

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2013 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

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#### SESSION 2P

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#### MCNAIR SESSION - ECONOMIES OF EXPLOITATION, CULTURES OF RESISTANCE

*Session Moderator: Sonnet Retman, American Ethnic  
Studies*

**295 MGH**

*3:45 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

#### **Cinema of Loss: Exploring the Role of War and Trauma in Burundian Films**

*Alejandro (Alex) Guardado, Senior, English (Creative  
Writing)*

*McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Kate Cummings, English*

In 2007, filmmaker and journalist Christopher Redmond co-founded the Burundi Film Center in eastern Africa. This non-profit organization allows Burundian filmmakers and other citizens to engage with cinematic art forms and communicate their culture through film. Furthermore, the BFC opens avenues for Burundian artists to explore the significance of some cultural themes, such as family relationships and sexuality, in their works. My research will focus on the cultural themes presented in these films as they arise from a perspective on war and trauma. Specifically, I will do a close reading of each film to study the significance of family relationships, sexuality, and education within a framework of war and trauma. A close reading of these films requires a careful and critical analysis of the narrative and imagery onscreen. This method allows me to analyze each film with a focus on particular images, dialogue, and narrative elements. My close readings of these films will aim to offer explanations and conclusions on how war and trauma inform these cultural productions. This methodology benefits my research because the subject of war and trauma is not always overt in these films. Theoretical works that inform my analyses come from Judith Butler's work on vulnerability and affect, and David Eng and David Kazanjian's work on mourning. I will analyze these texts in relation to the BFC student films that I discuss in my research. To conclude my research, I will offer a thorough discussion and explanation of how these cultural productions

contribute to Hutu-Tutsi cultures and to the nation of Burundi. Specifically, I will provide insight on the implications of filmmaking practices in Third World countries.