

ARTS and FEATURES

Study group to culture students through media criticism TV show

By MARY MOORE PARHAM
Staff Writer

Culture involves a lot more than Renaissance art or classical music. "It's about things as common as Elvis, Sinatra and Madonna and things as obscure as campaign buttons and drink recipes," said Bob Boster, co-founder of the Pop Culture Study Group. "Pop culture is the study of those common experiences not necessarily embraced by the media but part of modern society."

It was after a class in media criticism last year that Bob Boster got together with Carrie McLaren and Brian Nestor to begin what is now the Pop Culture Study Group.

Because there is no formal department in mass media, classes focusing on pop culture were scattered through-

out departments and usually discovered by word of mouth. The three channeled their interest into a student organization to help promote these classes and address the spread of critical theory beyond literature and film.

"We all know what Aristotle was talking about," Boster said. "What we don't know are the effects of kids watching as much television as their parents work in a day, and that's scary."

One year later, the Pop Culture Study Group has grown to include over 30 students, faculty and members outside the University who meet about every three weeks to discuss topics ranging from censorship of 2 Live Crew to cultural bigotry in the United States.

No funding comes from the University, but the group has raised enough

money through its members to sponsor the New York-based media criticism show, Paper Tiger, on Carolina Cable. Scheduled to air on Thursdays at 8:30 p.m., the non-profit show investigates the corporate structures of the media in an attempt to clear up the mysteries of the information industry.

Each episode of Paper Tiger typically focuses on one agent of the media. The first show, airing this Thursday, critiques the coverage of the Middle Eastern conflict by the nightly news. Others include a reading of The New York Times by professor Herbert Schiller to look at what is under the text as opposed to what is actually printed on the page.

"If you don't understand what you're watching, you're probably going to be taken advantage of by the media," Boster said. "Most of us don't analyze what we see when we're watching TV, we just see it."

Underscoring this lack of analysis is the concept of nightly news. Boster said TV news was not set up to inform viewers but to make them watch the commercials.

"The viewer is a commodity, and newscasters are paid to deliver them advertising," he said. "If they tell you something that will make you want to turn off the TV, they you won't be watching the ad. This whole concept really colors what the viewer is and is not told."

In addition to sponsoring Paper Tiger, the Pop Culture Study Group is writing a paper to the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union in Durham addressing

the banning of 2 Live Crew. Although the ban was reversed in Chapel Hill, no work has yet been done to reverse the decision in Durham.

The group has established a paper file in the North Carolina Collection of Wilson Library. Both graduate- and undergraduate-level papers written on pop-culture issues are on file for reading, research and bibliographical use.

At present, the only degree in pop-culture studies is given at Bowling Green University in Ohio. However, the group hopes to build enough support for the eventual insertion of a pop-culture major here much in the way the folklore department was formed.

"The study of popular culture fits into almost any discipline you can imagine," co-founder McLaren said.

"It's the study of history, but now, mainstream and often culturally irrelevant."

Other members of the group agreed that the lines between the departments and even the traditional uses for critical theory were beginning to blur.

"I remember taking an art history class and realizing that I probably had more in common with media theory classes offered in RTVMP than with the painters down the hall," Boster said.

Both Boster and McLaren stressed the need for pop culture to be addressed whether or not a major was obtained.

"We all see movies or TV shows and talk about them," Boster said. "The study of pop culture is not up in an ivory tower but may be a literal survival skill in this age."

Committee forests awareness program

By M.C. DAGENHART
Staff Writer

In recognition of World Rainforest Week, the Rainforest Action Group (RAG), a subcommittee of the Student Environmental Action Coalition is sponsoring a number of programs on campus to bring attention to the issue.

"Our purpose is to raise awareness on campus and in the community about forestry issues, to let them know that the rainforests are there and that trees are being cut down at an alarming rate," said RAG co-chairwoman Lindsay Lowry.

"The trees can't save themselves and we can't live without them," Lowry said. "We want to inform people, get them involved and have fun while we do it."

To kick off World Rainforest Week, RAG sponsored a benefit concert featuring Idolon, The Gathering, Stream of Consciousness and The King's Bluff at Cat's Cradle last night, Lowry said. The money raised will be donated to the reforestation program in Costa Rica

known as Arbofilia.

Tonight, Rolando Mendez, a wildlife biologist for the United States Forestry Service, will speak on "Old Growth Issues in the Pacific Northwest." The presentation begins at 7:30 in 104 Howell Hall. There will also be a dinner discussion with Mendez at 6 p.m. at the Campus Y, Lowry said.

RAG will also be selling Ben & Jerry's Rainforest Crunch in the Pit today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Lowry said. The ice cream, donated by Ben & Jerry's Homemade Ice Cream of Chapel Hill, will be sold in reusable plastic mugs for \$1.50. Those who bring their own reusable mug may buy the ice cream for fifty cents. Proceeds will go towards funding future RAG programs, Lowry said.

