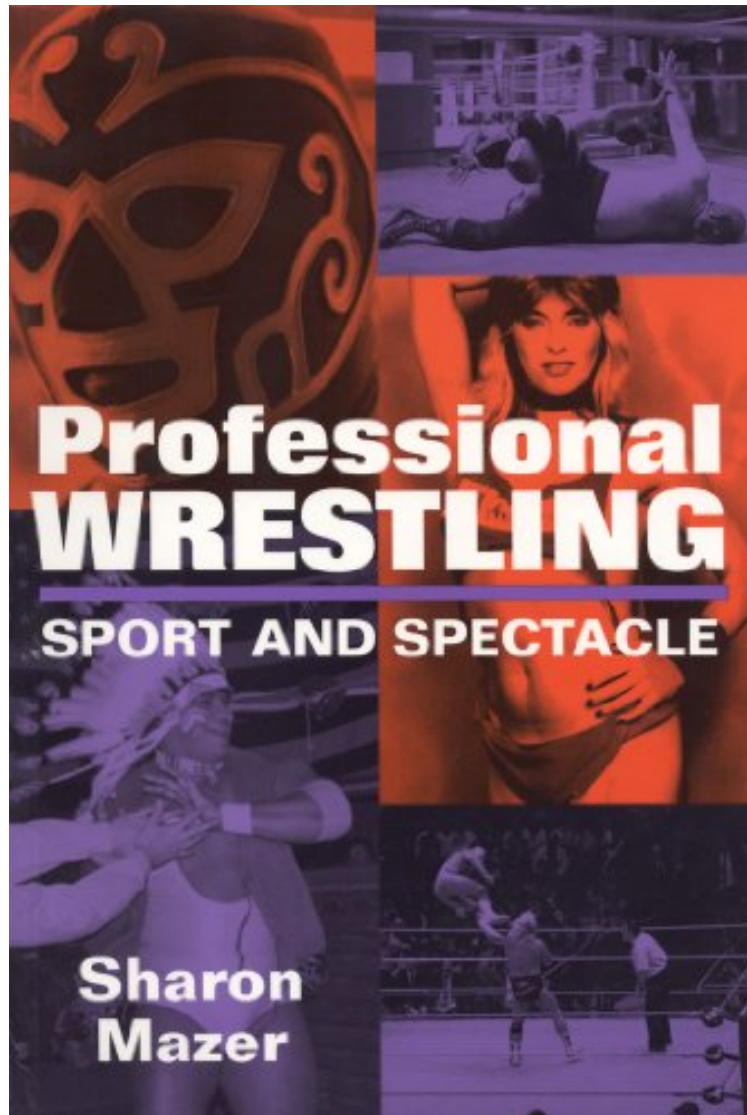


(Online library) Professional Wrestling: Sport and Spectacle (Performance Studies Series)

Professional Wrestling: Sport and Spectacle (Performance Studies Series)

Von Sharon Mazer

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Von Sharon Mazer : Professional Wrestling: Sport and Spectacle (Performance Studies Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Professional Wrestling: Sport and Spectacle (Performance Studies Series):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "Is wrestling fake?" - the point is that-it doesn't matter!Von Ein Kunde"Is it fake?" is the question we all ask about

wrestling but Sharon Mazer, in her book, "Professional Wrestling Sport and Spectacle," saves the big one for last. What she covers first are what I would not have supposed to be your typical wrestling questions. Comparing the sport to the universal mytheme of good versus evil, Mazer looks at wrestling from many different angles and in a style that is stunningly articulate. She plumbs with great clarity the deeper, often hidden, meanings of the sport, and yes, it is amazingly deep and machiavellian with power plays, machismo, homosexuality, homophobia and much much more. The book gives enjoyable insights into one training gym, but arguably could have profited from more (like the WCW school in Atlanta) to round out her research. Nevertheless the time spent with Johnny Rodz and his talent provides inside information on how the guys, and girls, are trained to make their athletics appear real, and the knowledge and execution these wannabes require to make the grade in pro-wrestling is very substantial indeed! At times the book gets wordy but still provided plenty of mat action including plenty of black and white photos to keep the interest up! Yes, the sport of wrestling is a morality play that has been acted out since men have battled each other. And it will continue to be so, even if the players aren't quite as identifiable, and Mazer's work helped me at least understand its universal appeal and why its completely completely beside the point that it's staged!

