

## Extended cultures: Towards a discursive theory of hybrid space

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### Abstract

In the contemporary world, individuals and communities from different cultures communicate with their local and international partners through virtual space nearly as often as they speak across their desktops, thereby creating a hybrid communicative space. Discursive theories allow us to capture at least some of these relationships; we may understand the processes of openings and closings, or the transfer and reconfiguration of specific cultural patterns, even those occurring within the same culture. Critical discourse studies allow us to question the specificity of an interaction in a space with a differing ontological status. They reveal the deep structures of this discourse in spheres of reality and hybrid space; they may also inspire multidisciplinary research and the formulation of fundamental issues in the study of hybrid reality and help explicate transgressive features of the hybrid and intercultural spaces.

**Keywords:** hybrid space, intercultural communication, mobility of cultures, multiplication of space, cultural interactions, virtualization of cultures, discursive theory

### 1. Introduction

Technological, market and cultural globalization processes have shown themselves to be as differentiating as unifying, thus revealing cultural differences to an extent never before manifested, recognized, or experienced. More importantly, differences have been revealed among groups with a recognized cultural status, such as nations or ethnicities, though this issue also applies to religious, local and even environmental communities, which interact on a relatively small scale (Korporowicz, 2012a; Kapciak, Korporowicz & Tyszka, 1996). There are many factors that raise questions about the rules for their coexistence and cooperation, the boundaries of their dominance or submission, and, above all, the rules allowing them to maintain their own system of values – or ways of redefining

them. This problem also applies to the constantly growing scope of relationships among individuals, as well as entire groups of migrants from Asian countries, who have found a permanent place in a variety of industries, institutions and organizations – stimulating the creation of whole branches of science or management. Among these, for example, are “intercultural management” or “mediations in multicultural work environments”. In the era of the civilization of the media, these interactions are also transferred to virtual space, causing a radical expansion of the culture spectrum in each of them, as well as the sphere of mutual interactions. As a result, multiplying relationships give rise to numerous hybrid spaces, each composed of real and virtual elements and with dynamic configurations in their own content, metamorphosis and flow channels. However, the elements of this sphere are being transferred more and more freely among the outermost regions of the world, while engaging participants from culturally diverse communities. Managers from China, Japan or Korea communicate with their local and international partners, both across desktops, but also equally often through virtual spaces, creating a hybrid space of communication. Discursive theories allow us to capture at least some of these relationships and to understand the processes of both closing and opening, and the transfer and reconfiguration of specific cultural patterns, even within the same culture (Duszak & Fairclough, 2008). Critical discourse studies also allow us to:

- a) question the specificity of the interaction in the space with a different ontological status, in which meanings relevant to the objects of actual realities become separated from it, and begin to create their own world of discourse in a virtual space, or in intersecting hybrid environments,
- b) reveal the deep structures of this discourse, which are not readily perceived in everyday life, though they are manifested in many spheres of reality and hybrid spaces,
- c) inspire the search for a new methodology and conceptualization of the fundamental issues in the study of the hybrid reality,
- d) help to understand the transgressive and synergic elements in the process of cross-hybridization of intercultural space.

## **2. Macro-structural factors of creating hybrid space**

Although the relationships between people (as individuals and as communities) can have a highly subjective, contextual and changing character in hybrid reality, there are objective factors that give rise to these relationships. These factors include:

### **2.1 Mobility of cultures**

In addition to new production technologies, instrumentalisation of values and a remodelled social order, a technical civilization has created completely new forms of commerce, transport and information flow, thus bringing about unprecedented mobility in parts of cultural spaces, which are in turn embedded in their own specific framework. The configurations of these parts, which comprise spaces appropriate to them, are in a state of continual flux (Urry, 2009).

The mobility of cultures causes a clear contravention in their geographical, administrative or ethnic boundaries, especially in the area of products of a symbolic culture (Ting-Toomey, 1999). The conventional relationship among places, people and their creations has been freed and can now be constructed in other places; however, above all, it has been transferred and changed. The movement, not only within a space but *of* entire spaces, necessitates a change in the methods used to define them. In this way they are freed from their conventional place as a kind of anchor or rooting, and from conventional relationships with other components and their meanings. Space and culture are not defined by place but with respect to the configuration of their meanings: this is especially true when they become the subject of real human experiences. In this way, we may transfer the tradition of art schools by following its creators and audience, the created space of ethnic groups, and the dispersed space of recipients of all cultural content, educational programs and information. The mobility of cultural content concerns movement both in terms of physical space and a mental space; it may occur in the structure of cultural patterns, the digital network of modern information societies and the structure of the value systems associated with them (Paleczny, 2007). The cultural boundaries are, then, crossed differently, though that does not mean they cease to exist or that new ones are not being created. It is the ability to cross these boundaries, however, which is becoming more important than ever in the modern history of man and cultures (Dyczewski, 2001).

