

Culture as Mediatization: Edward T. Hall's Ecological Approach

► POR PAOLO GRANATA

paolo.granata@utoronto.ca McLuhan Centre for Culture & Technology, University of Toronto, Canada

Fecha de recepción: 19/9/2016

Fecha de aceptación: 22/10/2016

ABSTRACT

This article aims to present a review of Edward T. Hall's ethnographic and anthropological research to critically look at mediatization as a complex cultural process. This implies an explicit support of linguistic relativism and cultural materialism. Hall's belief in linguistic relativism led him to further research the communication processes by relying on a meditation that directly resulted from the anthropological research conducted by Sapir and Whorf in line with Boas' tradition. Hall realized that the principles defined in relation with the study of languages and interpersonal communication could be applied with equally good results to the study of human behavior in general or to the entirety of cultural facts and culture in general.

Moreover, he develops his concept of culture from a strictly ecological perspective or the idea that it results from the special connection between man and his environment. Hall's approach combines and mixes within a systemic view of culture both the cultural materialism advocated by Harris and White and the cognitivist tradition founded by Boas. This article shows the essence of Hall's ecological approach according to which culture is conceived as a whole: a dynamic system, a coherent process of mediatization within which all the elements are deeply connected and therefore co-dependent.

KEYWORDS: *Edward T. Hall, linguistic relativism, cultural materialism, intercultural communication, cultural ecology.*

RESUMEN

Este artículo pretende presentar una revisión de la investigación etnográfica y antropológica de Edward T. Hall con el propósito de considerar críticamente la mediatización como un proceso cultural complejo. Esto implica el soporte explícito del relativismo lingüístico y el materialismo cultural. La creencia de Hall en el relativismo lingüístico lo llevó a investigar más a fondo los procesos de comunicación sobre la base de un estudio que resultó directamente de la investigación antropológica conducida por Sapir y Whorf en línea con la tradición de Boas. Hall se dio cuenta de que los principios definidos en relación con el estudio de las lenguas y la comunicación interpersonal podrían aplicarse con resultados igualmente buenos al estudio del comportamiento humano en general o de la totalidad de los hechos culturales y de la cultura.

Además, desarrolla su concepto de cultura desde una perspectiva estrictamente ecológica o la idea de que resulta de la conexión especial entre el hombre y su entorno. El enfoque de Hall combina y mezcla dentro de una visión sistémica de la cultura tanto el materialismo cultural defendido por Harris y White, como la tradición cognitivista fundada por Boas. Este artículo muestra la esencia del enfoque ecológico de Hall, según el cual la cultura se concibe como un todo: un sistema dinámico, un proceso coherente de mediatización dentro del cual todos los elementos están profundamente conectados y, por tanto, resultan co-dependientes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Edward T. Hall, relativismo lingüístico, materialismo cultural, comunicación intercultural, ecología cultural.*

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical foundations of mediatization can be particularly recognized in relation to a vitally important issue, a vibrant testing ground constantly addressed by the twentieth century tradition that reveals a transversal, fascinating, and at the same time complex element in its very roots. This issue is culture –an age-old but everlasting key theme that, perhaps for its inherent critical value, has attracted the interest of countless academics and has stimulated philosophical as well as historical, economical and sociological research, and has ultimately become the main axis of a vast and fruitful disciplinary field– cultural anthropology. A key figure of intercultural communication's intellectual tradition, Edward T. Hall (1914-2009) can be related precisely with the meditation on the concept of culture that, since the very first definition of culture formulated by Tylor (1871), has nurtured a remarkable part of anthropological research.

Born in Webster Groves, a town near St. Louis, Missouri, Hall was working in the construction sector in his early 20s, he when he discovered the Hopi and Navajo native reservations in Arizona and he developed an interest for human

ethnic groups and their cultural diversity (Hall 1992). He studied cultural and social anthropology at the Columbia University, the main academic center for anthropology at the time. During WWII, Hall served with the US troops in Europe, Africa and the Philippines and experienced first-hand the key issue of ideological-cultural conflicts in the context of war. Between 1951 and 1955 –in the meantime he had started an academic career alongside key anthropology experts such as Ruth Benedict, Ralph Linton, Abram Kardiner, Clyde Kluckhohn– he continued his intense research activity with the US government as an anthropologist with the Foreign Service Institute, a State Department agency that managed diplomatic relationships and foreign affairs for postwar reconstruction in occupied territories (Hall, 1992; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; Rogers et al., 2002).

