



More Than a Champion: The Style of Muhammad Ali

Jan Philipp Reemtsma

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From one of Europe's most prominent intellectuals: a brilliant, utterly original study of the boxing style of Muhammad Ali; of his rise, ascendancy, and fall as champion of the world; and of how Ali the man came to reflect many of our own deep, often disturbing, cultural patterns.

This virtuoso essay takes as its narrative framework the legendary Ali vs. Joe Frazier fight in Manila in 1975, which Jan Philipp Reemtsma follows in three-round sections. Intercut with these vivid and telling accounts of what actually is going on (as opposed to what merely appears to be) are much wider ranging sections exploring the choreography (it is not too grand a word) that Ali crafted for his greatest title bouts, how he created a style that became its own myth, how he then came to have to act that style in the ring, and its damaging consequences.

Reemtsma also provides portraits of Ali's opponents: Sonny Liston, George Foreman, Ken Norton, and, above all, Joe Frazier, the strongest "big puncher" of them all. He even produces a startling analysis of Sylvester Stallone's five Rocky movies to show how closely linked they are with the changing mythology of Ali, then opens up that myth so that we see how Ali the man and what he represents are connected with our own lives.

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