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The lamppost: a metaphorical reflection on archival absences and presences

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ABSTRACT

My research intends to appropriate and recast Jacques Derrida's ideas by seeking to interpret the written text as supplementary to photographic images. I use a close reading of Judith Coullie's introductory text to *Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/biography* (2006) to explore Santu Mofokeng's representation of his biography and autobiography. Through selected works by Mofokeng, I highlight photographic ways and writing modes of expressing and locating his voice, drawing on the artist's own subjective reality, memory and metaphor. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in conjunction with the introductory text to *Selves in Question* serve to provide much historical evidence and contexts to the complexities of writing a personal narrative in an exploration of freedom within the confines of oppression. I nevertheless acknowledge that some narratives are heavily dependent on a collaborative relationship. The negotiated different moments and perspectives that make up various presented narratives are born from spaces and places that act as intersections within the private and public in a constant state of stasis and movement.