In the following years he continued to work as a researcher and teacher, and contributed to several high-profile academic institutions –in Vermont his colleague Erich Fromm advised him to study Freud–, with a remarkable and unceasing publishing activity of essays on cultural anthropology, linguistic, animal behavior and psycho-analysis. His intellectual development was particularly influenced by Franz Boas, a German academic who had studied physics and geography before moving to the US where he became an undisputed pioneer of anthropology and helped overturning the late nineteenth century evolutionist and ethnocentric approach. His research promoted an actual turning point for anthropology as it considered every culture in its own specificity and refused to establish a hierarchy based on evolutionary reasons. This new approach originated what is somewhat doubtfully considered as the so-called Boas school with a following that included key exponents of American cultural anthropology, linguistics and ethnographic research such as Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Benjamin Whorf. The Freudian psycho-analytic paradigm on one side, and the anthropological tradition established by Boas on the other inspired Hall to build a robust theoretical and methodological approach based on the deep connection between the two pillars of his thinking, culture and the communication processes, both contributing to the idea of intercultural communication, a study field he undisputedly pioneered (Winkin, 1981; Bennet, 1998; Rogers et al., 2002).

THE WORLDS OF RELATIVISM

Edward Hall's meditation on intercultural communication, developed within the activities of empirical research conducted at the Foreign Service Institute, and alongside the linguist George Trager –who had studied with Sapir and Whorf– and the anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell –who had studied with George Mead in Chicago–, starts with *The Silent Language* (Hall, 1959). The book, the first of his best known works –and an unexpected editorial success

translated into several languages that would also make him quite popular—highlights some meaningful features in Hall's thinking from which media ecology derived several insights. The title clearly evokes the hidden elements underlying interpersonal relationships, or the non verbal elements of human communication that Hall began to research in an original attempt based on the ethnographic work he had developed in the native reservations in Arizona that he would later name as *proxemics* (Hall, 1966), or the study of space management and the effect of distances on interpersonal communication, and complemented by the research on gestures developed by Birdwhistell (1952) about *kinesics*, later expanded to the study of the cultural views of time through the notion of *chronemics* (Hall, 1983). The relevance of the ethnographic and anthropological approach in the method Hall adopted to understand communication processes can be measured through the focus on culture constantly recognizable in the book. Its main subject is indeed the function of communication *within*, as well as *between* each different culture, starting from the pluralistic acknowledgment of their basic differences and individual peculiarity. This implies an explicit support of the paradigm of so-called *linguistic relativism*, a very productive current of North-American cultural anthropology that deeply influenced the twentieth century philosophical discourse, although it was cautiously received particularly by European criticism (Borowsky, 2000).

The methodological foundation of linguistic relativism, or the principle of linguistic relativity, is that language's function is not simply to describe the world and reality surrounding man. Language instead shapes or at least influences our way of thinking, or our way of perceiving reality and experiencing the world (Lyons, 1981). The canonical expression of this speculative approach is rooted in the meditation about the nature of languages—linguistic prospectivism—particularly in the work of the German philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt, and of Émile Durkheim about the categories of thought, and on Franz Boas' ethnographic research on American natives (Boas, 1911). Actually, a somewhat standard version of linguistic relativism may be traced back to the studies conducted by Edward Sapir, a student of Boas also of German origin, who worked between Canada and the US, in the universities of Yale and Chicago in close contact with the members of the Chicago School. In his classic text *Language* (Sapir, 1921), Sapir introduces an approach to the understanding of language that reflects both Freudian psycho-analytic influences and Boas' approach in the sense that, due to the connection between thinking and language, the latter is viewed in its psychic and individual dimension as well as in the collective dimension as “historical product” that effectively works as an instrument of psychological-cultural identification and as a leading factor of social reality. Sapir also sensed the revolutionary relevance of the still emerging remote communication technologies—starting with the radio—and actually anticipated some insights on contemporary neo-tribalism that would

be researched by the thinkers of the so called Toronto School a few years later. A research conducted later on by Sapir's best known student, Benjamin Lee Whorf, should be considered as equally relevant as it formalized the studies about the relationship between language and culture. Whorf was a chemical engineer by profession who, after meeting Sapir in Yale in 1928, decided to focus on a comparative study of Amerindian languages and cultures that effectively inaugurated the current of comparative linguistics. By developing the insights in Sapir's works, he would formalize the principle of linguistic relativity (Whorf, 1956), a theory now indissolubly tied to his name.

