



The Virtual Marshall McLuhan

Donald Theall

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Marshall McLuhan was a satirist and prophetic poet, who explored subjects from the occult and the esoteric to everyday popular culture and the emerging digital revolution. Written in an accessible, engaging manner, "The Virtual Marshall McLuhan" sheds new light on McLuhan's goals and the background to his influential writings. Donald Theall explores and explains the significance of the emergence of McLuhan as an important figure in North America in the development of an understanding of culture, communication, and technology. He reveals important information about McLuhan and his relationships with his earliest collaborator and lifelong friend, anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, as well as with Theall himself, McLuhan's first doctoral student. McLuhan emerges as a complex human being at once attractive, witty, egotistic, and exasperating. Theall examines McLuhan's many roles - proponent of a poetic method; pop guru adopted by Tom Wolfe, Woody Allen and others; North American precursor of French theory (Baudrillard, Barthes, Derrida, Deleuze); artist; and shaman. Complex and intellectual, neither uncritical adulation nor demonization, "The Virtual Marshall McLuhan" does justice to a unique figure caught in a struggle between tradition and modernity, between faith and anarchy.



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