INTERMEDIATING POLITICS THROUGH SUBJECTIVITY IN KHWEZI: THE REMARKABLE STORY OF FEZEKILE NTSUKELA KUZWAYO BY REDI TLHABI

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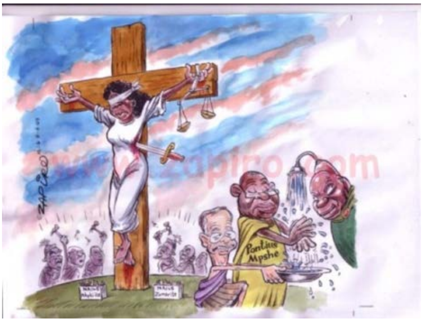
Abstract

My contention is that literary journalism welds large, complex world phenomena that are not always readily understandable to people — war, large-scale migration, climate change and others — with the reader through the narrator's subjective experience. To evaluate this argument, I utilize

In Khwezi: The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo. Redi Tlhabi narrates the life of Fezekile both before and after she brought charges against the former president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma. I argue that this work of literary journalism has the ability to reconstruct the problematic narratives that surrounded Fezekile during the time of the trial. Kwezi is written with the intention of giving the reader information within one body of work of South African politics and endeavors, not only to explain what is happening, but helps the reader understand why something is happening. Reporting in conjunction with storytelling — which is extremely important to the understanding of what is being reported — not only leaves the reader better informed but more civically and globally engaged.

I chose this book because it successfully demonstrates the capacity of literary journalism to give readers a nuanced insight into South African politics, and Jacob Zuma's presidency.



Intermediating Politics through Subjectivity in Khwezi: The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo by Redi Tlhabi

The image above is a political cartoon by one of South Africa's most famous satirists Jonathan Shapiro. The man with the shower head on the right hand side is Jacob Zuma, who a month before the publishing of the cartoon was the president of South Africa and the president of the governing political party the African National Congress (ANC). In 2005 Zuma was dismissed as deputy president of South Africa after his longtime friend and advisor, Schabir Shaik was sentenced to 15 years in prison for corruption and fraud. The court discovered that Shaik made regular payments to Zuma that totaled to 1.2 million rands (US$178,000) thereby breaking anti-corruption laws (The Telegraph). On the 6th of December, later that year, Zuma was officially charged with rape. As the trial went on it was discovered that the woman who accused Zuma of rape was HIV positive. After being cross examined, Zuma said that he took a shower after having intercourse because it "would minimise the risk of contracting the disease [HIV]" (BBC News).

The showerhead in the cartoon is meant to serve as a visual representation for the comments that he made during the trial, the trial itself, as well as the fact a few years after the trial, many South Africans believed he was guilty despite the court ruling — which found him not guilty. The cartoon above depicts Zuma with a showerhead on top of his head. In any and all of Shapiro's cartoons that feature Zuma, the showerhead is present. The showerhead has become an enduring symbol of Zuma's guilt, as well as an attempt to never forget that the president of South Africa, a figure that is meant to to be the face of the post-apartheid "rainbow" nation and to represent the values of its country, was accused of rape. Although the showerhead is an act of resistance, it simultaneously pushes the woman who brought the allegations forth in the background, and leaves her forgotten in the public memory of South Africa. This works in tandem with the fact that the trial is remembered through Zuma's own words.

The cartoon above represents very important political realities at the time that it was released. This cartoon depicts Mokotedi Mpshe as Pontius Pilate, the man who is biblically known for allowing Jesus to be sacrificed. Mpshe, the acting head of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) withdraw the charges of corruption made against Zuma before the trial. The reason he withdrew these charges are not clearly stated. His depiction as Pontius Pilate suggests that the reason he withdrew the charges might be because he himself is as corrupt as Zuma is.

The cartoon is a commentary on how justice, represented by lady justice on the cross, is crucified whilst the people who have the power to enforce it turn away and literally wash their hands of it. The water that allows Mpshe to wash his hands is the same water that "prevented" Zuma from contracting HIV. Water in this cartoon comes to represent the ease with which South African politicians are able to do what they want, with little to no repercussions. The cartoon was released four years after Zuma was found not guilty of rape and one month before Zuma would become the president of South Africa. This is important because it shows that it did not matter to high ranking ANC leaders and a significant portion of the South African population — poor, black South Africans — whether or not Zuma was guilty of these charges because he went on to become president in May 2009.