Although the studies conducted by Sapir and Whorf have been generally known since the 1950s as the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis", this definition has raised some doubts because they never actually authored a joint publication about it. In spite of this, the convergence of their research would attract a remarkable interest ever since, and not merely from anthropologists or linguists. The so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argues that every language shapes a particular perception of reality, and organizes the forms of experience as the interpenetration between subject and object of perception, between man and his environment. This approach also reflects the anti-positivist attitude that led to the birth of the pragmatist season in North-America, and promoted most insights of the so-called Boas School and the Chicago School, including the interactionist current and more in general the tradition of media ecology itself. Every language, based on its specific cultural domain, is viewed as an element with a certain degree of autonomy that can generate a particular form of experience, a certain vision of the world in its users. In other words, this approach argues that culture lives in and is reflected by language. In this regard, the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer proposed an even more radical interpretation: "Language speaks us, rather than we speak it" (Gadamer, 1960, p. 529). Ultimately, we may offer an equally radical synthesis - more than describing the world, language creates it. According to Whorf (1956), every language influences the thought and therefore human behavior, promotes observations and assessments of reality that are directly connected to and therefore determined by that linguistic system - hence, the definition of this approach as *linguistic determinism*. In other words, the languages define "both how the individuals that speak them conceptualize the reality that surrounds them and how they perceive" (Lyons, 1981, p. 312). But every language is the expression of a particular cultural configuration - it organizes reality according to specific categories in relation with different conceptual systems on a structural and functional level, hence the idea of relativism - therefore relative to the culture that generated them.

Hall's belief in linguistic relativism/determinism led him to further research the communication processes by relying on a meditation that directly resulted from the anthropological research conducted by Sapir and Whorf in

line with Boas' tradition. Hall realized that the principles defined in relation with the study of languages and interpersonal communication could be applied with equally good results to the study of human behavior in general, or to the entirety of cultural facts and culture in general. The relevance of this approach is concisely expressed as follows: "Culture is communication and communication is culture" (Hall, 1959, p. 243). This means that each culture in its specificity has a special formative power, the power to influence the communication experience, based precisely on those cultural behaviors, the invisible and "silent" elements in the non verbal and gestural forms of communication or in the management of space and distances that implicitly and almost unconsciously guide any kind of interaction. Obviously, Hall considers the expressive forms of communication as an unconditional reflection of the culture that generated them. By following Freud's argument, he thinks there is a cultural unconscious, a hidden code that operates simultaneously at different levels of conscience within that expression of the human symbolic system that is communication. In other words, culture and communication are inseparable and the various cultural behaviors are communication systems that human beings develop within various groups on a range that is remarkably wider than the limited one we used to attach to the phenomena of communication as such. In short, based on a strictly ecological perspective, culture may be viewed as a structured system of codes that establishes a symbolic space of human interaction, an environment within which communication occurs. And, as such, the environment influences and shapes it, and gives it a meaning that can always be referred to that environment. Each communication interaction uses culture as an instrument, a medium, a place. Therefore, according to Hall's approach, culture *is* a medium, an environment, a territory that systematically influences the dynamics of each communication interaction. In even clearer terms, the concept of culture as communication expressed by Hall means that it is culture, with its own linguistic code, that communicates; with itself and *for* itself, through the individuals that are part of it. All of these positions basically describe a kind of *ecology of communication*.

As soon as Hall pushed the meditations on linguistic determinism a little bit further, and therefore contemplated all the material or ideational factors that contribute to the specific features of a certain culture within a systemic and integrated logic, he most simply embraced an equally fruitful current in American anthropology, *cultural relativism*. The relativistic approach that can be recognized in Boas and in his followers may be indeed applied not just to the linguistic factor that, as we have seen, shapes every cultural domain by organizing the forms of experience. From a psycho-analytic perspective, this approach is also particularly useful to explain all the factors that shape human experience in the aspects of social, religious, ethical and aesthetical nature. The idea of culture that emerges from cultural relativism can guide human

behaviors, shape beliefs, assessments, categories of thought and therefore any aspect of individual life within that culture. In other words, we can recognize the connection between cultural and psychological processes that contribute to shape individual identity. In this regard, it is important to mention another theoretical current commonly known as “Culture and Personality School” that, although with several approaches and solutions, would embrace the remarkable influence of the idea of culture on the individual and explain the individual reactions to such influence through scientific psychology and psycho-analysis (Borowsky, 1994; Cuche, 1996). By simultaneously supporting the Boas paradigm and the anthropological results of the psycho-analytical approach, Hall would remain basically aligned to this current that was also advocated by some prominent figures in his academic training, including Benedict and in particular Linton and Kardiner.

