

**Film Appreciation**  
**Prof. Aysha Iqbal**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Science**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**

**Lecture - 20**

**Raging Bull**

Good morning, so today's class I am going to read you help you read and very seminal very important film that is Raging Bull by Martin Scorsese. The film starring Robert Nero and DuPage had screen play by Paul Schrader and Mardic Martin. Paul Schrader those of you who know Martin Scorsese work they would understand recall that Paul Schrader has also written the screen play for one of the greatest films of all time that is taxi driver again starring the Nero and directed by Martin Scorsese.

The film is also edited by Scorsese frequent collaborator Thelma Schoonmaker and they have been collaborators for a very long time is a partnership. It s a wonderful partnership that is still goes on. Now, one very, very unique feature of raging bull is that it is a boxing film, but it is not your usual boxing film which is most boxing films or sports films or dramas, which are imbued with this spirit of feel good fact with the feel good fact, but not this one.

So, unlike rocky raging bull is not feel good movie the one of the reasons could be that it is of course, based on Jake Lemortas biography auto biography. And a also the fact that is Scorsese himself was going through a very low face in his personal and professional life this was a time when one of his most ambitious films New York, New York is starring Roberti Nero and Liza min Eli had bombed very badly it dint receive either critical or commercial success and some of his personal relationship are also going.

And this was a period when he was not doing well at all, but his friend Roberti Nero urged him to read the book by Jakly Morta, who was a middle weight boxer also known as the brongs bull. So, the film was adapted from Lamardus Membawa raising bull mayo story a story it is a story of self destruction guilt and eventual self realization. I am going to basically addressed the technical aspects of this film, but I will also be talking about the theme of masculinity the gender theme as implicating the film.

The central themes of *Raging Bull* are guilt and redemption and the idea that the past can never be recovered unlike most stories about boxer heroes. For example, the fighter, which is a relatively new movie recent movie 2010 *Jake La Motta* is an unlikable unsympathetic hero, who was famously brutal towards his opponents in the ring and he was also extremely cruel towards his wife and his brother. Martin Scorsese confesses in his autobiography *Scorsese on Scorsese* some of few whom I who would be interested in our who might be interested in Scorsese works must read this book if you have already done so.

So, Scorsese honest Scorsese and his is I was fascinated by the self destructive side of *Jake La Motta's* character and his very basic emotions. So, these are the key, the key operative words self destructions and self realization and if you have voiced other films, where the *Nero* has collaborated with his Scorsese you may recall that this has been a constant theme guilt redemption self destruction. So, these are the constant motives and features of most films of Scorsese.

The Scorsese and *Dinero* have collaborated on staggering seven films or even more though some of the major films are *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *New York, New York*, *Raging Bull*, the king of comedy *Good Fellas*, *Keep Fear and Casino*, which was a 1995 film. Before we start with the film we have to also understand the period in which the film was made. Now, the 70's as you all know was a watershed period that witnessed and have a land of big ideas the excitement over films was tremendous.

And then, there were experiments by people like Andy Warhol in the world of art and Bob DeLeon Mick Jagger in the world of you know rock music and these artists also got in front as well as behind the camera. So, movies were big thing everyone wanted to be in the movies in that period along with Francis Ford Coppola and Woody Allen Scorsese the most significant name associated with the, so called Hollywood new wave cinema.

Though short length the new wave American new wave has given us films such as *Clockwork Orange* talking of the period after *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Easy Rider* there, which was the first new wave I am talking about the second new wave. So, this is the period which witness films that is *Clockwork Orange*, *Kluge's The Last Detail*, *Paper Moon*, *The Exorcist*, *American Graffiti*, *The Conversation*, *Natural*, *Carry On*, *Holent's Star Wars*.

So, this is a period when the directors were experimenting and more importantly were

allow to experiment with film genre film themes gender situations etcetera. And this was also a period where audiences were more receptive to such kinds of experimentation. Now, I have already told you about the theme of masculinity and *Raging Bull* can be read as an example of cinema, which unrealized the concept of the crises of masculinity as tip five through how men forced their images via physical strength endurance sexuality and relationships.

