

Conference misrepresented

I would like to correct the somewhat misleading impression created by your news article on the recent UT Conference on Cultural Studies in Britain and America ("Conference discusses E306 changes," *The Daily Texan*, Sept. 24). The article's headline and much of its text concentrate on a single informal discussion of the recent attacks on scholarly progress by conservative ideologues financed by right-wing political organizations. I would like to clarify that the conference was organized long before the far-right fringe at the University attempted to paralyze the University's academic growth, and that the informal discussion of the English 306 controversy and its relation to the agenda of

the far right was added quite late in the planning. (The relevance of Cultural Studies to the 306 struggle, in fact, lies in no small part in the far right's blissfully uninformed tendency to conflate any and all scholarship it doesn't like under the rubric "Cultural Studies.") The conference as a whole was extremely wide-ranging in its interests and attracted a large audience, not just those with an interest in 306.

One other serious misconception created by the article concerns John Fiske's talk on homeless men and the film *Die Hard*. Fiske himself did not show the men the film. As I believe the *Texan* reporter was informed, the homeless men routinely selected the films they watched, and Fiske merely reported on their viewing habits, rather than using them as guinea pigs.

More importantly, in relation to those habits, Fiske did not simply report that the homeless cheered for terrorists (the point at which the article stopped), leaving the damaging impression that the homeless are sociopaths. Fiske actually analyzed the response to *Die Hard* as an expression of anti-authoritarianism (not pro-terrorist sentiment), working from the environment of shelters to the general cultural construction of the homeless and its impact on them, and economic analysis of the effects of Reagan administration housing policy in the 1980s. The point was hardly that homeless men support terrorism, but that they fairly acutely sought out vehicles, in film, for enactment of the resentment they feel for the political authorities who have blithely cut them and mil-

lions of others adrift.

Neil Nehring
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13 'rights' make a wrong

In Thursday's guest column by professor of philosophy Douglas Kellner ("Right-wingers on the march against cultural reform," *The Daily Texan*), accusations were thrown against those questioning multiculturalism. Throughout the editorial some variation of the term "right" was used (right, right-wing, reactionary right, rightist, academic fundamentalists, McCarthyism, McCarthyist).

It appears to me that you could have used the space provided to answer some legitimate objections made by the National Association of Scholars.

If we take Professor Kellner's lead then issues certainly would appear much clearer — if you have problems with multiculturalism, you're a right-wing fanatic. If you're not gung-ho for affirmative action, you're a KKK Grand Wizard. If you're uncomfortable with homosexuality or think it is wrong, then you're a homophobe.

Instead of stereotyping your opponent and forcing a defensive response, see if you can give a real defense of multiculturalism (not empty platitudes about "openness" and "acceptance.") Professor Kellner, at least respond to the claims of dissenters without calling them right-wing fanatics 13 times in one editorial.

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