

Janine Marchessault*

This essay argues that Marshall McLuhan's most important ideas on the media are to be found in the early writings of the 1940s and 1950s. McLuhan's work did not provide policy makers with concrete recommendations, nor did he leave communication scholars with a theory of the media; but he developed new methodological 'probes' for thinking through the effects of a variety of media on environments and bodies in the newly mediated context of North America in the post-WWII period. His approach to media technology was aesthetic, interdisciplinary, transnational, phenomenological and driven by a commitment to pedagogy. His work was prophetic in terms of recognizing that electronic media would transform experiences of space and time, and the interrelation between global and local cultures.

Keywords: McLuhan, aesthetics, pedagogy, interdisciplinarity

* York University (Toronto, Canada)

jmarches@yorku.ca