So, this is an important theme that Hollywood cinema specially, so masculinity was created in classic Hollywood to keep the male superior. Now, there is Jacques Lacan, who traces the mirror stage in the mirror face; that is first identify contact with an image in order to recognize our selves and we have to separate from our selves, similarly men looking at the movies screens identify with the hero feel superior. So, that is what very simplistically put how cine audience identify with the hero classic Hollywood about the classic case, where heroes were created, so that men in audience could relate them could identify them.

But, this is we are talking about a period when the entire month started getting punctured thus we have *Pat Lauro* yelling at his opponent I never got down you never got me down the fact is that he is just being extremely egomaniacal; that is what the idea is that; that is what a he or men like him feel that is what being a man is all about, but not really, so.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:28)

## Opening Credits

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXdvq1JZfWA>

I would like you to watch the opening credits scenes of raging bull as at this period in order to get a feel of the film. So, here is the you tube link please watch the film and come back. So, what did you watch you watched Jake Lamotta in the ring in slow motion boxing away he is also surrounding by this glaring media people likes and crowds yelling at him it could be perhaps his salad days, when he was you know the, so called raging bull he could he was alone in a ring and he could capture the attention of an adoring public they adoring media.

But, so therefore this kind of a scene at right at the beginning it works a kind of nostalgia about the past this is what the film is all about it is a longing look a days by god. Now, coming back to the key themes of masculinity and I am coating you from john pennon from his masculinities and culture, where he feel that masculinity is inform by a variety of factors such as historical location, where a men comes from. Culture and sub culture, so what kind of culture and sub culture he belongs to let us assume sub by sub culture, so the derockcin the eye or in the art scene, so that becomes a sub culture.

May Lennon also talks about class and occupations, so there is a working class masculinity also there is a white colored masculinity to, when religion and believes ethnicity. So, you have Aaron masculinity you have Chicano masculinity and people also do these is or research on masculinity of Indian males apnicity matters agents physic sexual orientation education and a Stetson life style, so these are the key features that

shape or inform masculinity.

Now, we were talking about the theme of masculinity in crises and the, which is like an exploder of the violence in have not in a masculinity that must wish sly repressed all signs of femininity. And or even of homo sexuality a man's inability to understand a women excepting in terms of the only two roles he knows how to assign a Madonna or Horne this is Madonna or is a binary that features very frequently in all films of martin Scorsese. If you are familiar with his very one of his you know very early film, fims that made him well recognize name in the world of cinema that was Who is that Knocking at my Door.

So, there again the hero is played by Harvey Keitel and he regards women along two terms me do or two binaries Madonna hor. Again thus a key element in his Scorsese taxi driver also and of course, in raging bull if you're not chaste and he keeps suspecting his wife of having affairs with various men. So, either you are a chaste women or a whore that is the idea. In raging bull sex and jealousies expressed through violence I will soon show you the scene.

Again it moans rather than celebrates the lots of masculinity it is the very the film has very ambiguous attitude towards violence the protagonist as is the case, which most Scorsese heroes his in articulate his artless he is rarely introspective and it expresses emotions mostly through aggression his lonely again like more is Scorsese male characters, which extremely limited image imagination and his dial on the mostly limited to expressions of desire fear hatred and jealousy.

Now, coming to his relationships Jake Lemottas two major relationships are with his brother manager as played by Joe Keshi and also with Vicky his second wife both relationships are haunted and eventually destroyed by Lamottas own self a low self esteem leading to bouts of depression violence grooving sense of desirous suspension in paranoid. One incident in the movie went his while describes one of the opponents as good looking and Lamotta punishes the young men by pounding his face and his he will never be beautiful again or rather you know one of the people.