## 2.2 Deterritorialization of space

Deterritorialization is a direct consequence of the mobility of cultures and relies on breaking away from the place of its creation, existence and development. It initially causes an increase in the differentiation of cultural spaces and their multicomponentiality, because of their content and disparate nature. The symbolic space equipped with modern means of transfer can be reconstructed in multiple configurations. More importantly, a lot of cultural content may exist in virtual space. By its very nature, it is highly deterritorialized, and access to it is regulated by the rules of web access. Such a space crosses many barriers, which greatly affects the principles of formation of cultural identity. This is set in the realities of the modern world in terms of its content more than its territorial location. We can say that in the era of the deterritorialization of cultures, the “axis of crystallization” of one’s identity is more abstract and increasingly less “mechanical”, thoughtless or routine. There is no ready “mechanism” of assigning and giving identity through a stable place in a hierarchy and social structure. This raises the need for activation, not only of the ego and the creative aspects of the personality at an individual level, but also for new ways of searching for new forms of group bonds. This happens as a result of the exchange of experiences and configuration of identity in relation to other “monads” of cultures that exist in the extraterritorial universe of symbolic culture.

In the process of deterritorialization, the rights to participation in this universe do not disappear, but instead gain a new meaning. Due to their mobile and extraterritorial nature, these rights relate to complex beings, and not to goods, territories and possessions, because of cultural content (Diamandaki, 2003). This requires the ability to recognize these rights and to define our own approach to them, through the development of cultural competences. In the conditions of increased mobility, this recognition is of a very interactive nature. Out of necessity, comparisons, references, the reconfiguration of features of a specific model and the negotiation of meanings are all indispensable in the processes of cultural hybridization.

## 2.3 Multiplication of space

The development of the means of gathering, processing and transmission of information by the media have directly brought about unprecedented possibilities for duplication and reproduction of cultural content, which after separation

from their place of origin may be replicated in a multitude of distant geographic locations and in many distinct communities of “networking” civilizations. This phenomenon gives rise to another equally important process of continuous expansion, and even something of an explosion of space, which brings about the problem of filling and utilising new and expanding domains. The scale of multiplication is so vast that it does not escape extremely aggressive techniques of annexation, possessiveness and competitive fighting between warring sub-spaces.

The multiplication of cultural spaces has had the incidental – although logically inevitable – consequence of cultural saturation; certain types of spaces are overlapping and constantly “thickening” in terms of information. Cultural identity is in a state of decay, having been subjected to a massive attack by processes of transferring, uprooting and multiplication. The abilities of cultures to select, construct and design are being put to the test. Paradoxically, overproduction of content leads to cultural impoverishment. This is based on the previously-mentioned process of “sinking” and overloading integrative abilities: these include being forced to reconfigure frequently and re-evaluate cultural canons. Identity is in a state of technological siege, and needs support through the defence of human dignity and values, which are treated almost like a bio-component of technical civilization. On the other hand, the skills for connecting, moving and flowing between different types of spaces with a different ontological, social and mental status remain necessary. This situation creates a need to understand the discursive nature of the spaces of continuous flow and re-composition.

## **2.4 Convergences and interactions**

Overlapping in intensively-multiplied spaces has to lead to intense interactions among them. This happens both “horizontally” – in the space with a strong physical correlation, which has geographical origins of place – but also “vertically”, in the cultural, symbolic and virtual space, which exists in a quasi-physical manner that remains difficult to describe, measure or study. Interactions and the continuing need to include new elements in real and virtual space constitute hybrid space; it draws on resources from every available source, constantly expanding the scope of its “building blocks,” though not without symptoms of chaos and confusion, contradictions and exclusions (Hermans & Kempen, 2003). The penetration of such different spaces requires parallel participation

in the worlds which are barely touching, and in the worlds between which it is difficult to move. This ability will lead to key competences at present, and – probably even to a greater extent – in the future. Internal differentiation of cultures leads to their hybridization and the recognition of plurality of their potential. They may complement one another, but they do not have to mutually exclude each other.

