

Review of:

Melinda Camber Porter in Conversation with Joyce Carol Oates at Princeton University 1987

By Lolly K. Dandeneau, Bookstalkerblog.wordpress

Rating: 4 out of 5 stars

Full Text:

“Certainly, feminism in the past decades has been very idealistic and has definitely modified the culture, not as much and perhaps not as permanently as we would like, but it has had some alteration of consciousness.”

I snapped this up on Netgalley because Joyce Carol Oates writing is wonderful. She has a way of disturbing me, always provoking the reader to question their morality, and the world. This is an intelligent conversation, focusing on boxing (the sport) at the beginning, it's interesting to see Carol draw parallels between boxing and smoking. The violence of a sport, the violence we do to ourselves that doesn't even inspire a mention. I chewed on the topic of poverty, prostitution, the under-privileged and the violence that arises, such as boxing. Yet she doesn't claim to want to abolish it, is it even possible?

There is a section, where they are discussing celebrity and the weight of their opinions. in the sense that authors aren't really listened to here in America. Celebrity though, I wonder how much that has changed since this interview with different platforms now, outlets for their thoughts to be spread. I still don't imagine writer's opinions are followed as much as say... a singer or actor. I would hope we wouldn't vote a certain way now, based on any celebrity, sadly I am guessing some people will sway their opinion based on a celebrity, which is sad to me. Should we ever align our thoughts with a celebrity, Donald Duck or otherwise? (Read the interview) Lord I hope not.

“America has this long tradition of anti-intellectualism.” I wonder if it's changing now, as more praise is heaped upon our trailblazers, but it does seem people are suspicious still of intelligence. We weren't taught to 'think for ourselves', mostly to just memorize, regurgitate. I agree with Oates too about putting writers, or celebrities, in the spotlight of politics then as now, because it really is about dedicating to understanding politics, it's not just 'opinions' and it's a heavy burden to 'thrust the microphone' at them when their understanding isn't as strong as those in politics. How many have 'put their foot in their mouth', maybe meaning one thing and not seeing the bigger picture?

The topics discussed resonate today, interesting as this conversation took place in 1987. I am always curious about the writers whose work I devour, what they think about certain subjects, how it relates into the creation of their characters, what they're trying to say about the world through fiction. Not because I have to agree with them or disagree, simply I enjoy feasting on the food of their thoughts. Yes, I would purchase for a friend.”

By Lolly K. Dandeneau

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<https://bookstalkerblog.wordpress.com/2017/10/17/melinda-camber-porter-in-conversation-with-joyce-carol-oates-1987-princeton-university-issn-volume-1-number-6-melinda-camber-porter-archive-of-creative-works-by-melinda-camber-porter-and-joyce-carol/>



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At Princeton University 1987

Forward by: Cathy Suter, artist and writer

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See Melinda Camber Porter on YouTube...

Melinda Camber Porter interview with Joyce Carol Oates took place in 1987 at her Princeton University Office at the time of the publication of her book *On Boxing*. They noted it as a highly unusual topic for a female writer. Joyce Carol Oates grew up at an early age attending boxing matches with her father and thus the book.

Their conversations ranged from boxing to her writings, writers, and her writing process and styles. This title includes the differences noted in American and European writers. In 1987, Joyce Carol Oates notes the American infatuation with celebrities and names as examples Henry Ford, PT Barnum and Donald Trump!

In the Foreword Cathy Suter, writer and artist, notes the metaphor for the creative writing process and writer's block described by Joyce Carol Oates, when she compares it to, "mowing very wet, chunky grass with a hand mower, pushing through big patches of lawn and having to go over it again and again, until getting it just right."

Melinda Camber Porter passed away of ovarian cancer in 2008 and left a significant body of work in art, journalism, and literature. The Melinda Camber Porter Archive wishes to share these conversations with the public to ensure the continuation and expansion of the ideas expressed in her creative works.

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Melinda Camber Porter's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIfCaF2qpHh8uQgffSXLDDQ>