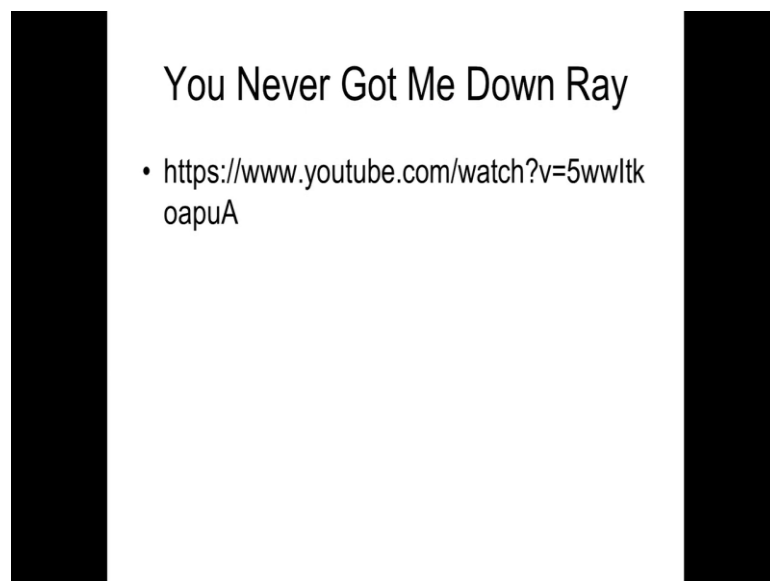
One of the members of the audience he attires these lines he will never be beautiful again and this is a punishment given to that unsuspecting man just, because his wife very casually says mentions that he is a good looking boy. LaMotte's final fight with sugar ray

Robinson, which actually took place in 1956 historically speaking. So, for the boxing scenes and here I would like to draw your attention to the innovation in terms of techniques.

So, the boxing scenes lights and shadows and sounds they all add hint of regret and meaninglessness to the events. The access of blood and the leap characters distorted mind is portrait through distortion of time and reality and his dissent in to dehumanization through animalistic sounds raging bull is credited for experimenting with sounds the lot and then, you should every fight has a different kind of a sound to it.

Lamotta self loathing is speak 20 takes terrible punishment pounding by his opponents causing many film critics to read Scorsese fascination with religious sacrifices and Christian rights.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:16)



Here is a scene the fight between sugar ray Robinson and Lamotta please watch this particular clipping it is called you never got me down ray and come back. So, you may observe that each fight scene in raging bull uses different kinds of sounds is Scorsese remembers frank worner, who did the sound in the film and use rifle shots and melon braking in order to play the sound punches.

Also notable was the use of silence, which became like scoring music and also observe how Scorsese uses boxing montages during the course of the film boxing scenes were

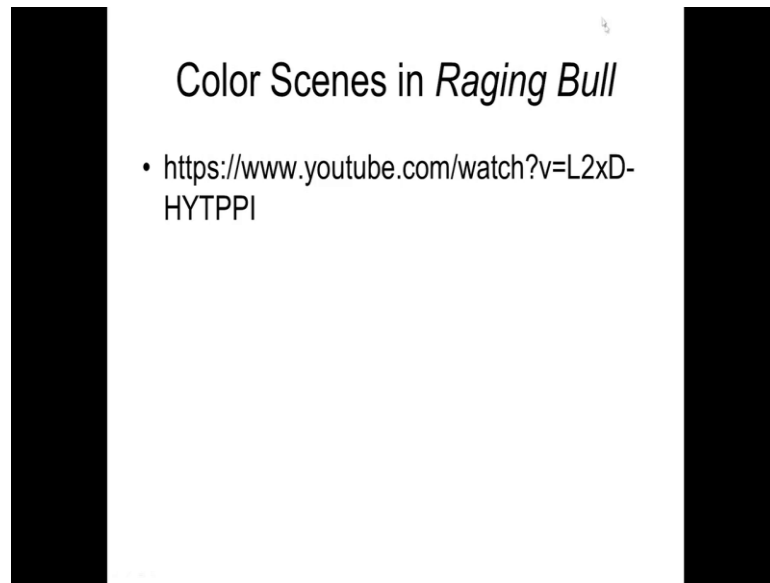
often shot in the film in slow motion to suggest heightened feeling and awareness during the fight between Lamotta and Sugar Ray Robinson and Detroit. Lamotta lost on technical issue the scene is film using expression is textile with boxing ring as a held as a Lamotta remembers it with smoke and fire.

Now, if you compare it with the opening shot where he is alone and a hero of the boxing ring and then, here when he loses on a technical issue and boxing ring is represented a portrait as a living hell with blood faces and out of frame shots. Again to create something extra ordinary Scorsese also had the boxing ring on the sets constructed twice the size of an actual ring and it was in smoke.

It may be worth noting that while watching the rushes of the film before the movie was finally, edited and readied director Michael Powell the director of classic such as *Red Shoes* and *Peeping Tom* he is also editor *Thelma & Louise* makers husband he commented that these red clause bother way. So, therefore it was decided that the film should be shorten black and white. Now, the films black and white cinematography is by Michael Chapman and the film has earned a lot of applause for his cinematography.

