

# The Theory of the Gimmick: Unlocking the Secrets of Wrestling's Most Enduring Phenomenon

Professional wrestling is a unique form of entertainment that has captivated audiences for over a century. At its core, wrestling is a physical competition, but it is also a highly theatrical spectacle. Wrestlers use a variety of techniques to create memorable characters and storylines that engage fans. One of the most important tools in a wrestler's arsenal is the gimmick.



## Theory of the Gimmick: Aesthetic Judgment and Capitalist Form by Sianne Ngai

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## What is a Gimmick?

A gimmick is a persona or character that a wrestler adopts to differentiate themselves from other performers. It can be based on anything from the wrestler's real life personality to a completely fictional character. Gimmicks can be funny, serious, over-the-top, or anything in between. The key is that they are memorable and create a connection with the audience.

## **The History of Gimmicks in Wrestling**

Gimmicks have been a part of wrestling since the very beginning. In the early days of the sport, wrestlers often used their real names and personalities. However, as wrestling became more popular, wrestlers began to adopt more elaborate gimmicks to stand out from the competition. Some of the most famous early gimmicks include The Great Gama, The Masked Marvel, and Gorgeous George.

In the 1980s and 1990s, wrestling experienced a boom in popularity thanks to the rise of Hulk Hogan and the World Wrestling Federation (WWF). During this time, gimmicks became even more important as the WWF created a number of larger-than-life characters that appealed to a wide range of fans. Some of the most iconic gimmicks of this era include Hulk Hogan, The Ultimate Warrior, and The Undertaker.

## **The Psychology of Gimmicks**

Gimmicks play an important role in the psychology of wrestling. They allow wrestlers to create characters that fans can identify with and root for. By adopting a gimmick, wrestlers can tap into the emotions of the audience and create a sense of connection. This connection is what makes wrestling so compelling and entertaining.

Gimmicks can also be used to create conflict and drama. By creating characters with different personalities and motivations, wrestlers can create storylines that keep fans invested in the action. The conflict between good and evil is a common theme in wrestling, and gimmicks allow wrestlers to explore this theme in a variety of ways.

## **The Sociology of Gimmicks**

Gimmicks also play a role in the sociology of wrestling. They can be used to reflect the values and beliefs of the society in which they are created. For example, the rise of patriotic gimmicks in the 1980s reflected the conservative values of the Reagan era. Similarly, the rise of female wrestlers in the 1990s reflected the growing feminist movement.

Gimmicks can also be used to challenge societal norms. For example, the character of Stone Cold Steve Austin was a rebellious anti-hero who defied authority. This character resonated with fans who were frustrated with the establishment.

## **The Future of Gimmicks**

Gimmicks will continue to play an important role in wrestling for years to come. They are an essential tool for wrestlers to create memorable characters and connect with fans. As wrestling continues to evolve, gimmicks will likely become even more elaborate and over-the-top. However, the core principles of gimmickry will remain the same: to create characters that fans can identify with and root for.

The theory of the gimmick is a fascinating insight into the world of professional wrestling. It explains how wrestlers use gimmicks to create memorable characters that connect with audiences. This article has explored the history, psychology, and sociology of gimmicks in wrestling. By understanding the theory of the gimmick, we can better appreciate the art and entertainment of professional wrestling.

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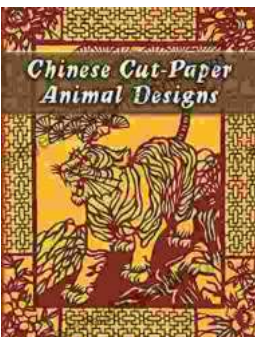


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