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Actively seeking to be 'marked out'

Von Ein Kunde

In wrestling, the lariat or clothesline is a move in which a man is whipped from a standing position via a running straight arm to the throat, propelling him violently to the mat. It was both disappointing and strangely reassuring to find out, from Sharon Mazer's new book, that one of the very first skills a rookie wrestler is taught is the ability to "fall backwards, hitting the mat so it resonates loudly with his fall" precisely to effect this and related wrestling moves. The violent illusion of the lariat is illustrative of what I think is one of Mazer's major points - namely that wrestling exchanges rely not only on the active co-operation of the wrestling opponent - to forward roll when he is suplexed, to crumple when he is hit, to stay down when he is booked to lose - but on the active complicity of the audience in the illusion of the real. As such, Mazer argues, wrestling is ultimately transgressive and subversive. That is, the wrestling performance reveals, by inference and extension, that society itself and its established protocols are a 'work' (a social construction) that rely for their power on our complicity. Mazer wonders, but does not completely answer, why a wrestling audience would wish to be reminded of its own complicity in subjection. Perhaps, her book suggests, our willing subscription to the illusion of the wrestling performance is, in a very small way, the tangible proof of our larger individual freedom - to believe in social constructions/'works' or not to believe.

I bought Mazer's book as part of my background research for a biography I'm writing of the pro-wrestler Tom Zenk. After some months I am still having considerable difficulty differentiating between Zenk the performer and Zenk the virtuous, masculine figure of his ring persona. I had been running the line of a high quality performer denied justice by the bookers but have now come to the realization, courtesy of Mazer's book, that in promoting this line I am possibly 'marking out' to an well-established wrestling storyline. Here is Mazer - "What fans come to recognize and interact with as they come inside the game is the play outside the play- first the signs of a hero [in my case Tom Zenk] or villain, then the inevitable failure of the representatives of authority in the ring to assure a fair fight and a just end, and finally that the true power lies not in the ring at all - but rather in the hands of the promoters whose purchase of a wrestler includes the right to dictate his success or failure. What is certain is not a Justice which is at last intelligible but an Injustice which is visible both in the dramaturgy of the performance and in the structure of the game itself, in the ongoing failure of authority to assert itself for the hero in the ring and in the success of the authority outside the ring, the promoter, as he dictates an outcome that negates the possibility of any real contest between men. It is not a fair fight, neither for the wrestlers in the ring nor for the wrestlers and the fans in relation to those in power." (Mazer, 1998: 153) But here's the dilemma that illustrates the point about wrestling that Mazer makes so articulately in her book- the probability that what I had taken to be real in the Tom Zenk story - the complete submission of the heroic ring figure to the power of the promoter - is itself both a 'work' (a fabrication) and a 'shoot' (the real thing). The point appears to be that it is both and it is neither. Once again, it is too simple to see a wrestler such as Zenk - or indeed any worker, inside the ring or out - as the heroic 'victim' of the unscrupulous authority of other men. The reader like me who thus begins the journey from 'mark' to 'smart' is not engaged in a transition from credulous outsider to cynical or ironic disbeliever. The knowledgeable wrestling fan or 'smark' - as the name suggests is both 'smart' to wrestling's storylines, yet still more completely a consciously credulous participant (or willingly complicit 'mark') in the wrestling performance - as Mazer notes, actively seeking to be 'marked out' - to be fooled into believing that the 'wrestler was injured for real, that the fan rushed the ring for real, that the promoters grip over the wrestlers and the matches will slip, that the fight will be more than play'. The wrestling arena is thus a highly ambiguous space - for the period of the play at least. As such, it is a place that has been sanctioned by society for the unpacking and repacking of the normalizing discourses of masculinity, class, hierarchy, race, morality, etc. Mazer's discussion of the sexual ambiguities of pro-wrestling is particularly good. The heterosexual male gazing at the muscled bodied of the ring performer, confounds the prohibitions which 'normally' limit such a display to women and thus actively violates the protocols of masculinity - only to reaffirm them minutes later with the cry of 'faggot'. The wrestlers themselves present near naked male bodies that, in performance, touch and embrace, make a show of domination and submission that "resemble nothing so much as cliches of sexual engagement". - yet the routine discourse of wrestling is firecelly heterosexual and heterosexist. In a