MAN AND HIS EXTENSIONS

In a later work, *The Hidden Dimension* (1966), Hall's arguments about the communication aspects of cultural behaviors are fully extended well beyond the area of interpersonal and social interaction. By approaching the study of culture in its entirety, Hall provides some remarkably relevant theoretical coordinates that make anthropological knowledge particularly important for the intellectual tradition of media ecology. The first coordinate concerns the focus on space and time within the processes that shape every culture. Proxemics and chronemics –defined by Hall with an actual taxonomy (1966, p. 143; 1983, p. 13)– are two concepts that are not simply related to the relational and communication dynamics recognizable, although with remarkable differences, in every culture. Hall considers them as distinctive features, therefore as the reflection of a specific cultural configuration that can shape the forms of experience in the individuals that are part of that culture, thus providing every time a different and peculiar view of the world. Therefore, the ways of conceiving space and time play the role of cultural *a priori*, and represent the invisible background that shapes a culture and at the same time makes it different from all the others. The central role of space and time in Hall's view puts him in direct connection with the interpretive line proposed by Harold Innis (Flayhan, 2002) that recognizes the distinctive role played by these two elements in the forms of production, preservation and propagation of knowledge in the different ages of human culture in an historical, economical and political perspective.

The second theoretical coordinate that emerges from the research conducted by Hall on culture seems in line with both the interactionist approach proposed by the Chicago School and the psycho-analytical approach of the so-called culture and personality school that Hall relies on to develop his own

speculative system. Every symbolic system man lives in, every culture in its own way, promotes specific experience-shaping processes, and therefore contributes to the construction of constantly original perceptive universes. As a result, the structures of experience are shaped by culture. Hall writes: "Experience is something man projects on the outside world as he gains it in its culturally determined form" (Hall, 1959, p. 244). Based on this assessment, the entirety of culture deeply influences the use of the senses, or the perceptive interface through which man experiences the outside world. The entire aesthetical apparatus is shaped by culture as a kind of sensorial background, a perceptive world, the foundation of habits, models of behavior, ways of perceiving and conceptualizing reality, or the very forms of human experiences (Hall, 1966). Hall sees this as a kind of *sensory relativism*, as "people who grew in different cultures also live in different sensory worlds" (1966, p. 225). This argumentative approach somehow evokes the meditations developed by Walter Ong (1982), who articulated a well-defined periodization of the great human anthropological cycles—primary orality, literacy and secondary orality—precisely in the light of the requirements of adjusting and balancing human sensory components induced by the different communication forms cyclically emerging in a certain culture or historical age.

The third insight provided by Hall that would become an exceptionally relevant element within the debate on the nature of media and more in general within the vast continent of philosophy of technology is the important interpretive line of the so-called *prosthetic* paradigm, or the idea of considering the entirety of cultural artifacts as actual prostheses or extensions of human abilities. In this regard, Hall uses the word *extensions* that would become a prolific interpretive key in media studies (Flayhan, 2002). Hall writes: "The study of man is a study of his extensions" (1976, p. 38). Any human artifact—whether material or ideational, any technology, instrument, invention—should be considered as an extension of man; or an extension of his physical, psychic and sensory abilities. All of these extensions create a network of support through which man interacts with the world by modifying it, and shaping it based on his own needs and requirements. Hall explains:

Today man has developed extensions for practically everything he used to do with his body. (...) In fact, all man-made material things can be treated as extensions of what man once did with his body or some specialized part of his body (1959, p. 26).

Therefore, every extension plays a particular mediating role; or *mediates* the relationship between man and his environment. "The territory—Hall argues—is in every sense of the word an extension of the organism, which is marked by visual, vocal and olfactory signs. Man has created material extensions of territoriality as well as visible and invisible territorial markers" (Hall, 1966, p. 131).

