References

[1] Schickel, Richard. "Brutal Attraction: The Making of Raging Bull." *Vanity Fair*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2012. <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/features/2010/03/raging-bull-201003>.

"Everyone recalls it as quite conventionally chronological: boyhood, adolescence, triumphant and then defeated young manhood, and finally some sort of almost inarticulate redemption."

" In rewriting the script, De Niro and Scorsese wanted to boil the story down to raw emotions — ' to strip this story down to its primal elements, to reveal states of being, not states of mind. ' "

" The controlling idea was never to step back and explain anyone's behavior; it was to plunge the audience into it, to make us feel, viscerally, every blow Jake La Motta delivered or absorbed in the ring and outside of it. "

The addition of Joey La Motta, combined with the real life character of Pete Savage, allowed the audience to have that same visceral experience with another character closely related to Jake. However, Joey had none of the physique of his brother, and he dealt with the politics of the boxing arena. By giving the audience two characters that packed the same primal violent tendencies but had two differing jobs/duties, they managed to give illumination to the character of Jake La Motta. He has no excuse for being so overwhelmingly violent; Joey can accept his mistakes and forgive others, but Jake cannot, and he cannot use his violent stage persona as a reason. It is in his blood, it is part of who he is; it is his fatal flaw.

[2] La, Motta Jake., Joseph Carter, and Peter Savage. *Raging Bull: My Story*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print.

The book is a complete mess of stories from Jake's life, complete with disorganization and unlabeled chapters. The writing is stream-of-consciousness style, which leads to many long asides and explanations for Jake's actions. Many times, the explanations are extraneous and add nothing to the story being told. On page 25, after robbing a bank, Pete and Jake get into a heated argument that showcases Pete's relationship with Jake in regards to cooling him down and keeping him out of trouble.

"I got to admit it was Pete who cooled it.
...
"Pete looked at me and saw that I was beginning to hit the panic button, that I was on the edge of the seat with the gun in my hand waiting for them to come alongside. 'Take it easy,' Pete said. 'Take it easy, buddy, relax...'
I snarled at him, 'Nothing is going to screw up this deal, see, nothing, nothing!'
Pete grabbed my wrist with both hands, pointing the gun down at the floor, and said 'Let go you maniac, let go!'
All of a sudden the sound of the siren began to fade and we relaxed.
...
Suddenly he asked me, 'You ever even shot a gun?'
I shook my head, feeling silly."

However, in the final script, Joey serves to add onto Jake's violent behavior with his own aggressive demeanor. There is also a section on pages 152-3, where Jake and Joey argue about the bet on the Janiro fight. They exchange long paragraphs of dialogue with each other about the logistics and advantages of fighting Janiro with the 155 pound bet thrown on top.

"Joey was close to going out of his skull and screamed, 'Are you nuts? A hundred and fifty-five? What are you gonna do, cut off a leg? You must be outta your cotton-pickin' mind!'
...
'And in the first place, you're gonna blow fifteen thousand bucks! ... the least you could do would be to discuss it with me in advance. I'm your manager...and I'm also your brother.'
Well probably I should have told him. It's just that I was so used to doing things for myself that I didn't think of it.
...
'Okay,' I said to Joey. 'Okay, we'll see how it turns out.' "

[3] Boddy, Kasia. *Boxing: A Cultural History.* London: Reaktion, 2008. Print.

Boddy argues that *Raging Bull* is unique due to how little emphasis is placed on the victories and triumphs of Jake La Motta. In fact, it goes out of its way to place Jake in as terrible a light as could possible be placed onto him, and the result is a heart-wrenching display of a man who destroys everything he had going for him out of pride and jealousy.

" If Raging Bull (1980) were ever remade to follow the lines of a conventional naturalist plot, Jake La Motta's peak would be identified as the night he defeated Marcel Cerdan to become middleweight champion. This is certainly how La Motta himself describes it in his autobiography: 'There can't be a high any higher than being a world's champion,' he notes, before adding 'and – though I didn't recognize it then – I was on my way to my lowest low.' Scorsese's film pays very little attention to the highest high (and indeed has La Motta complain about his small hands and how he'll never be able to fight Joe Louis, 'the best there is'). The championship fight is over in minutes and the next scene jumps ahead a year to present an overweight La Motta at home, eating a hero sandwich as he tries to get the tv to work. No longer a compelling bodily spectacle on the screen but mere spectating body – the film suggests that it is inevitable to be one or the other – his distended stomach blocks the picture. All that is left of the hero is the sandwich. "

[4] Hayes, Kevin J. *Martin Scorsese's Raging Bull.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.

There are two passages from the book that jump out as being especially interesting. In the first, Hayes argues that by breaking expectations and making the supporting male one who shares the same characteristics as Jake rather than the opposite (as is the case with Pete in the first draft), the script gains credibility and is more able to define and flesh Jake out as a multidimensional character.

