

# Technology, authenticity and live performance: Some observations

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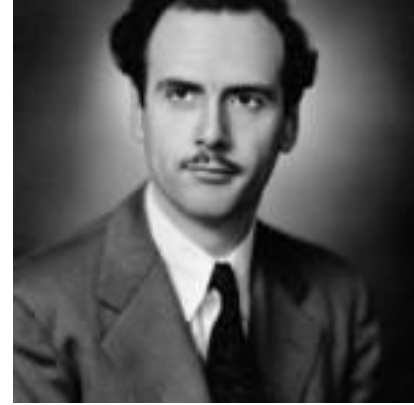
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# Resilience of live performance/live entertainment as industries

- Student numbers growing – a ‘new’ industry
- O2 Arena success
- Olympics ticket demand
- Culture/live entertainment increasingly central to urban development policy



# Marshall McLuhan



- "The medium is the message"
  - semantic/channel blurring
  - (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*
- hot vs. cold media (quote pg. 22-3)
- *Compelling media/communications analysis but lacking economic dimension (e.g. capital flows, impact on labour, firm behaviour) and predates post-structural debates*

# Technology Natives

- two anecdotes



...and an (amateur) Olympics clip



# Authenticity Question

- Rising audience demand for authenticity
- Pine and Gilmore (1999) - post industrial 'experience economy'
- Walter Benjamin (1932), "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
- Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) - disdain for 'cultural industry' (mass culture)
- Roland Barthes – subjectivity in 'reading' the 'text', w/ challenge to 'the author'

# Selling 'experiences'

- [http://www.argos.co.uk/static/Browse/ID72/14417427/c\\_1/1%7Ccategory\\_root%7CGifts%7C14417351/c\\_2/2%7Ccat\\_14417351%7CExperience+days+and+gifts%7C14417427.htm](http://www.argos.co.uk/static/Browse/ID72/14417427/c_1/1%7Ccategory_root%7CGifts%7C14417351/c_2/2%7Ccat_14417351%7CExperience+days+and+gifts%7C14417427.htm)



# Live performance: the economic dimension

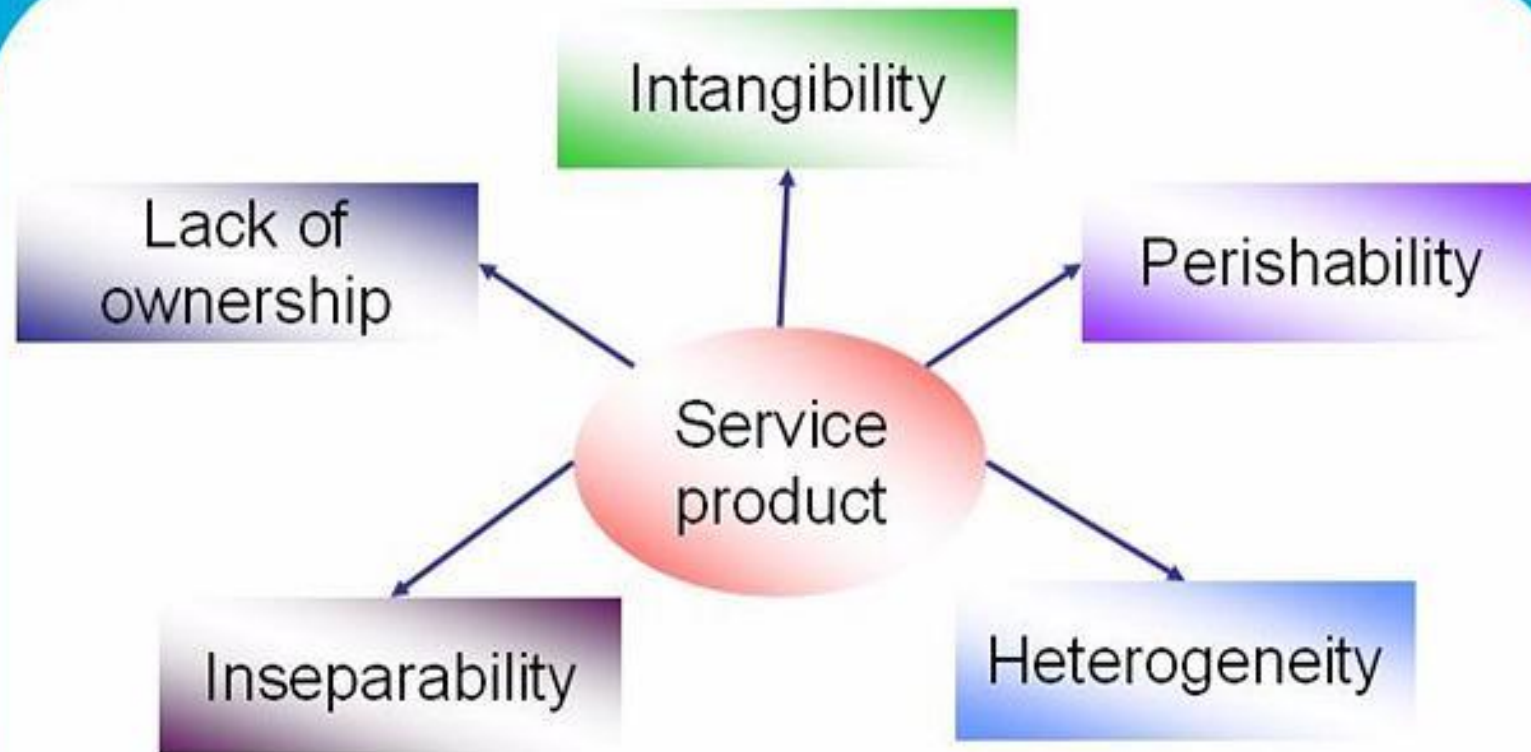
- Baumol and Bowen (1966), "Performing arts - the economic dilemma"
  - cost disease
  - productivity lag
- Rehearsal vs. Performance?







