

Reading the Post-Apartheid Social Archive in JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Fiona Snyckers' *Lacuna* - **Wambua Muindi & Muthoni Kahindi** (University of Nairobi)

This paper comparatively reads JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Fiona Snyckers' *Lacuna* (2019) to problematize the post-apartheid social archive of South Africa. Where Lucy Lurie is a protagonist of *Lacuna*, in *Disgrace* she is a minor character and a victim of rape. A character within both novels and South Africa's literary history, the paper uses her representation to argue that both narratives, from the standpoint of two white South African imaginaries, critique, compromise with and engage with different but related familial, gender and race relations themes. This way, besides offering a social commentary on contemporary South Africa, both novels complicate South Africa's future. Through close textual reading primed by memory and signifying discourses, the paper further augments the argument in two ways; first, the novels' gender and sexuality metaphors signal the politics of racism, violence and second both narratives serve an agentic function through which to think about South Africa's future. For the colloquium, the paper will use the discursive context of Literature to highlight how South African imaginaries' textual revisions not only contest, and perform but also animate the post-apartheid social archive to comment on South African past and future.