Because Zuma is the perpetrator, his dominant public presence inherently erases his responsibility for his behavior, reducing the rape accusations to a comedic moment that Shapiro is able to capitalize on. HIV disproportionately affects poor black South African's, the same demographic that rallied around Zuma at the time of the trial (Wabiri and Taffa). By offering a simple solution, this demographic saw a relatable person in Zuma. And at the same time, to the both white and black formally educated, urban middle and upper-class demographic, the simplistic solution painted him as an incompetent leader who lacked the adequate knowledge and intellect that his position required. The way in which middle class and liberal South Africans dismissed him is precisely what allowed him to get away with the corrupt behavior he would go on to commit.

Redi Tlhabi's Kwezi: The remarkable story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo is tremendously important for all types of readers to read when trying to understand the debilitating state of women's rights in post-apartheid South Africa and why they are in that position. "Kwezi" — which is both the title of the book and the pseudonym that she used during the trial to remain anonymous — is the story of Fezekile, the woman who brought the rape charges against Zuma. Kwezi not only follows Fezekile's life from birth through to the trial, and then her death in exile on October 9 2016, it exposes and explains the internal culture of the ANC and articulates South Africa's political climate during apartheid and during the trial. It also maps the historic patterns of violence against women and the role (or lack thereof) of the ANC and apartheid in the kinds of violence that women experience in South Africa. Having a sober understanding of the politics that surrounded the trial is imperative to challenging the political complacency that has developed around the ANC, the same complacency that won Zuma the presidency in 2009.

In the context of South Africa, reading Kwezi is an act of resistance because regardless of whether the reader believes her story or not, reading the book represents a willingness to hear a different narrative as well as a willingness to learn about the history of violence that South African women have had to — and still — experience. By the time that the reader has reached the last page, they have allowed themselves to walk through the experience of all the ways in which Fezekile was let down by the ANC, the legal system, her country, and ultimately her president. I will demonstrate that literary journalism has the ability to complicate the reductive ways in which political scandals are reported, the discussions that surround the scandal and subsequently remembered by the general public.

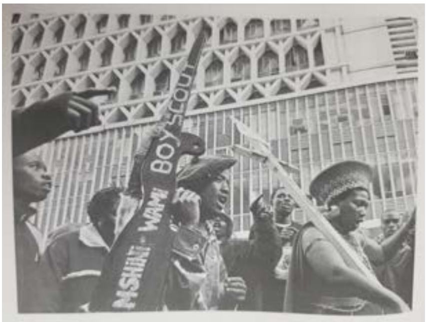
Drawing upon mainstream news reports and scholarly articles on South Africa I will set the historical and political context of South Africa and the trial. The theoretical framework of this paper is based on sociological research in victim blaming and Roland Barthes ideas on photography. Together, these two frameworks will illuminate the political and social context of the trial and Fezekile's life as a child.

The form of the text itself as well as the photographs included work to complicate how the trial was understood by the South African public. Because Kwezi was published in 2017, academic reaserch is very scarce. For that reason, this paper will serve as the beginning of academic study on Kwezi.

Form is the main way in which Tlhabi decenters Zuma and his supporters, and maintains focus on Fezekile and her experience during the trial. Given the anonymity that Fezekile wanted to maintain, paired with the way in which she was treated by Zuma's supporters, Tlhabi must then work much harder to humanize Fezekile and her experience of walking through the crowds of Zuma supporters during the trial. Although Tlhabi addresses the crowds, the language with which she addresses them does not give voice to them and by extension, does not give them relevance to the reader. This is an intentional choice on her part, not because she does not think their role is unimportant or that they do not symbolize very significant realities in South Africa; but because of the way in which Fezekile was vilified, Tlhabi must take all and any opportunities to maintain the focus of the story of Fezekile. Of the crowds outside the court, Tlhabi writes:

> "His supporters, clad in ANC colors, some toting hateful, incendiary placards, massed outside. As part of the psychological warfare to which Fezekile was exposed during the trial, this was the gauntlet that Fezekile had to run to enter and leave the court. Her advocate has specifically asked that she be let in through the basement where she would escape the crowds baying for her blood outside the court. This drill has been agreed to, and rehearsed over and over again. Yet, she was paraded right in front of the crowds, taken though the entrance nearest the mob (Thlabi, 87). "

In addition to this, there are three pictures depicting what the crowds were wearing, and how large the crowds of support for Zuma were. I want to spend some time analyzing the crowds outside of the courthouse in one of the photos included below as they reveal the layers of narratives that fed into how South Africans understood Fezekile.



The kind of support that Zuma was able to garner during the trial had more to do with the expression of frustration from poor black South Africans and less to do with Jacob Zuma himself. Instead, he was able to take advantage of the already existing frustrations that poor, black, South Africans had because of the way in which they were left out of the economic changes after the end of Apartheid. The majority of the women wore traditional Zulu clothing, similar to the woman on the right in the picture above, which reveals the way in which Zuma supporters understood the trial. In her analysis of the trail, Graham writes, "Outside the courthouse, anti-rape activists were outnumbered by Zuma supporters, many of the women dressed in traditional Zulu clothing who in the early days of the trial burned A4 sized photographs of the complainant, printed her name and surname while chanting 'burn this bitch'" (264). First, I will analyze the traditional Zulu clothing in order to demonstrate the political tensions, then I will address the burning of Fezekile's name to demonstrate the narrative that surrounded Fezekile.

In South African political history, the ethnic 'tension' between Zulu and Xhosa people is one that is a surrogate for class conflict. During the trial, Zuma used his Zulu identity as a defense for his behavior. During apartheid, the ANC's largest competitor was the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The IFP is a political party that placed emphasis on a separate and traditional Zulu identity, an identity that emphasizes the man as the patriarch of the family accompanied by more than one wife, as well as a traditional homestead. Their ideology is in direct contrast to the ANC's which is rooted in a South African identity that transcends race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality (Graham, 269). Whilst both parties were part of the anti—apartheid movement, the ANC's vision for South Africa was of one united, pan-ethnic country. The IFP on the other hand, wanted South Africa to exist after apartheid but with each ethnic group possessing significant autonomy within separate provinces. Zuma's claims to a Zulu identity, despite never being apart of the IFP, was enabled because the IFP was no longer a political threat at that point.

However, by invoking a Zulu identity during the trial, Jacob Zuma roused up the ethnic identity that the IFP had manufactured. Many South Africans were economically neglected due to the fact that the economic policies of apartheid largely stayed intact (Mbeki,11). This same group that was neglected and identified as Zulu, rallied around Zuma as a way to reassert their identity. The fact that Zuma had three wives at the time of the trial as well as his homestead, Nkandla, in Kwa-Zulu Natal, where the majority of the Zulu population lives in South Africa, helped sell his image as a traditionalist.

Additionally, Izingane ZoMa, a maskandi musical trio made of three zulu women released a song and album titled: uMsholozi. uMosholozi is one of Jacob Zuma's clan names, which is used as a respectful way to address a leader. Maskandi is a kind of Zulu folk genre and Izingane ZoMa is a very big name within this genre. The lyrics translate to: "Everybody says they want Zuma to rule, to be the government of South Africa, but parliamentarians are refusing. Madiba [Mandela] said Zuma would become president at the end of his term. Charges against Zuma must be withdrawn so that he can lead government ." The album sold very well. The group says that they were not trying to make a political statement however, the fact that it did so well implies that this song really resonated with fans of Maskandi music who typically would be South Africans who identify as Zulu traditionalists. The South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) decided to exclude the song because of its controversial lyrics. Several radio stations decided not to play it as the maskandi genre did not appeal to their listeners (BBC News). However, it was made into a house song to appeal to those listeners. The fact that a pro-Zuma song was converted to a genre that is consumed by a wider and younger audience and then played on radio stations shows how pervasive the trial was in the day-to-day lives of South Africans both young and old, rural and urban, poor or elite. Additionally, outside of the courtroom during the trial, people were burning pictures of Fezekile's name and chanting "burn that bitch" — as well as signing "Awuleth' Umshini Wami, wena uyang'mbabezela, musa ukung'bamabezela" a song of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). "'umshini wami" then takes on an insidiously violent meaning. The song literally calls for bringing a machine gun, and it is obvious that the target of the gun in this context is aimed at Fezekile. These words to the song can be seen on the gun that the man holds on the left hand side of the image. Fezekile's father was a soldier and a prominent leader in the MK; thus the crowds singing a song of the military wing becomes a very personal attack on Fezekile. Moreover, because of the context in which this song is sung, the machine gun becomes a phallic symbol. The use of the word 'bitch' and the machine gun are important as they represent the public way in which Fezekile and so many other South African women are blamed for the violence that they experience (Graham, 264).