One reason to resort to this was a technical reason, because color prints fade out fast and also the fact that black and white cinematography also help to highlight the theme of the film, which is nostalgia and regret and desire to bring back the past. So, black and white photography also help in toning down the images of blood and gold flashes of color provide most restful count a point to the black and white cinematography and indicate Jake's happier memories particularly in his home movie videos.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:24)



So, here is a clipping you may watch this particular same color scenes in raging bull and you will find how color is use just to evoke the home video kind of feeling in the film, we have been discussing when notions of heroes journey as given towards by Joseph Campbell in his hero with a thousand faces. So, again you can apply the same idea here as well. So, the film is a tragic tale of the fall of the hero from the world middle way champion to a comedian standup comedian in a small time club.

Now, in order to portrait this Dinero again to 7 kg to become or and embody that decline of low matter the film sees the peak of Dinoros method acting with the physical metamorphoses, which has inspired letter day actor such as christen bal for example, in the machine is very lost incurred well amount of weight, talking about iconography of the movie the scene that frames the film is evening with Jake Lamotta, where Lamotta resides bits of Shakespeare and then, civilians.

Now, both de Nero and as Scorsese decided to use this speech from on the water print I could have been contender I could have been somebody as example of new Hollywood's retrospective impulse, which is a part of Hollywood's iconography. So, watch that scene also I could have been the contend from raging bull the film surprisingly open to mix reviews and was not an immediate box office success though it want two academy or what is for the best actor and best editing.

However, the film today is regarded as one of the greatest films ever made at some level

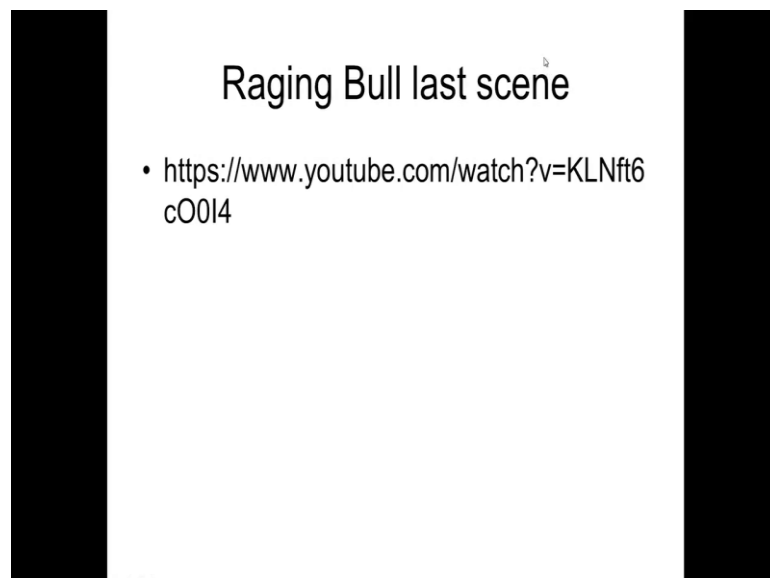


it is also a portrait of tragedy of the American dream to an Italian immigrant family the American dream offers promises of success and power and it often located in crime and corruption. Lamotta appears as a victim hero caught between the two forces a true product of his environment Lamottas down fall or loss of family and loss of body loss of self esteem is a consequence of the pit falls of the dream that is what the film appears to tell us the film appear ends on a note of regret as Lamotta coats from the bible once I was blind now I can see.

As he seeks forgiveness from those he has hurt the oven aching theme is of reflective sadness as we get a glimpse of jakes ability gain an inside despite losing everything. One of the memorable lines his end Jake Lamotta says as you know my life was in drab though I would rather here you cheer when I delve into Shakespeare a horse a horse my kingdom for a horse. I have not had a winner in six months and though I am no earl ivy if he fought sugar ray he would say thus the thing in the ring is the play.

So, give me a stage which is bull here can rage and though I can fight a I rather I would much rather reside that is entertainment and here I would like to I would like you to watch.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:01)



Raging Bull last scene

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLNft6c00I4>

The last scene from raging bull please note down the link.