To recognize the potential of the hybrid reality, the so-called *logo-making dynamisms of culture* are essential, i.e. the processes of making sense that are the essence of every encounter between cultures in their basic anthropological dimension (Korporowicz, 2011). This fundamental orientation – “towards something”, “towards goals” and “towards values” – through design, modelling and selection of self, communities and activities, is what determines the creative potential of the space of discourse, understanding and respect for the values of other cultures (Castells, 2008). These values are fundamental but also interactive competences, which create new potential for social reintegration and revitalization of old and new “vectors of sense”. The participants of these processes have the right to discover these vectors and use them to create their own ontological and cultural security, in many congruent, although different realities (Dyczewski, 2012).

## 2.5 Metamorphoses of space

The social space in the modern civilization of the media no longer has such precisely-set boundaries, as it is more extensive and dispersed, with inner areas of crystallization. The same applies to the symbolic space, and even more to virtual space. The transformation of these spaces, the passing of one into the other, and various forms of parallel existence are the phenomena of the modern world. We are experiencing a different kind of discourse in disparate spaces, in which building bridges is particularly important. New spaces are building signs of their individuality, and a specific language for inter-space communication. Therefore, the spaces, and specifically their individual types, have started to represent a new kind of culture. Chinese and Polish IT specialists will certainly understand each other better in a virtual space rather than on the basis of their ethnic cultures, which forms a new kind of communication code. This code may gain increasing importance, but only in the area of technology, and not in the axiology of communication. It is evidenced by serious problems in cultural

adaptation of Asian students in Europe, and also of European students in Asia; it is also similar to those faced by workers migrating between the two continents (Golka, 2008). Transitions from one space to another, after all, will not be indifferent to the existence of a company, the competences and organizational identity of its employees, the teams created by them, and their contact networks and relationships. Identifications which are generated at this time will provide building blocks for identities which are created, changed, and often reconfigured, as well as methods of communication associated with them (Kobierzycki, 2001). Moving between these two types of space – real and virtual – will cause volatility in cultural and personal references, but conversely, it is identity built through participation in new types of spaces that generates new communities for exchange in the environments of specific organizations. (Giddens, 2007).

## **2.6 Virtualization of hybrid space**

Penetrating the secrets of participation in the virtual space and other areas of convergence constitutes the ability to recognize the types of reality to which we refer during the communication process (van Dijk, 2006). Determining the significance of meanings has an impact on the nature and content of discourse between cultures, in a world subjected to virtualization. The reality of objects and values in the new space is not absolute: it is regulated by one's relationship to the medium. A human being immersed in the virtual world may have a traumatic experience when he encounters a power cut and the system logs out of the network while he is wearing glasses, headphones, and gloves filled with neurological sensors. Everything which was an object of his experience loses a specific form of existence; it does not lose realism, however, because the experience was a fact. Perhaps it is re-playable and repeatable, but not without the use of the media. The role of the latter has grown dramatically, and a question must be asked as to the limits of long-term dependency. In such a situation, the reality of human experience would depend on the effectiveness of the flow of electromagnetic stimuli, without which this experience is not possible at all. The ontological security of culture and actual opportunities for dialogue are becoming a serious problem, and require absolute reference to fundamental human values – those which integrate the hybrid reality into the realities of the contemporary civilization of the media (Poster, 2006). Thus, virtualization of reality generates completely new forms of reality (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). However, this is a reality with a high level of relativity, which will require new

means for both its definition and protection. This leads one to questions about protecting reality itself, as well as protecting the people participating in it, so that a “flickering of meanings” is not transformed to a flickering of their identities and personalities, while taking advantage of the full potential of the hybrid experiment (Boellstorf, 2012).

