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'Rubyfruit' author calls art 'political'

By ANN TRENEMAN
Of the Emerald

"Art is political, indeed it is . . . and don't let anyone ever tell you it ain't," Rita Mae Brown, feminist lesbian author, proclaimed to a crowd of over 800 last night in the EMU Ballroom.

Mixing humor with the deadly serious Brown gave the audience more than a few laughs as well as something to ponder during her one and a half hour talk covering everything from Anita Bryant, "the individual who likes fruit," to women in the military.

Brown, a ten year veteran of the women's movement who started "in the trenches, doin' work that doesn't get you on the cover of Time," is the author of the best-selling book *Rubyfruit Jungle*, a novel about childhood and coming out. The book is being made into a film to come out in fall of 1979.

"This is an important movie. It's goin' to help kill the stereotype of what gay people are," she said, adding that she waited four years to sell the book's rights in order to insure the film had a woman director.

She urged other women to use their skills to portray people as they really are. "You can't look to others for the answer. You must be the answer."

Brown enforced her point that knitting the various movements together was important by saying "I think we realize the struggle to alter the nation's course is all one movement, although most of us came into the movement the way it affected us most personally."

She added that cohesion in the women's movement is essential to be able to build a bridge to the other movements. She urged women to "fight differences out honestly instead by gossiping."

She stressed to women not to be afraid of their roots, "A lot of you out there are white and middle class and embarrassed as hell about it . . . If you don't tell us your struggle how can we ever know your struggle."

After commenting that she assumed that "everyone here's consciousness, if not raised, must be at least a little tilted," Brown went on to dispell wide myths about homosexuality.

- "The only people who are queer are the ones that don't love anybody, those are the ones I worry about."

- "All lesbians are sex maniacs . . . — this is not true, I know from deep, personal experience."

- "Nothing is unnatural — just untried."

- "Psychiatrists have never seen a happy homosexual. This is true. Happy people don't spend money to lie on a couch, they do it for free."

She denounced people who use their Christianity "as a vehicle to fanatically destroy the lives of others," saying that if there was one thing she learned as a Lutheran, it was tolerance and compassion.

Brown spoke on the "cat and dog" fight in Eugene, referring to Ballot Measure 51, which would invalidate the ordinance prohibiting sexual discrimination.

"There is something you can do besides vote No on Ballot Measure 51. Say you're gay and see what happens!" she said. "I know there are good reasons for not saying you're gay . . . the next time someone asks you if you're straight or gay, say you're bicentennial!"

When asked during the question and answer period about how fame has affected her Brown said she was "a cult figure" and that "the sad thing about our movement is that it's cruel. The trashing, backstabbing is unparalleled anywhere."

"But whatever comes my way, don't worry about me. Rita Mae can handle anything."

Brown said her soon-to-be-released 500 page new book, "Six in One," is about two sisters from 1905 to 1980 and "that's all I'm a goin' to tell you."

(See related stories Pages 6 and 7)



Rita Mae Browne

Photos by Adrienne Salingor

Symposium planning upsets minority groups

By CAROLYN BEAVER
Of the Emerald

A coalition of Third World women students lashed out against the University Women's Symposium in a press conference Monday, saying it was "aimed primarily to benefit the white middle-class women."

The group, with representatives from most of the University's minority student unions, made several allegations about the symposium's planning. In a written statement, they accused the Symposium's Planning Committee of hampering minority participation through inadequate "outreach" to include minority women and failing to notify them of meetings or changes in meetings.

The statement continued that Symposium Coordinator Donna Shepard, refused to give minority women a financial estimate of what they could spend on programs for the week-long event and would not answer calls from "her Eastern world sisters."

Shepard said she felt the main problem was one of communication and the people hurt now would be the participants.

"We sent notices to all student unions and tried to encourage their participation," she said.

"Getting messages and trying to get through to every group" was difficult, she continued. "We tried to get everyone called who had signed up at the first planning meeting."

The minority women put together a package of five workshops with a total budget of \$1,000, which was turned down, Shepard says, because the Symposium Committee had already determined money allocations by the time the program was turned in.

The minority women then proposed a multi-cultural potluck dinner. They were given a site off campus along with \$50, neither of which they felt was adequate. They withdrew from the symposium entirely.

Maria Mesa, of MEChA, a Chicano and Latin American student union, said "it's strictly a matter of one person who did not have any insight." She added that because of the third-world non-participation, a third world women's state conference had been planned for May.

In conjunction with the walkout, the Women's Resource and Referral Center is sponsoring a petition along with the Eugene Minorities Commission, Native American Student Union, the Gay People's Alliance, the Black Student Union and several other minority groups.

The petition emphasizes a hope that in the future symposiums, a specific commitment to dealing with racism in planning and throughout the symposium will be made.

The minority women's statement said they felt "very much a part of this University, and it is sad to see that those around us can be deprived of the richness of our culture and tradition by the short-sightedness of a few people."

Oliver laments, 'It's not enough'

By MARY BETH ALLEN
Of the Emerald

The founder of the Women's Symposium, former ASUO President Jan Oliver, appeared prior to Rita Mae Browne to report that she is "embarrassed and saddened" by this year's symposium but continues to believe in her brainchild.

Oliver, last year's ASUO leader, made the decision to speak at the second symposium even though third world University women have officially boycotted the convention in protest of what they feel is the symposium planner's insensitivity to third world women's issues.

"This thing came out of my fucking mind," said Oliver. "It came out of a black woman's mind." Of the relative lack

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