



Jeanne Randolph / *Why Stoics Box: Essays on Art in Society*, 2003
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Why Stoics Don't Riff The Prime of Ms. Jeanne Randolph

BY ANDREW JAMES PATERSON

Why are there neither titles nor words on this book's front cover? Partly because sexy subject-objects don't require explanation, and partly because stoics accept rather than explain.

The boy or manchild on the cover is wonderfully ageless. His chest is almost hairless, although his arms and legs aren't. His wonderfully proportioned underwear accommodates a bulge. The boy is ready and not nervous. He has his boots on, but he won't be making commands. He doesn't have his dukes up, in any heroic sense of that expression. He is calm and not necessarily before the storm.

Not only intellectuals consider boxing sick and voyeuristic to boot. Not only intellectuals and essentialists enjoyed *The Fight Club*. Boxing has always permitted camp—the shorts, muscles and testosterone supply the demand. And the manchild on the cover is not performing for the congregation, who are seated in the field while facing the side of the steeple. Boxing is religious for the performers as well as their devotees. Maybe Hemingway and his cousin Artaud were right after all. Boxers have united nature with Nature, while remaining hyper-aware of culture.

Jeanne Randolph is a different kind of boxer. She's not a stoic guy and she's a champion talker. On 10 February 2003, I witnessed Jeanne verbally improvise on a selection of personal slides so random they were curated by her cat.¹ She's a player, unlike

those who have accepted their fates. Are all boxers fatalists? Must boxing and other forms of intellectual one-upmanship culminate in knockouts?

Is Stoic Girl an oxymoron? Jeanne assembles a list of Barbie's Famous Women. They were uniformly silenced, but not silent by either choice or belief. These girls all knew they were taking chances. First they heard the music and then they faced it. And now we know how Joan of Arc felt.

It was Jeanne's son, name of Jones Randolph Miller, who convinced Mom that the picture on the front cover, as well as its doppelganger on the back, didn't need words. Good writers, by definition, appreciate pictures.

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Note

1. The Trampoline Hall Lecture Series, at the Cameron House, Toronto, 10 February 2003.

were closed, probably 1958. In terms of how a lecture, or how theory works its way into the productive artist's life, could it be that theory is like a snowman in bayou country?

I was sliding around on Netscape and I saw somebody's back and I'll tell you the metaphor because I think it has something to do with theory. Someone was injured. They had a big scar on their back and they went to Urban Primitive and had the diagram of an oak tree branded on to it. Oh, but not to hide the scar. Instead to commemorate the accident that created the scar. In cyberspace I saw the design of the branding that commemorated the accident that created the scar. What is theory, a burn that commemorates the accident that created the scar.

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