## 2.7 Interaction as a revitalization

A glance at the interactive nature of hybrid space reveals its key feature, containing both threats and culture-creating opportunities. It is experienced by communities which reconstruct and revitalize cultural communities in specific areas of old or modern frontiers; it may affect the content and patterns of culture of a forgotten cultural heritage as much as members of the “network society.” These communities are detached from any territory; they exist in virtual reality in the form of internet communities. These communities restore or generate social activity (which has disappeared, for various reasons), and subsequently revitalize it as a result of communicative interactions. The communication becomes, in this situation, a stimulus for the regeneration of resources and the hidden potential of exchange, mutual learning, completion and enrichment (Korporowicz, 2012b). Such processes have always existed in multicultural regions with highly intercultural activity, and there are many indications that they will characterize an open space of virtual reality (Goban-Klas, 2005). A good example is the European Association of Taiwan Studies, which managed to create a community of researchers effectively communicating via a periodical published for this purpose, existing in virtual space. Its role as the forum for interaction, but also for integration, has been fulfilled very well. It also builds new forms of social bonds. At the same time, these bonds fulfil their trans-cultural functions, both within Europe and in relations with representatives of Taiwanese culture, who are spread throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> An example of an even more expanded system of mutual complementation of activities in the field of real and virtual reality is the cooperation of 53 countries in the ASEM Partners program (Asia-Europe Meeting), which has functioned since 1996. Its contemporary forms contain very complex systems of virtual interaction, without which its current updates would be impossible.

<sup>1</sup> [https://academia.edu/27406190/EATS\\_News\\_issue\\_8](https://academia.edu/27406190/EATS_News_issue_8)

(The ASEM process emphasising equal partnership, favouring the general process of dialogue and cooperation based on mutual respect and mutual benefit.)



Highlighting the importance of communication and the creation of entirely new types of interactive communities, the new communicative environment is becoming the “area” for the transfer of change and values; the virtual world facilitates processes of cultural interactions, and the hybrid nature of these created realities is becoming a norm in everyday life. A good example of such communities are contemporary Lemkos (Sobieraj, 2012). Every year, they organize a congress of members of their communities in their native area of southern Poland, but all the effort they put into preparations is done through communication in virtual space, which becomes a functional component of the hybrid reality, and of very serious interactive consequences. They simultaneously carry out the first and the second type of cultural and social revival, as described above. They consciously conceptualize and use their cultural rights through intensification of relations with the environment and neighbouring cultures; they also integrate and facilitate contacts between individuals, families and communities scattered throughout the world, using a well-organized community portal, i.e. a virtual communication space created for this purpose.

Reality and hybrid space, as clearly illustrated by the example of the Lemkos community, are not only a postulate but an actual environment and form of activity. In order to see and manifest the possibilities for development it entails, we should pay attention to the characteristics of the discourse it contains.

### **2.7.1 Interaction as a value**

Relationships which are created in hybrid space do not have a uniform and functionally-defined form. When these relationships are instrumental in nature, they convert all elements of the process to externally controlled “objects,” depriving them of elementary subjectivity; thus the entire discourse dynamic becomes social engineering, involving influence and impact. For these reasons, hybrid space is not able to revive any experience of development and to revitalize the content which requires incorporation into live and conscious actions. However, this is not the only face of its discursive character. An indication that the interaction may constitute not so much a “tool” but a value marked by autotelism in a communication process, represents an obligation in the era of intensifying globalization processes (Lusting & Koester, 2006).

### **2.7.2 The right and the need to respect the community of discourse in its identity and uniqueness**

A simple rule of identifying differences, for the creation of individual and community identity, is something more than preserving distinctness. It is not the sum of the differences that makes people recognizable in their identities, or creates the identity itself. It is created by the choice and the conscious design of a principle, which integrates and directs differentiation activities. The principle of integration defines the process of development in the structure of an individual's personality and the culture of a community, complementing the attribute of dignity. Only then do discursive processes form the actual content of the interaction within the sphere of encounters, and give them a recognizable sense. This allows a way of learning the values through the effort of recognizing them in intercultural exchanges (Golka, 2008). Effective implementation of this effort is not just building, but also rebuilding of communities of intercultural contact (Nikitorowicz, 2009). Both of these activities can support each other, accompany each other and create truly creative perspectives in both real and virtual spaces, as well as synergies between them. Despite many dangers stemming from the randomness of interactions in hybrid space and reality, it is still a chance for redefinition and revival of the social and cultural wealth that has been destroyed as a result of atomization and the functional reduction in many cultures and communities.