Throughout the week RAG will sponsor a letter-writing campaign in the Pit to protest the logging efforts of the Mitsubishi Corporation in Malaysia, said SEAC member Mark Chilton. RAG has also called for a boycott of all Mitsubishi products, from cars and stereos to Nikon cameras.

"The Mitsubishi Corporation owns a logging operation that runs 24 hours a day," Chilton said. "It is also displacing indigenous people and basically forcing them to work for slave wages or throwing them into jail. Our goal is to get Mitsubishi to change their practices," he said.

"It is a massive violation of human rights," Lowry said.

Thursday night, RAG is showing a PBS documentary on South American rain forests in the Union, Lowry said. RAG will also be presenting in the Union the animated film version of "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss at 7 p.m. on Friday, Lowry said. The room numbers for both shows will be posted at the Union desk.

The Lorax is especially relevant to World Rainforest Week, Chilton said. "It's a fable about what happens when an area becomes deforested," he said. "It's an allegory of worldwide deforestation and what our world's future might be. It's a terrific movie. Don't miss it!"

Students will participate in the performances together without the usual fierce school rivalry. Daniel Cherry, a junior political science major at UNC, credits this to the nature of the event.

"Music is a good way to transcend any school's rivalries and to bring people together," he said. "Music is a common bond."

The concert is all about playing music and having a good time. In the words of violinist Kathy Mlinar, a

Joint concerts bond UNC, Duke orchestras

By ANGELA BUFFUM
Staff Writer

Members of the UNC Orchestra will set aside traditional school competitiveness to join the Duke Symphony Orchestra for an exclusive concert featuring a combination of the two orchestras in Memorial Hall on Tuesday, Oct. 23, at 8 p.m.

The groups will perform together again on Wednesday, Oct. 24, at 8 p.m. in Page Auditorium at Duke University. Both concerts are free of admission.

Students will participate in the performances together without the usual fierce school rivalry. Daniel Cherry, a junior political science major at UNC, credits this to the nature of the event.

graduate student at UNC in musical performance, "students (from both schools) have all been having a really good time, and I think this will be conveyed to the audience."

The combined orchestra boasts an impressive 100 members and provides an opportunity to hear music that requires a larger orchestra. Tonu Kalam, orchestra conductor at UNC, said, "They are playing music that neither orchestra would be able to do separately."

The program consists of four Italian pieces. The opening piece is Verdi's "Overture to Nabucco." Written early in the composer's career, the combination of slow melodic sections and fast lively sections makes it a great opening piece, Kalam said.

Following is the "Turandot" Suite Op. 41 by Busoni, a large symphonic piece that highlights the strong string section produced by the mutual efforts of the two schools. The two orchestras will also play "Overture to Idomeneo" by Mozart and "Pines of Rome" by Respighi.

Kalam and Lorenzo Muti, the conductor at Duke, had the idea of combining the orchestras. The two became friends while studying at Curtis Institute of Music. When they both came to North Carolina, they thought it would be a good idea to combine the two groups.

Muti studied conducting at the Conservatory of St. Cecilia in Rome before coming to the United States in 1967 to study at Curtis and the Juilliard. He has worked in England and Holland, and with most of the symphonies in Italy. Muti has been conducting at Duke since 1983.

Kalam studied conducting, piano and composing at Harvard, Curtis and the University of California at Berkeley. He has conducted orchestras at various universities, as well as the Nevada Opera Company and the Lake George Opera Festival. Presently, in addition to his position of associate professor at UNC, he is also the music director of the Longview Symphony Orchestra in Texas.

Military wife's postage costs worth knowing husband may return safely from Persian Gulf

By ERIC BOLASH
Staff Writer

Wendy French can't watch M*A*S*H.

She can't watch China Beach, Tour of Duty or Platoon.

The 26-year-old isn't blind, and she doesn't harbor some hatred of military shows. That's not it.

When she watches these shows, she puts her husband into the picture, living the fear of a war like the characters on the screen. Her husband, Marine Corps Capt. David French, is stationed on the USS Guam — a helicopter transport ship floating somewhere in the Persian Gulf.

When Iraq first invaded Kuwait on August 2, Wendy said goodbye to her husband every morning for two weeks. She didn't wish him a good day at work, she had to say 'goodbye' in case he didn't return that night.

Every morning, David would pack the cab of his pickup with his duffle bags crammed full of the clothes and tools for war; today might be the day. During that time, she said watched the news morning, noon and night to see if her husband would be called to duty.

On August 20 her husband didn't come home.

For a while she would not watch the news. She simply did not want to know what was going on. She watches the news now, but it doesn't ease her worries.

"It's just real scary. You can't talk to him on the phone...I always worry when he flies (on regular assignments), but this kind of thing never crossed my mind."

David French is a Forward Air Controller. His troops are part of an amphibious assault that would storm the beaches and establish beach heads in the first wave of an attack. He would move into enemy territory and direct an air strike according to what he saw from

a mobile telephone on the ground.

Normally he flies C-130 transport planes for the Marine Corps. Two years ago, he took the job as a Forward Air Controller to get away from his flight squadron for a while and do something different. But two weeks before he finished the job, he was called. He would rather be flying planes, the job he trained so long to perform, but the Marine Corps uses pilots for the position he is in.