## Figure 22.2 Characteristics of Service Markets





**CAN HD TECHNOLOGY IN LIVE  
PERFORMANCE HELP TO RECONCILE  
THE DESIRE FOR AUTHENTICITY, THE  
SERVICE DIMENSION, AND THE COST  
DISEASE?**

# Optimistic view

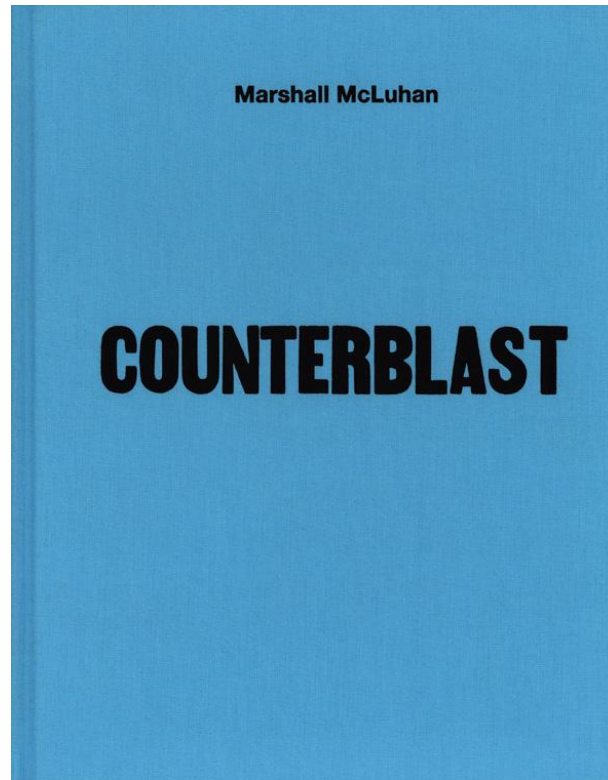
- democratization: wider access means breakdown of class barriers, challenge high vs. low art
- higher quality technology drives move from hot to cool medium
- rational strategic business response from the firm's point of view

# Pessimistic view

- over-mediation of experience
- the body reduced to an experiential consumption machine
- with content (nearly) free, the medium indeed has become the message – but is it art?

# Concluding quote

- McLuhan (1954) from COUNTERBLAST (pg. 208)





"Mess yourself up a little —  
the key to this business  
is authenticity."

*Thank you*

## Questions/Discussion

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