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Televised Wrestling as Mediated Cultural Performance

Live has traditionally been privileged in studies of performance. While we fetishize the live performance as “real” or “truthful”, perhaps we need to explore the idea that our heavily mediatized culture functions as a site of contestation between the live and the mediated. In a society increasingly dominated and defined by the mass media, the concepts of the artificiality of recorded performance needs to be addressed. With televised wrestling on big screen TVs in High Definition and PPV performances at local cinema, boundaries are constantly being reconfigured between TV and film, between live and mediated. A live event, while offering possibilities for audience interaction and an aura of spectacle that cannot yet be created in a mediatized environment, the mediatized serves a social function as well. What is the role of the fan, time and space, technology, and notions of authenticity in looking at these questions?