memorable phrase Mazer captures the ambiguity when she writes - "To some degree a professional wrestler is always in drag, always enacting a parody of masculinity at the same time that he epitomizes it" (1998; 100) Overall, this book - like the story of the lariat - is both revealing and strangely re-affirming. Wrestling has often been dismissed as the lower end of "popular culture" but Mazer's book contributes to its revaluation as something more complex and much more profound. If, ultimately, wrestling - as something visceral rather than rational - evades all attempts at a 'pin', nonetheless Mazer's effort - her 'work' so to speak - is both highly believable and really quite credible. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An intellectual look at pro wrestling Von Charles T. Dean III was surprised by the book. Most accounts of the business are very superficial and border on mark fanaticism. This woman, who had no other wrestling viewing experience before seeing Rick Rude on tv in 1987, jumps headlong into the sport and analyzes it academician-style. She does not condemn it, instead pointing out the intricacies and driving forces behind it. She does not focus on the negative and the scandals, just what makes the sport tick and why people watch it. She uses correct wrestling terminology like "mark" and "heat" and does not single out just WWF or WCW either. She refers often to the indies and has selected good pictures to boot. Moreover, it is not a survey of the most recent wrestling boom. More than once it dives back to the Gorgeous George era as well as the 1980s cartoon gimmick era. A well-done book and a good, unbiased effort all around. I was mighty impressed, and I am not usually by books written about pro wrestling these days. Quite a well-rounded work.

Kurzbeschreibung Professional wrestling is often seen as a suspect sport and marginal entertainment. It is also one of the most popular performance practices in the United States and around the world, drawing millions of spectators to live events and televised broadcasts. That its display of violence is at once simulated and actual is part of the appeal for the fans who debate performance choices with as much energy as they argue about their favorite wrestlers. Its ongoing scenarios and presentations of manly and not so-manly characters--from the flamboyantly feminine to the hypermasculine--simultaneously celebrate and critique, parody and affirm the American dream and the masculine ideal. This book looks at the world of professional wrestling both from the fan's-eye-view high in the stands and from the ringside in the wrestlers' gym. It begins with a look at the way in which performances are constructed and sold to spectators, both on a local level and in the "big leagues" of the WWF and the WCW. A close-up view of a group of wrestlers as they work out, get their faces pushed to the mat as part of their initiation into the fraternity of the ring, and the dream of stardom follows. The second half of the book explores professional wrestling's carnivalesque presentation of masculinities ranging from the cute to the brute, as well as the way in which the performances of women wrestlers almost inevitably enter into the realm of pornographic. Finally, it explores the question of the "real" and the "fake" as the fans themselves confront it. The game of wrestling may indeed be fixed, but no more so than the game of life. The real power may rest with the invisible money men, but at least in the arena, fans know the rules by which this particular game is played and are free to insist that the action meet their expectations. Sharon Mazer is coordinator of the drama program and lecturer in theatre studies at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand.

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Synopsis This close-up look at professional wrestlers, male and female, in training and in action, gives readers an intimate look at the workouts and the rites of passage which initiate rookies in the fraternity of the ring. It also surveys the continuing debate over what is real and what is fake.