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[1] I speak fluent isiZulu and translated the song myself

[2] This translates to "bring me my machine gun, you are holding me back, stop holding me back."

[3] This translates to "spear of the nation." MK was the military wing of the ANC that trained in Angola and served as an armed force to fight against the apartheid government.

At the time, Zuma publicly said that the charges were a political attack by Thabo Mbeki to discredit him (Worthington, 613). His accusation then fell along the lines of the ethnic conflict between Zulu and Xhosa people. This conflict is based on the fact that Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were both part of the elite and educated class in South Africa during apartheid, and were both Xhosa. This created the notion among IFP supporters that the ANC had a pro-Xhosa identity (Worthington, 613). So, by claiming years later after apartheid had ended, that the charges against him were a political attack, Zuma took advantage of the underlying idea that Xhosas are the rich elite who are biased against Zulus. Therefore, when the women wore traditional Zulu clothing to the trial, it was not just about showing support for Zuma; it was about representing a group of South Africans who were left out of the economic shifts when the ANC first took power, and saw this trial, and Fezekile, as another attack on poor black South Africans.

Tlhabi counters the dehumanizing language that was used as a weapon against Fezekile by using very sympathetic language about her experience. Not only does she label the crowds as "psychological warfare," she calls the crowd a "gauntlet" to get through and describes them as "baying for blood" (Tlhabi, 87). The negative connotations of these words juxtaposed with the sympathetic language used to describe Fezekile's experience create more compassion for what Fezekile had to go through. By focusing on the ways in which she was wronged, even in the smaller details of the trial, Tlhabi is able to further center Fezekile. Creating negativity around the crowd, followed up with "by the time she took the stand she was demoralized and frightened (Tlhabi, 87), Tlhabi is then able to successfully humanize Fezekile to a reader that may not know anything about her, the trial or Zuma, or to the reader who may have pre-conceived ideas about Fezekile and who she is.

Moreover the way in which Fezekile was understood, another key element to understanding the trial, South African politics, in addition to the work that Tlhabi's text attempts is to analyses the manner with which Fezekile was implicitly blamed. Kathryn Rebecca Klement outlines a very prevalent rape myth: the idea that sexual assault is a violent event and that the victim will fight back. In her dissertation titled, Women Lie and Other Myths: How Rape Myths Impact Attributions of Blame in a Rape Case, she writes,

> There are several parts of the traditional rape script: the perpetrator's characteristics (e.g., crazy, deviant,loner, stranger, uses violence); the victim's characteristics (e.g., young, innocent, alone); the situational characteristics (e.g., night, an abandoned place); and the victim's post-assault behavior (e.g., emotionally unstable, compliant with police). (10)

As aforementioned, Jacob Zuma was the deputy President of South Africa just before the charges were made, with three wives at the time, meaning he does not fit into the characteristics of the deviant loner. At the time, Jacob Zuma knew that Fezekile was HIV positive, which implies that she has had sexual intercourse before, meaning that she does not fit the young innocent characteristics that a victim is supposed to have. Fezekile went to Jacob Zuma's home in Forest Town, which means the situation does not fit the "abandoned and scary place" characteristic. It was also well known during the trial that Zuma was no stranger to Fezekile and that he was a good friend of her father. In fact she considered him an uncle (Tlhabi, 143). When questioned by his lawyer whether Zuma thought Fezekile would have the physical strength to fight back, Zuma responded by saying, "If she did not want it, she would easily push me away. I know her. She is not weak" (Mail&Guardian). Because Fezekile's assault does not fit the measures of the "rape script," she already had that working against her in the courtroom. This is also evident in the way in which Zuma's lawyer, Advocate (Adv.) Kemp questioned Fezekile.