Before the crisis began, David was assigned to move to Chicago, Ill., in September. He and Wendy had already called the realtors and made arrangements to move, but that all had to be postponed.

Now all Wendy can do is wait.

What does help is having some idea of specifically where her husband is and communicating with him somehow, she says. Although she can't talk to her husband on the phone, Wendy has rummaged around for every means of communication possible.

She sent her husband a small tape recorder through the mail about six weeks ago. For almost two months she had not heard his voice. Finally, on October 6, her husband's tape came in the mail.

"That tape player made all the difference in the world."

He had taken the recorder around the ship with him all day long. He carried it with him on morning drills so she could be with him and hear the troops chant. He took it with him to the mess hall so she could eat with him and his men. He gave her a spoken tour of the ship so she could picture him lifting weights in the weightroom, reading in the ship's library and running on the deck of the ship.

And there are alternative methods of communication. Every other day she calls a hot line in Norfolk, Va., or at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville to find out the approximate location of her husband's boat.

she sits down to watch the news. President Bush's comments that the stalemate can not continue forever don't comfort her.

She tries to be optimistic, but what would she do if there was an invasion? She says she would probably turn off the television, call her mom and cry.

After the news, she contacts other wives to exchange any new gossip about their husbands and then she goes to work on her stained glass. When her husband left, she signed up for a stained glass class on the base. The craft work challenges her and she enjoys it, but it is really something to keep her from constantly worrying about her husband.

Before she goes to bed, she sits down to write a letter to her husband. She writes to him every day, telling him at least a little something about her day.

In a letter to his father, David wrote, "Now that we are here, we will probably just stay on the ship unless something big happens with Iraq...I'll be happy to be home - hope it's soon."

Wendy hopes so too.

From Associated Press reports

BOSTON — The head of a museum that displayed photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe says politics is the reason why the head of the National Endowment for the Arts rejected a grant for another exhibit there.

"A week ago I would have said no, but now I would say that maybe there is an informal blacklist," said David Ross, director of the Institute of Contemporary Art.

The institute drew protests this summer with the Mapplethorpe show. In Cincinnati, a gallery and its director were acquitted of obscenity charges after showing the same photos.

NEA chairman John Frohnmayer told Ross he was rejecting a \$40,000 grant to fund an exhibit by Los Angeles mixed-media artist Mike Kelley. The grant had been approved by an NEA selection

panel.

"It is almost unprecedented in the history of the NEA that an application for a gallery is approved by a peer review panel and then gets rejected by the director," said Arthur Cohen, the institute's marketing director.

An NEA spokeswoman denied that. "It's not unusual for grants to be rejected at any level because of last-minute information or whatever," said spokeswoman Virginia Falck.

Falck said NEA policy prevented the organization from saying why it rejected the grant, out of consideration of the artist's privacy.

"We get 18,000 applications a year, and we have money for only about 4,000," she said.

Ross, however, cried foul. "I see this action as an insult to the peer review system and to the artist as well as in-

tegrity of the Institute," he said. "I am both saddened and angered by it."

"We will do the show no matter what," Ross said.

Traditionally, NEA grants are recommended by a peer panel and referred to the National Council on the Arts, the agency's 26-member advisory board, but the chairman has the authority to approve or deny grants on his own.

Ross said he was told the council did review the application, but did not know how it ruled. He said he knew the peer panel was not asked to review the application again, as is customary.

Last week, a House compromise that would have allowed the NEA to award grants without content restrictions was derailed by the Senate Appropriations Committee, which reinstated an anti-obscenity pledge that artists must sign before they receive grant money.

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Gallery questions NEA exhibit grant rejection

decision," town council member Art Werner said. "Basically we've been interested in reducing traffic and lowering the usage of the airport."

Some citizens also oppose night use of the runways and have suggested various ways to reduce night traffic. But in the letter, Antle wrote that the best alternative would be to place a "stronger statement ... in the general airport di-

rectories, limiting normal airport use in the period of 12 midnight to 6 a.m."

But Bloom said the citizens group would continue to push to discourage use of the runways starting at 9 p.m. instead of midnight.

Citizen groups have suggested that turning off the runway lights would discourage night use of the airport. But Antle wrote that, because of the electrical system, if the runway lights are turned off, then all the lights must be extinguished. "Practically all airport users ... recommend against this practice," he wrote.

The University will continue to limit the use of the airport as usual. No jet

airplanes, gliders, balloons or ultra lights are allowed to land or take off from Horace Williams. Also, the airport does not provide any services after dark, and no practice landings or takeoffs are permitted.

Antle also promised in the letter that "no action will be initiated that would lead to greater use of the facility."

In the letter, Antle reported the use of the airport this year has declined since fiscal year 1989. In fiscal year 1990, gasoline sales were down 15,570 gallons and transient landings were down by 958. Preliminary statistics for 1991 show the numbers will be virtually unchanged this year from 1990.

Airport

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