The idea of culture that emerges from these statements is that of a primary, if not exclusive, feature of human condition. It is rooted in man's ability to interact with his environment by transforming it over time through the layering of the extensions he acquires and conveys socially. Therefore, Hall's view is in agreement with a wide current of cultural anthropology that considers culture as the sum of features of human condition socially rather than genetically or biologically inherited. This is not so distant from the canonical definition of culture proposed in 1871 by Edward B. Tylor, one of the pioneers of anthropology: "that complex whole (...) of capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1871, p. 1). In addition, Hall develops his concept of culture from a strictly ecological perspective, or the idea that it results from the special connection between man and his environment. He writes: "The relationship of man to his extensions is simply a continuation and a specialized form of the relationship of organisms in general to their environment" (Hall, 1966, p. 234). Therefore, culture is naturally connected with man's ability to extend himself in his environment by forming new and different environments that, as such, acquire the features of the culture that generated them. In other words: "As man developed culture he domesticated himself and in the process created a whole new series of worlds, each different from the other" (Hall, 1966, pp. 12 y 13). Finally, according to Hall, if on one side society extends itself through its cultural artifacts, ultimately conceived to transform the world, in order to shape it according to its needs and models of thought, on the other side, once these extensions have propagated around it, they act as environmental, sometimes invisible, forces, that establish a new environment in turn capable of stimulating new cultural attitudes and ways of approaching reality. The ultimate assumption is that "Man has created a new dimension, the cultural dimension" (Hall, 1966, p. 11), and in this new dimension he lives, acts, thinks, ultimately builds his own vision of the world. But this dimension –not coincidentally the word in question evokes a territorial, spatial, environmental analogy– is in many ways hidden, invisible, due to man's incomplete awareness of the cultural unconscious that, as explained by the anthropological tradition influenced by Freud, he is forced to deal with. It affects, influences and, in a more radical sense, imposes a certain perception of the world: "Man cannot divest himself of his own culture", as Hall argues (1966, p. 234). In other words, this is a feedback effect, a rebound, a retroactive process: man transforms his environment but at the same time is transformed by it, sometimes in an unconscious way.

Hall's vision, his interpretation of culture in light of the relationship between man, his extensions and his environment, would attract a remarkable interest in the Toronto research group led by Carpenter and McLuhan. The latter, in particular, would adopt the concept of extensions –in place of the terms *uttering* and *outering* he had formerly used– in part borrowed from Hall's works (McLuhan, 1962). As documented by a large correspondence, the two

men would actually establish an intellectual partnership, facilitated by Carpenter himself, in the late 1950s (Molinario et al., 1987; Rogers, 2000). This partnership, based on the shared advocacy of the concept of extensions –that McLuhan would actually also attribute to Buckminster Fuller (Rogers, 2000, p. 122)–, would lead him to describe the media precisely as “extensions of man”; a phrase he will use as the subtitle and argumentative background of his best known work, *Understanding Media* (McLuhan, 1964).

BEYOND MATERIALISM

Finally, a further consideration should be made about Hall's relationship with another important current of North-American cultural anthropology. His focus on the complex of cultural artifacts as an element that can reveal the primary features of a certain culture is such that his approach can be related to the current of *cultural materialism* mainly advocated by Marvin Harris. Harris also came from the intellectual environment of the Columbia University, and had long worked as an ethnographic researcher in the native colonies of Latin America. He then basically abandoned the Boas-influenced approach then mainly prevalent and, starting from a materialistic approach to history largely inspired by Marx and Engels, although lacking their dialectical character, he directed his survey towards the forms of material culture conceived as guiding elements of the processes of cultural transformation and evolution. Harris tried to combine two positions that at the time appeared to provide an alternative to the psycho-analytical paradigm influenced by Boas on one side, and to the Marxian paradigm on the other side (Harris, 1968, p. 881).

The first position Harris considers is the one expressed by Leslie White, who had studied with Thorstein Veblen and was a member of the Chicago School. White was the first to argue for the notion of technological determinism (Veblen, 1899) –he followed several insights proposed by Alfred Kroeber– and created the notion of “superorganic” (Kroeber, 1952). With *The Science of Culture* (White, 1949), White, who was a convinced advocate of cultural determinism and clearly opposed the most orthodox positions of the culture and personality school (Peace, 2004), recognized the technological factors, and in particular man's ability to produce and manage different forms of power –the so-called “White's law”, a fundamental law of cultural evolution (2004, p. 333)–, as mainly responsible for the cultural processes (Moore, 2012, p. 161). Given a cultural system conceived as the sum of a technological, a social and a philosophical-symbolic level, White attributes a fundamental and primary causal role to the technological level, and a subordinate function to the second and third levels. Therefore, the technological factor “determines the form of social systems, and technology and society together determine the content and orientation of philosophy” (White, 1949, p. 334). According to White, technology

is the key to understand the development and progress of culture. In this sense, he became the interpreter of a neo-evolutionist approach that tried to overcome the ethno-centrism inherent in the first generation of anthropologists who belonged to the more orthodox evolutionist tradition –Lewis Morgan in the United States and Edward Taylor in England (Kaplan and Manners, 1972)–, by recognizing in the technological apparatus the main cause of development of the social and philosophical factors in any cultural system.