Tlhabi goes on to deconstruct the language with which Fezekile was questioned. During the trial, part of Adv. Kemp's defense was to discredit the two previous assaults that Fezekile had endured in order to prove that she cannot be trusted in her third accusation of rape against Zuma. Tlhabi very clearly points out that although Adv Kemp does not argue that the two assaults did not happen, his word choice implies that Fezekile had the capacity to consent to the assaults:

> Kemp says that Fezekile's attacker 'took off your clothes, took you into his bedroom and had sex with you'. Not 'raped you' but 'had sex with you'. That the court did not gasp at the thought of a man in his thirties 'having sex with' a five year old child is staggering. Earlier when Adv Kemp used the word 'rape' is was prefaced by 'as you say here'. But, when Adv Kemp used the words 'had sex with you', they are not attributed to Fezekile but are the council's own words. (Tlhabi, 98)

Adv Kemp uses the phrase "had sex with you" again when he questions Fezekile about the second assault at age thirteen. Tlhabi's close reading of the difference between "had sex with you" and "rape" is one way in which Adv Kemp attempts to assign equal responsibility to both Fezekile and her perpetrator. Additionally, the fact that the court did not respond negatively to the idea that a five year old is capable of consent suggests that the court follows this line of thinking. To build on Tlhabi's argument, by assigning an equal capacity of consent to five and thirteen year old Fezekile, Adv Kemp is not only shifting blame away from her previous perpetrators; his wording hazes the already misunderstood concept of consent. This is the rhetorical method through which he absolves Zuma of responsibility which is exactly what Kwezi aims to combat.

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[4] The second deputy president to Nelson Mandela, and then president of South Africa after Mandela.

[5] Mandela was the president of the ANC and the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

The resistance to believe Fezekile was not only restricted to the court room or to Zuma's supporters but to South Africa in general. Pumla Williams, the head of the Government Communication and Information Systems for the ANC, at a conference on The Politics of the Armed Struggle said, "'I had a gun. I knew how to use it. No man would dare rape me'" (Tlhabi, 44). In her statement, Pumla implies that if a woman was sexually assaulted, it was because she did not adequately protect herself against potential dangers. The notion that women are to blame is also evident in the way in which high ranking women within the ANC responded to allegations of sexual assault by other women. Tlhabi reports that, "the conference attendees seemed frustrated that their courage and bravery were muted by 'this narrative of rape.' This is understandable: many of them gave up their youth and took on dangerous missions in the fight for a democratic and free South Africa… those in attendance were not happy with how women were portrayed — as victims of sexual violence; in defending their position, they inadvertently closed the space for any interrogation of the gendered nature of armed struggle." (Tlhabi, 45)

This passage demonstrates that perhaps part of the reason high ranking female leaders in the ANC did not want to address issues of sexual assault was because they felt that it tainted their bravery and sacrifice with stories of women who, perhaps, according to them could not stand up for themselves.

Misguided public support as well as victim blaming, both in and outside the court room, abstracted Fezekile as a human being. Photography then becomes a useful tool for Thlabi to humanize Fezekile to both readers who do not know about Fezekile or who are reading Khwezi with a hostile disposition. Because Fezekile remained anonymous throughout the trial and after, including pictures of her childhood and family helps the reader connect to Fezekile. The photographs that Tlhabi includes in Kwezi are meant to tell a parallel story to the text that the reader themselves can piece together, which makes Fezekile a more familiar person. Barthes provides a useful framework for analyzing the role of photography in Khwezi.