### **2.7.3 Respecting the principle of reciprocity and justice**

Discovering the principle of reciprocity is one of the fundamental values in the process of restoring culture-making functions to communication activities. Neither the impact of technology mentioned above nor transfer procedures can create what appropriate communication processes do – the *communicare* of “doing things together” – in response to the actions, thoughts and experiences of another individual. For many reasons, it is the principle of reciprocity that gives us the right to participate and generates a field of agency, and subjectivity – eliminating domination, subordination, and consequently the loss of the cultural presence of one of the participants. For these reasons, the attribute of reciprocity reveals the ethical dimension of the discourse that asks questions about responsibility, credibility and the intentions behind interaction. Interactive qualities of a discourse can, then, restore its most important values, weakened by the

instrumentality and routine of everyday situations. With respect to the ethics of discourse, we must ask a question about the actual goals of intercultural meetings or events. We do not need to be fully aware of them, while being subjected to social patterns and rituals, or conventions of communication “behaviour” with varying levels of external pressure. If we recognize that communication activities and discursive processes in themselves constitute an important type of reality, and not just its setting, addition, or functional supplement, then they truly comprise an important part of human reality.

#### **2.7.4 Intercultural relations as a process of development and learning**

The revitalization of relations in the discursive process arises from the opportunity for discovering, experiencing and enlarging understanding of the values of participants; this is generated by progressive interaction. Hybrid space abounds in ever-increasing innovations that enter into everyday life, but it also brings surprises in the form of new integrations of elements as it virtualizes the real world. It makes artefacts and objects of conceptual society – i.e. of a modern networking society – real. It makes actual and potential development available to anyone who becomes involved in the process. Although these possibilities are conditioned by many personal, social, technological, situational and contextual factors, they represent a real value which is worth seeking in personal and group relationships. It is hybrid space that represents existing and potential intercultural wealth, which can be used in a real-life situation and which can determine directions of cooperation, creativity or design of further actions (Jaskuła & Korporowicz, 2013). Hybrid space poses constant challenges, sometimes shocking in the degree of adaptation, re-evaluation and re-composition of old patterns of thinking and acting that they require. Europeans and a mass of “Westerners” are open to the spiritual values they have found and still find in traditional societies and cultures of Asia; Asian communities, which despite their colonial past and strong liberation movements, have been able to transpose typical western values to their own. Intercultural communication and the hybrid spaces which accompany it exist contrary to numerous conflicts and tensions in the relations of their already-established areas; they have enabled the discovery of points of exchange, sometimes even synergy, both in the instrumentally-oriented fields of technology, commerce and broadly-defined business, and in education, science and diplomacy. One can even put forward a claim that a revitalization and exploration of creative potentials, both inherent to the discursive process,

demand a multi-dimensional account of the functioning of hybrid space. What is needed is a multi-level integrated theory of discourse, which will manage to connect the phenomena in the interaction of cultures to reality, and capture the discursive processes in the virtual space, allowing an simple transition between them in a structure of a bounded, penetrating, ontologically and functionally-heterogenous nature.

### **3. Towards an integrated theory of hybrid space**

The creation of an integrated theory of space, especially hybrid space, which for many reasons will constitute the basis of an integrated theory of intercultural space, one must start with the identification of its fundamental components, which exist in the most “real” way, ending at the level of virtual space. The weight of the physical component of space disappears, in favour of the absolute domination of axiological-semiosis processes. A theory so constructed illustrates the growing complication of relations among space elements at each possible level, and between the levels, as well. Such a theory should satisfy diagnostic, explanatory, and heuristic functions. It should inspire adequate understanding and analysis of the contemporary hybrid space in the entirety of its various manifestations and transformations.

In order to gain at least an approximate insight into the manner of the existence of hybrid space, with its tendency to complicate internally along with its growing importance in the diffusion and interaction of cultures, we must separate several of its levels; within each of them there are three basic groups of attributes. These attributes relate to the different features of space. Accordingly, they only symbolically constitute analogical “ingredients” in an attempt to build a model. In the proposed theory they are interlinked, and this feature indicates a high degree of synergy and mutual inclusions, redefinitions and specific inclusions. We can speak of their autonomy only at the first level – out of at least three such levels – which has the classic features of physical space. One may say that the second level is superimposed on the first one, through attaching meanings and values to physical objects; by these means, a semiotic nature of space is created, supplemented by entirely symbolic creations. This level has exceptionally numerous stratifications with varying degrees of semiotisation and “dis-embodiment,” up to the third level, where they reach entirely symbolic

representation, technologically incorporated in virtual reality, capable of communication in a digital and roundabout manner.

