GEOGRAPHY’S UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARD WINNERS

Submitted by Richard Roth on July 20, 2012 - 1:27pm

Congratulations to undergraduates Alexandria Ferguson and Christine Woodward for winning UW Library Research Award prizes.

Christine Woodward (Geography & Latin American Studies)
Faculty Advisor: Jose Antonio Lucero, Jackson School of International Studies
Senior Thesis: Viva a Revolução/Sent from my iPhone: Politics, culture, and the Fora PM movement

Alexandria Ferguson (International Studies)
Faculty Advisor: Tish Lopez, Geography
White Demon Sophistry: the Gates Foundation's Control over the Production of Knowledge of Women of the Global South

In this paper I conduct a discourse analysis of the Development paradigm to understand how aid workers control the production of knowledge around women of the Global South. In exploring how the development apparatus depicts women, I analyze the representations of women in real marketing materials from the Seattle-based NGO, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This paper draws on critical development theory and post-colonial feminism to deconstruct how the discourse of the Gates Foundation functions as an important factor defining the relationship between the Global South and the Global North. I argue that the Gates Foundation constructs reductive images of women through their roles as mother and farmers, without specificity, credible evidence or historical context, thereby reducing the agency and the complexity of the everyday lives of women from the Global South. These simplistic interpretations have real effects by informing the policy of development workers on the ground.