In his Camera Lucida, Barthes reflects on the nature of photography. He astutely says, "photography is a kind of primitive theater, a kind of Tableau vivant, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath the dead" (32). The word "theater" implies that a group of photographs tell a story when they are read together and "tableau vivant" literally means "living image" and implies that these pictures are not static. Although they capture a moment in time, they bring that moment back to life again and again rather than make that moment static. Each of the pictures in Khwezi can be thought of as a scene in Fezekile's life. The reliability of these pictures is what invites the reader to project their own lives and experiences and, through that process, the life that happens in between the photos are filled in by the reader's projection.

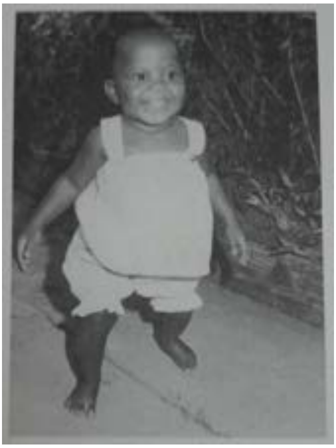
Barthes also points to the haunted nature of photography especially when the faces we see are those of people who have passed on. Fezekile's father had passed on when she was ten years old and by the time Kweziwas published, Fezekile had passed on. Photgraphy then functions as a king of portal to the past that is able to create a uniquely personable way for readers to connect to her and her family. This, perhaps in a morally questionable way, enables the readers of Khwezito relive Fezekile's childhoold in a way that she no longer can.

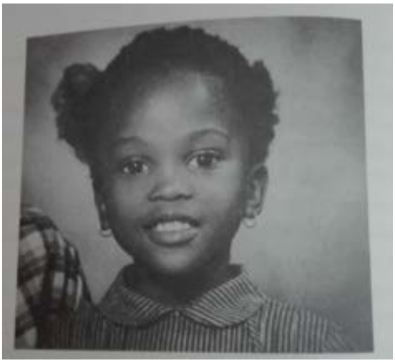
With the exception of four pictures out of thirty-one, the pictures of Fezekile and her family are mostly void of politics or personal tragedy. The projection that reader engages in is separate from what they read in the text because of the fact that the context of the pictures does not always directly reflect the same moment in the text. Thus, the photography opens up a space for projection in a way that the text disallows.

Many of the family photos that are included in Kwezi are typical family photos. For example, the above image shows Beauty and Judson's (Fezekile's mother and father) wedding day. Other than Beauty's white dress, veil and flowers, their pictures lack the photographic composition to adequately communicate that it is their wedding day. The couple is immersed in the crowd which makes them blend in with everyone else. They take up the least amount of space compared to the crowds and the building behind them, the lighting is evenly distributed throughout the picture and they are only in the foreground of the picture. The large amount of family and friends surrounding Beauty and Judson communicate that there is a community that surrounds, not only them, but the child they would eventually come to have.

The lack of composition in Beauty and Judson's picture reveal that they truly are pictures that are meant to be seen by their family in private spaces. Presenting family photos as part of the construction of Fezekile's story in Khwezi invites the reader into an intimate part of her life, as well as to spend more time trying to find the faces of Beauty and Judson.

The experience of looking through Fezekile's private family memories mimics the experience that readers have looking through their own family photos. Viewing family photography lends itself to imagining what that moment was like. It is in the imaginative nature of photography that the space for story making is possible. Through the experience of seeing the different 'scenes' in Fezekile's life, the reader is able to connect to her and get to know her life in a similarly intimate way that one might know their own family members or get to know a family member that is not present. Furthermore, the picture is connecting the reader to Fezekile even before she was born. The photo immediately below is of Fezekile before her parents were exiled and the subsequent photo is of her as a young girl growing up in Swaziland. The first picture follows a similar composition pattern to the wedding photos that makes it recognizable as a family photo. Although the subject of the photograph is Fezekile, she and her background are both in focus and her body is not centered. The second photo is similar to a school photograph with Fezekile in the center wearing a collared shirt with her hair tied up. These two photos reflect the relatable stages of a happy childhood. The embarrassing baby photo, as well as the cleaned up "first day of school" photo, weaves in the feelings of innocence and powerlessness into the narrative that the pictures create and allows who she was in that moment in Fezekile's life to be repeated. The presence of these types of photos introduces the idea that the same person who was called a "bitch" was once a child and innocent. It is undeniably humanizing to present someone in their childhood, making it impossible for the reader to reconcile how Fezekile was viewed nationally and how she is viewed in the photos. The former symbol — of an anti-Zuma, Xhosa conspiracy plot — is only possible to believe in the absence of the childhood photos and what they connote. Therefore, it is deeply important in Khwezi that Thlabi depicts Fezekile in this humanizing manner.