" Joey La Motta is another illuminating case. The boxer's brother is a long-standing character usually employed to express qualities in contrast to the boxer. ... Raging Bull combines two characters from the autobiography, Joey La Motta and Pete Savage, the boxer's close friend, into the more generic screen brother. Rather than illuminating the protagonist through opposition, Joey shares a perverse Italian-American machismo with Jake. Similar in personality

but less extreme than his brother, Joey La Motta emphasizes that their behavior is a product of a widespread ethos, not simply the malaise of a crazy boxer. When Joey finds Vickie at the Copacabana sharing drinks with Salvy, his furious attack on Salvy mirrors what Jake might have done. Later, when Jake storms over to Joey's home to assault his brother, the camera anticipates Jake's attack, showing Joey threatening to stab his child at the dinner table if the boy puts his hand on his plate one more time. The violence that constantly spills out of the boxing ring and into daily life gains credibility from Joey, who stands apart from the exceptional physicality embodied by the boxer. Raging Bull appeals to realism by resisting a melodramatic polarity between stock figures. Instead, it gains conviction by going against generic expectations." (44-5)

In the second passage, Hayes goes into detail about Jake's anger patterns and triggers. He notes that many of his domestic arguments run like clockwork, indicating they are the norm in his household and that he lives in a "perennially volatile mood" which can lead to flared tempers whenever he is not considered the dominant force. These tempers will often escalate into an outburst of physical violence followed, finally, by smiles and sweet behavior.

" Once Joey comes into the apartment, Jake loses interest in the fight, preferring his brother's company to Irma's. He makes short work of their dispute by grabbing Irma by the back of her hair and marching her toward, then just shoving her into, their bedroom. The net effect is his physical imposition of a disciplinarian's "Time Out" upon Irma, who knows from experience to close herself inside their bed-room doors, where she is still yelling and kicking objects in the room. Seemingly as an offhand remark, Jake shouts twice to Irma, "You break anything in there, I *swear I'll kill ya." We hear her muffled response, "Yeah, sure." Scorsese focuses our attention on a medium two shot of Jake and Joey at the table. To signal the beginning of their conversation, Scorsese initially has Jake turned away from Joey toward the bedroom. When Jake turns back to Joey, De Niro shows us his rare, very appealing smile. He jokes to Joey about Irma while laughing, "What's she doin?" to convey his mystification about the dust-up that, in his mind, Irma created. He closes the argument by saying to Irma, who is still inside the closed bedroom doors, "Come on, honey; let's not fight. Truce?" While Irma volubly grumbles from the bedroom, Jake is perfectly calm, ready to converse with Joey. This dispute establishes the pattern of Jake's domestic arguments that never changes, except in degree of violence, throughout the film. He begins or rather lives in a perennially volatile mood. In this state of angry explosion about to happen, Jake has a "hair trigger" temper that flares up at anyone who behaves toward him as if he were not "the boss."

As he loses his temper, he first interrogates his target according to his paranoid construction of reality. An imagined slight or lack of respect toward him elicits increasingly pointed, often maddeningly repeated questions to the object of his scrutiny, as in his repeated insistence that Irma overcooked his steak. When his questions are not met with the answers his agitated psyche needs, he explodes into physical violence. In contrast to the close-up photography of Jake's violence in the ring, Scorsese typically shoots Jake's domestic violence at a greater distance in relatively short takes. Nonetheless, La Motta's physical abuse toward those closest to him is a wrenching experience to witness. Here, Scorsese achieves a rhetorical affect upon the audience analogous to the bruising action represented within the film. Violence within and outside of the ring is relentlessly paced, a key factor in the film's exhausting effect upon audiences. Finally, it's a key element to Jake's rage pattern that, after his outbursts, De Niro as Jake is as sweet-tempered as he

ever gets. He either has no memory of the fight in which he just participated, as in this scene with Irma, or he is sincerely remorseful, pleading to patch relations up, as we see later with Vickie."

[5] Grindon, Leger. "Body and Soul: The Structure of Meaning in the Boxing Film Genre." *Cinema Journal* 35.4 (1996): 55-69. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Nov. 2012.

Grindon argues that, unlike other boxing films, *Raging Bull* focuses on the boxer's agony. By the movie's end, Jake has alienated everyone who has cared for and supported him, and he is left alone in prison to be released with no chance of redemption.

"Near the end of Raging Bull, Jake La Motta finds himself thrown into solitary confinement after resisting the police. Having alienated his family and friends, Jake is utterly alone, and he bemoans his bestial stupidity, finally pounding his head and his fists relentlessly against the unyielding concrete in despair. In both cases the boxer's suffering is portrayed when he apparently inflicts blows, but the punishment is directed against himself. The agony of the boxer, in contrast to the gangster's death, is a fundamental element. The reason for and purpose of suffering arise as central questions." (67)

[6] Grist, Leighton. "Masculinity, Violence, Resistance: A New Psychoanalytic Reading of Raging Bull." *Atlantis* 29.1 (2007): 11-27. JSTOR. Web. 12 Nov. 2012.

Grist argues that Joey is used to punish Jake in the kitchen scene, and that there is a large amount of homosexual undertone hidden in the movie. However, I disagree with both of these; Jake finds comfort in his brother, but he does not need to be disciplined by him for his violent behavior against his wives. In regards to homosexuality, both males are aggressive towards each other, which creates a disconnect between the two characters. There is, however, a large amount of homosexuality when observing Emmett Clary's draft of Raging Bull, then a working title.