The second speculative position integrated by Harris within cultural materialism is represented by Julian Steward, who had studied with Kroeber in Berkeley. Steward had amended the idea of cultural evolution by recognizing the importance of the environmental factors in the inherent process of change with which a certain culture evolves and develops (Kaplan & Manners, 1972, p. 75). The notion of *cultural ecology* thus emerges (Steward, 1955) –defined by Harris as a subset of cultural materialism (Harris, 1968, p. 886)– to convey the relationship of mutual adaptation between culture and environment, or “the interaction of physical, biological, and cultural features within a locale or a unit of territory” (Steward, 1955, p. 44). On one side, Steward tries to recognize the environment’s influence on cultural forms, on the other side he wants to understand how a certain culture ecologically adapts within a certain environment. Like Harris and White, in so doing he also recognizes that material and technological factors play a relevant role in cultural development, particularly if considered in relation with the inherent processes of environmental adaptation and structural change. As the interpreter of an essentially holistic and systemic view of culture according to which every aspect is co-dependent with the others, and the environmental factors are considered in relation with the development of the cultural models, Steward did not refrain from assigning an active role to the forms of material culture precisely because they are the main interface of mediation between human biological sphere and environmental sphere (Kaplan & Manners, 1972, p. 77). Harris’ materialist approach actually relies on the awareness that every cultural system results from a relationship of mutual interpenetration, and therefore of co-evolution, between man and his environment. The essence of cultural materialism, he writes “is that it directs attention to the interaction between behavior and environment as mediated by the human organism and its cultural apparatus” (p. 88). Basically, man adapts to his environment precisely through culture. Man’s ability to culturally adapt is precisely due to the acquisition of a complex material apparatus that considers both the natural and the historical-social environment.

Within this speculative frame, Edward Hall’s approach is in line with the notion of cultural ecology proposed by Steward and integrated in Harris’ materialism. He writes: “both man and his environment participate in molding each other” (Hall, 1966, p. 11). However, with this Hall explains that, according to a systemic logic, it is necessary to jointly consider all the expressive forms

of human culture –or all the “extensions of man” that can be related to the notion of material culture– and the complex system of components that instead remain mostly hidden and relate to the sphere of attitudes, values, categories of thought, of the sensory world, including the arts and literature (1966), that he considers as the actual keys to perception and represent the unconscious substrate of culture that impacts on creation of human experience and more in general of a vision of the world. Starting from the arguments in *Beyond Culture* (Hall, 1976), this cultural model –that describes an array of external elements visibly emerging in the features of a culture complemented by a wide array of equally influential elements deeply related to the former one but operating at a hidden, unconscious and subterranean level, within the human sphere– would be basically borrowed by the intercultural studies as the “iceberg theory” (Brake et al., 1995; Katan, 1999). Hall’s approach combines and mixes within a systemic view of culture both the material concept advocated by Harris and White and the cognitivist tradition founded by Boas. This is the essence of Hall’s ecological approach –the intellectual relevance of which perhaps has not been fully recognized yet (Rogers, 2000)– according to which culture is conceived as a whole, a dynamic system, a coherent process of mediatization within which all the elements are deeply connected and therefore co-dependent. In conclusion, Hall should be credited for revealing, based on the ethnographic method and on an accurate meditation on the forms of communication, the continuous, circular and retroactive relationship between man and his –material, cultural, symbolic– extensions that a wide intellectual tradition, based on Edward Hall’s approach, has defined as media ecology.

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IDENTIFICACIÓN DEL AUTOR:

Paolo Granata is Ph.D. by the Università di Bologna, Italy, and Magister by the Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italy. Teaches Cultural Heritage Management, and Media, Culture and Public Memory at the University of Bologna. His main research interests are: Aesthetics, Media Theory, Philosophy of Technology, Museum Communication, and Contemporary Arts. His main books are: *Arte in Rete* (2001), *Arte, estetica e nuovi media* (2009), *Mediabilia* (2012), *Ecologia dei media* (2015). Currently (2016-2017) he is Visiting Professor, Research Fellow, and Program Curator at the McLuhan Centre for Culture & Technology, Faculty of Information (iSchool), University of Toronto.

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