Barthes writes, "myself 'never coincides with my image; for it is the image which is heavy, motionless Stubborn (which is why society sustains it) , and "myself" which is light, divided, dispersed; like a bottle-imp, "myself" doesn't hold still, giggling in my jar" (Barthes, 12). Barthes is saying that the person who is captured in the photograph is stationary and unchanging, but that the self is always changing. This passage may seem to contradict his idea that photography is a living image or a kind of theater. What Barthes is pointing to here, though, is that the moment that the photography captures is the thing that the viewer is going to imagine to themselves. But, the subject itself that is photographically captured, and who they were in that moment, is static and motionless in the image.

Although Fezekile eventually grows into a woman with interests and desires, who she is as a child is static and unchanging in the above images contained in Khwezi. In viewing those photos, the reader cannot deny that there was once a time in which she was vulnerable and powerless. By including a picture of Fezekile's mother and father's wedding day, the photographs have communicated that Fezekile had what is typically viewed in South African society as the "right" start in life: a heterosexual couple who will start their own happy, loving and supportive nuclear family nestled in the support of their broader community. Additionally, the wedding and childhood photos appear in chapter two and the trial is in chapter five. The placing of these photos is significant because by the time that the reader starts the chapter on the trial, the reader already has a more favorable and relatable understanding of Fezekile and her background.

Tlhabi also includes various photographs of Fezekile in her adult life after being exiled. They follow the same compositional elements as the previous photographs and similarly invite the reader in to look closer at the woman they have been reading about. However, the adult photographs function very differently from the family and childhood photographs. The wedding and childhood photographs are meant to paint a particular narrative to a reader, her adulthood pictures serve as a reminder to the reader that although politics through out Fezekile's life had a huge influence on where and how she lived, she was not just a symbol, but a human being with ups and downs. These photographs are more in line with the core aims of the book, to tell her story as she wanted wanted it to be told. Additionally, these photos open up the space for Fezekile to re-claim her life and identity. This is a particularly powerful message given that Fezekile wanted to remain anonymous through out the trail. In rc-claiming her identity she is taking back control of the narratives that surrounded her, which for so long literally defined how her life played out.

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Khwezi as a whole resists any attempt to put blame on Fezekile for both of the sexual assaults she experienced as a child and then as an adult by Jacob Zuma.

It is easy for the political nuances to get lost in the chaos of the trial and Tlhabi is very aware of that, which is why she must pay attention to how she positions the crowds, but also include pictures, to give the reader context. In fact, Tlhabi very clearly says that "this book… does not intend to give a comprehensive account of the trial itself" (Tlhabi, 97) and that this is because it is not about the trial itself but about Fezekile. However, it would be near impossible to tell Fezekile's story without the inclusion of the trial and politics. What does it mean that Fezekile is inseparable from South Africa? What does it mean that Tlhabi is unable to tell Fezekile's story separate from the trial and South African politics? It speaks to the fact that individuals are inextricably tied to their political contexts. Whether we like it or not, the politics of our countries deeply affect the courses of our lives. Through the story of one woman, South Africa was able to see itself in a different light. That is the power of literary journalism. A single book is able to remind a country of how far it has come from apartheid, but how little progress it has made for its female citizens. Khwezi is able to achieve that by having its reader in mind with an aim to leave the reader more informed about, not just Fezekile, but the country's politics in a way that recognizes the reader as a human being who connects to people and their stories. Whilst Khwezi is able to do all of this work, what does it mean that her life is consumed as entertainment? Is it a vice of literary journalism that the reader is both entertained and informed?

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