

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Books, movies and plays about boxing are extremely rare. The reason for this is that boxing is a primordial, visual and brutal sport which communicates directly to the observer's viscera so the boxing ring is the best place to show it and, because it is so simple and straightforward in its purposes, any via attached to it that serves in any way as a frill is met by the fans with a resounding rejection.

Movies have attempted forays into boxing and the first *Rocky* met with success.

There was a play, *Golden Boy*, back in the thirties that was quite successful, and in 1970 there was *The Great White Hope* about the life of black champion Jack Johnson.

There were maybe two or three novels about boxing decades ago but they did so poorly they're hardly worth mentioning.

Yet, there are two to three hundred million boxing fans throughout the world, rising at a rate of 5% yearly, there are five different shows on television that feature boxing every week, there are events on pay-per-view and those involved in boxing are earning some fantastic money.

Currently, however, something new has happened. The mainstream population, that is, non-boxing fans, have suddenly gotten interested in boxing. Why? *Million Dollar Baby*, for one, *The Contender* series on NBC-TV for another, and the upcoming film with Academy Award Winner Russell Crowe about the life of heavyweight champion James Braddock.

Why are millions of non-boxing fans all over the world suddenly getting interested in a movie and a television series about boxing? Because neither of those is really about boxing. And neither was the first *Rocky*, neither was the play, *Golden Boy* or *The Great White Hope*. If all these are not about boxing, what are they about? They are about people we've gotten to care about in a story that interests us intensely.

And that is the characteristic *The KO Artist* shares with the first *Rocky*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *Golden Boy*, and *The Great White Hope*. It is about people we care about in a story that interests us intensely.

How will the people's interest in *The KO Artist* differ from their interest in the above movies, plays, and the television series? *The KO Artist* is a book. It is the first book since the short stories of Ernest Hemingway that uses boxing as a vehicle carrying a great story with fascinating characters.

Secondly, where all of the above delineated the struggles of characters to illustrate either triumph or tragedy for these particular characters, *The KO Artist* does all of that but then takes the giant step of showing very specifically how there can be triumph for the entire world, thus allowing readers to experience not only empathy for the characters they are reading about but hope for themselves personally and all of humanity.

Yet, the book remains first and foremost a mainstream entertainment. It is fun. It is thrilling, it is moving, it is surprising, and it is fun.