In order to characterize these complementary and mutually defining attributes we must list three of their types:

#### A. Objects

At the elementary level, they have the character of ordinary physical objects, to which we attach useful meanings and which form material correlates of culture. The elements of geographical space are the specific objects of nature; the elements of urban space are specific building structures, streets and squares, which transform themselves into the social space through given meanings. They form a new level of semiotic space, having varying degrees of association with physical reality. The second level essentially separates itself from physical reality by creating abstract themes and contents of intellectual, artistic or religious culture, accumulated in the world of symbolic culture. The third level in an integrated theory of space, formed only by objects that are purely semiotic in nature, which have entered the world of virtual reality and function as signs and representations of physical reality. All these levels meet at many points of interaction, creating more or less coherent creations of hybrid reality. The latter is already developed to such an extent that it is able to create its own institutions, organizations, and communication systems, as well as strong types of social ties, and its own types of identity in its collective or individual subjects. Moving from the first level to the third one, we encounter, in fact, a continuum of different types of reality, which in their different components show a very different type of combination of physical and semiotic elements, as well as their particular variant – which is incorporated into reality, conventionally called virtual. In spite of its “disembodiment”, deterritorialization and departure from the linear conception of time, it frequently reassumes the social and physical forms of reality, thus creating countless forms of hybrid space.

#### B. Relationships

They make the inalienable attributes of space, defining ways of linking, impacting and infiltrating objects, channels and bridges of content flow. This is a particular fragment of the application of discourse theory in the analysis of hybrid space: types of interactions. In the case of space understood in its physical sense, there are distances which can be defined parametrically, but also relative positions, which gain many meanings at secondary levels, while creating and expressing a socially-assigned sense. In virtual space, relationships assume, in fact, only

an informative and symbolic meaning; they are systematically disembodied, transforming into the space of semiotic and an axiological, mental, emotional, cognitive and communicative nature. Most importantly, owing to the metamorphosis of relationships, they lead to changes in the ontological status of objects, which are frequently an artefact of relationships and do not exist outside them (Duszak, 2004). These include, for example, folk festivals, scientific conferences, sports events, or international pilgrimages; each has a common denominator which leads to the meeting of very diverse ethnic cultures, often supported by activities of the media. Accordingly, there are relationships between individuals, groups and cultures that create “meeting places” both in the material and social worlds, and often in the virtual world. This is also the way in which cross-cultural space is created. Hence, completely new objects are created, which are the result of these relationships (including internet communities); experience and content bring important substance to hybrid space.

### C. Range

The integrated theory of cultural and hybrid space should allow a multiple approach regarding the problem of “boundaries”, showing multiple variations and transformations, as well as areas of overlap, and even disappearance. In the case of virtual space, which is determined by the scope of a network, the problem of boundaries does not disappear, but changes in character. Aside from the technological dimension of the “boundary” of scope, there may be limits to the ability to use the network, i.e. varying informative and communicative competences, which in consequence define many other boundaries delineating effective access to information. The third group of the intercultural space attributes designates a real sense of participation through the opportunity to update its resources. These attributes in the form of a “range” or something like “field access”, but also changes to the nature of the relationships mentioned above.. Field access is also a range of communication and intercultural skills. The potential of what can be used, generated and made an object of cultural experience is in the “range” of our participation.

Just as it is difficult to describe the symbolic objects of space beyond the “grammar” of relationships and the type of interactions creating them, it is equally hard to describe the space attributes of the third group, in isolation from the other two. The range, which is an attribute of availability in hybrid space, is defined as the ability to understand meanings that are present in it, as well as its realistically achievable experiences. The attributes of “coverage

of space” or its “range”, determine – in addition to the physical parameters which characterize the relationship of physical objects in space – the skills of perception, decoding and living through the meaning of objects marked symbolically. Physical objects may be significant carriers of meanings – examples of this being monuments or the symbolically-marked space of sacred objects. These have permanently entered the space of symbolic culture and function more as meanings than the physical space objects. For these reasons, the transition from the physical to the purely symbolic space objects presents a challenge, but also the rationale for an integrated theory of hybrid space, due to the gradational and gradual nature of the process of “disembodiment” of space – understood in physical and parametrical terms. The third group of attributes of space, especially when generated at the level of semiosis, exhibits a very strong bond with the anthropological factor, rendering them impossible to describe, define and understand outside of human mental abilities. Human competences determine what types of space objects will be noticed and what relationships will be recognized, understood and used.

