



Volume

109

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Journal 109

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Marshall McLuhan

Douglas Coupland's *Marshall McLuhan: You Know Nothing of My Work** (2010) was published by Atlas & Co. Marshall McLuhan's best known books include *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man** (Ginkgo Press, 1951), *The Gutenberg Galaxy** (University of Toronto Press, 1962), and *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man** (MIT Press, 1964). This latter title has one of my favorite passages addressing critics of the *content* of media who ignore the *form*: "Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the 'content' of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind. . . . The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without resistance." Sometime after McLuhan had achieved a degree of celebrity and the phrase "the medium is the message" became a much-quoted slogan in certain circles, McLuhan collaborated with graphic designer Quentin Fiore and editor Jerome Agel to create a book called *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects** (Random House, 1967), a volume that anticipates multimedia publishing, web pages, and the layout style of today's *Wired* magazine, while presenting (and demonstrating) the argument that different media *massage* the human sensorium in different ways, conveying a state of consciousness. McLuhan studied at Cambridge in the early 1930s, where he began a doctoral dissertation on the work of a sixteenth-century pamphleteer named Thomas Nashe. To evaluate the method behind Nashe's work, McLuhan conducted a study of the history of the classical trivium (grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric) from antiquity through the early modern period. The dissertation was submitted and approved in 1943 and has only recently been published as *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of His Time** (Ginkgo Press, 2006). While studying at Cambridge, McLuhan discovered the work of G. K. Chesterton, especially *Orthodoxy** (1908) and *What's Wrong with the World?** (1910), books which he later credited as being significant factors in his conversion to Christianity. In 1936, McLuhan's first published essay appeared in *Dalhousie Review* as an article entitled "G. K. Chesterton: A Practical Mystic." The essay demonstrates McLuhan's admiration of Chesterton's use of metaphor, paradox, and humor. This essay has been republished, along with other short pieces and letters that touch on religious themes, in *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion** (Ginkgo, 2005). A collection of twenty of McLuhan's most seminal essays—presented as a collection of book-

Disc 1

- 1 **Introduction**
- 2 **Douglas Coupland**, on the strange and wonderful life and thought of media guru Marshall McLuhan
- 3 **Charles Mathewes**, on lessons from Augustine on thinking about our political lives in theological terms
- 4 **William Cavanaugh**, on how the modern state is a unique kind of political entity, inviting a new kind of idolatry

Disc 2

- 1 **William Dyrness**, on the challenges of developing a positive theology of desire and the imagination
- 2 **Steven Guthrie**, on relating the Spirit's work in making us human to what happens in art and human creativity
- 3 **Susannah Clements**, on the changing view of evil evident in the evolution of vampires from Bram Stoker to Sookie Stackhouse

*An asterisk means that the book is in print; if you wish to purchase it from our friends at Splintered Light Books, call 1.800.979.3310.

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lets boxed in a slipcase—was issued by Ginkgo Press in 2005 as *Marshall McLuhan Unbound*. Pieces include "The Humanities in the Electronic Age," "Inside Blake and Hollywood," and "American Advertising."

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Political Theology

Charles Mathewes's *The Republic of Grace: Augustinian Thoughts for Dark Times** (2010) was published by Eerdmans. His other books include *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition** (Cambridge, 2007), *A Theology of Public Life** (Cambridge, 2008), and *Understanding Religious Ethics* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). William Cavanaugh's *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church** (2011) was published by Eerdmans. He is also the author of two earlier books discussed in *Journal* interviews: *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire** (Eerdmans, 2008) and *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict** (Oxford, 2009). His *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ** (1998) was published by Wiley-Blackwell, and his *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* was published in 2003 by T & T Clark. Cavanaugh was co-editor of *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology** (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).

Other Works Mentioned

William A. Dyrness's *Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life** (2010) was published by Eerdmans. Steven R. Guthrie's *Creator Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Art of Becoming Human** (2011) was published by Baker Academic. Susannah Clements's *The Vampire Defanged: How the Embodiment of Evil Became a Romantic Hero** (2011) was published by Brazos Press.

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