The discursive theory of communication and intercultural space can reveal dynamics of the formation of hybrid space, which is created in Asian-European relations, practically in all areas of life. In globalizing space of cultural and economic relations, it builds a new kind of reality, which needs to be taken into account when building a strategy for cooperation, and also in recognizing areas of tension and possible conflicts. The vitality of developmental potential, however, allows for effective identification of new forms of implementation and specific “bridges of hope” that are formed in hybrid space and its anthropological reflection. It is fully possible – a fact which was demonstrated by the massive participation of young people from Asian countries in the World Youth Days, which took place in July of 2016, in Cracow. The organization of this truly intercultural meeting involved many months of preparation in advance, using all the attributes of hybrid space in its most integrated model (Korporowicz, 2016). The workshops, prayer meetings and activities in the local communities which were undertaken by young people from all national groups participating in the WYD were discussed through intense contacts in virtual space, by means of the latest technological achievements. Owing to the realization of many teleconferences, preparation and sharing educational, organizational and religious materials became possible on a scale which certainly would not have been possible outside of the contemporary standards of functioning of information societies. Young people from the most remote countries in Asia were able to participate

on an equal footing in this space, joining in such diverse mutual activity, presence and cultural experience, while at the same time being part of a united community at this intercultural event.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Hybrid space in the reality of intensified processes of mobility, deterritorialization, developments in information and communication technologies, and the development of virtual space poses a great practical and theoretical challenge in the system of modern cultural studies. This may also support understanding of the dynamically changing relationships between Europe and Asia. This situation requires the creation of a new anthropology with a major component of intercultural discourse studies, which will assist the description and analysis of advanced forms of reciprocity and exchange, as well as those of collision, conflicts and destruction, which find old and new manifestations in these relations. Many disciplines will certainly take active part in the assessment and the description. Inadequate concepts, which used to treat culture and human being instrumentally must also be overcome, in attempts to find practical solutions to many emerging challenges. Certainly, the classic stereotype of the individualistic model of values held by members of European cultures and collectivist model of values held by members of Asian cultures needs redefining, as well. Many simplifications, and even misunderstandings, have accumulated around these divisions. Virtual space alters the types of social ties, and reduces direct pressure and control regarding the behaviour of individuals; many opportunities for individualized activities in reality emerge, while many new forms of surveillance, especially in the world of team activities, are also created. More and more frequently, the modern work culture requires continuous joining, interaction and complementation of activities, both in real and virtual realities, at the junction of many ethnic groups and cultures; these often occur in completely unique combinations, with their own characteristics. Hybrid reality may constitute a new factor of change and individualization of Asian mentality, leading to the socialization of Western cultures towards activities at a high level of synchronization, according to the requirements of collective communities. It is exactly this corporate personality, the result of pressure from work standards with a high level of subordination, which is accused of excessive conformity, destruction of creativity, and instrumental treatment of people, rendering them a functionary in organizations focused on effectiveness, efficiency



and rationality. In this sense, Asian cultures can build their own manner for using virtual reality, towards supporting traditional ways of socialization and even social control. It is interesting, however, that it is the Asian organizations that have become famous for many forms of innovative activities, using virtual reality in the modernization of contemporary organizational culture. Discourse analysis is one of ways to identify as-yet-unknown secrets of the process of increasing hybridization of cultures, including the personality, identity and consciousness of their participants. This reveals both the negative, but also stimulating properties that require reflexivity, advanced self-perception, innovative solutions and dialogicality in the treatment of various content and values which are the parts of cultural heritage and planned paths of development. The integrated theory of hybrid space may inspire a dynamic and relative perception of boundaries and competence of the individual fields of studies, arranging the interaction of contemporary studies of culture, without which understanding of the present and the future in the relations of Europe and Asia will not be possible. The interaction, exchange of values and mutual learning in new hybrid space of coexistence seems to be a modern form of building “bridges of hope”, for a better understanding, and toward real cooperation.

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