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## “PANTOMIMIC CULTURE” AND INTERDISCIPLINARY ASPECTS OF ITS THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

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The aim of the article is to identify the essence of the concept of “pantomimic culture” based on the analysis of the concepts of “culture” and “pantomime”.

Research methods. The main methodological principles of the research are scientific objectivity and systematic approaches in the use of complementary methods: theoretical (analysis of cultural, art history and historical literature), empirical and analytical (theoretical and art historical analysis of the phenomenon of “pantomime”). General culturological research methods, historical and analytical methods, epistemological principles of cognition of the essence of the concept of “pantomimic culture” were also used. Scientific novelty. Mutual integration of the development and transformation of the concepts of “culture” and “pantomime” has been analyzed in the context of the social and cultural space evolution. The conceptual and categorical apparatus of the research has been defined, in particular, the definition of the concept of “pantomimic culture” has been proposed. Conclusions. The social and communicative significance of pantomime as a cultural phenomenon is difficult to overestimate, since the pantomime act can be interpreted as an interpretation of national or cosmopolitan culture codes, a social and cultural message, an eloquent action of self-expression, a form of intercultural communication, etc. The pantomime culture is positioned as an interdisciplinary concept, the essential basis of which is the triad: man – culture – gesture that allowed us to define it as a cultural and anthropological concept; the universal language of culture that is characterized by a special sign system and uses various artistic signs (icons, indicators and symbols), endowed with certain properties; a unique means of creative embodiment of emotional collisions between the man, art and society under the conditions of modern stage space.

*Keywords:* pantomime culture; pantomime; culture; concept definition.

### Introduction

Movement, gesture and eurhythmies are non-verbal means of communication that appeared much earlier than language and music, the elements of communication through which people communicate with each other and the world. In the social and cultural space, the human body performs certain symbolic functions that are vividly reflected in pantomime culture. The language of gestures and facial expressions plays an extremely important role in this process. To understand them and comprehend one must have knowledge of a particular code that is a part of this

type of culture, since the human body, as a part of the system of social relations, values, meanings, knowledge and symbolism, becomes only social in its content, character and meaning, but also acquires the status of a phenomenon.

At present, the concept of “pantomime culture” as a generalized whole, having its own composition, structure and functions, manifested in the behavior and looks of the man, belongs to cultural gestures performed with a communicative purpose in the absence of verbal means of communication. The pantomime culture has a diverse nature of social use, but even in performing arts, this notion is used to represent a wide range of different genres and functions of the elements of the art of eurhythmies, which testifies to the problem of terminology and determines the relevance of the study.

Analysis of research and publications testifies to the presence of solid works and scientific researches of cultural scientists, art and theater researchers devoted to the research of various aspects of pantomime culture. For example, P. Pernis and G. Virlios (“The Bridge of Irony: from the World of Experience to the Language Experience”, 2014), R. Zhyvychnyskyi, S. Vatsyevych and M. Siberskaia (“Definition of Pantomime for the Study of Language Evolution”, 2018), S. Brown and E. Mittermeier (“How the Pantomime Works: Significance for the Language Origin Theory”, 2019), and others.

Researchers specify the term “pantomime”, and the concept of “pantomime culture”, despite its widespread use, has still not received proper coverage.

### **The purpose of the article**

Having analyzed the concept of “culture” and “pantomime”, we aim to reveal their meaningful essence.

### **Presentation of the main material**

In the context of this study, the definition is positioned as an important part of scientific discourse that facilitates categorization (performing functions of generalization, identification, etc.) and captures the state of knowledge at some point in reality. As the classification in the scientific dimension varies according to the development of scientific knowledge, the definitions are also constantly changing. Any definition expresses a certain logical operation in the process of which the content of a concept is revealed, which contributes to the formulation of the difference criteria between the object being studied and the specific methods of its construction and functioning (Zarva, 2003, p. 15).

In the scientific sense, there are many interpretations of the notion of “culture”, which is explained by the complexity and multivariance of the problem, impossibility of bringing it to a clearly defined and established phenomenon.

The definition of culture, proposed by Yu. Volkov (2003, p. 47), as a system of values, life perceptions, patterns of behavior, norms, a set of methods and means of human activity, objectified in the object, material carriers and passed on to the generation to come, makes it possible to position it as artificially created by means of thinking, verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, as well as

symbolic meanings of the environment – the basis for interpreting humanity's own experience and direction of action.

A brief analysis of the transformational processes of understanding and interpreting the concept of “culture” in the historical retrospect shows that this term has become widespread in the sense of the human mind and soul formation in ancient Rome, thanks to the political person, the speaker and philosopher Cicero, who, according to S. Corneanu (Corneanu, 2011, p. 45), believed that the formation of mind through contact with various branches of philosophy and art allows a person to achieve spiritual balance and harmony with the universe. It should be noted that the association of culture with achievements in philosophy, literature, science and art was peculiar to the society in the Renaissance era.

Identification of culture with all the achievements of civilization becomes particularly widespread in the nineteenth century. It involves the division into material and immaterial culture, and eventually, the concept begins to be interpreted as a dynamic phenomenon created by people who live in a certain area at a certain time; a set of human knowledge, values, beliefs and symbols, under the influence of social interaction, and sometimes as a way of life.

Modern researchers define culture as values and norms of coexistence adopted by this society; everything created through human thoughts and actions; all works and achievements in the field of art, science and morals, functioning in the form of works of art, customs, views, beliefs, and common values – truth and freedom, justice and equality; a phenomenon that depends on the time and space in which it occurs, and therefore it is variable and unpredictable (Robertson, 1992, pp. 37–40).

According to D. Turner (2005), culture is a symbolic phenomenon that involves creation and transmission of the symbols that people use to communicate and express emotions.

The genesis of cultural processes we have considered includes development of pantomimes, which has always been a part of the immaterial culture, since it presents art, customs and cultural symbolism.

In history and theory of culture, art in general and pantomime, as an independent form of art in particular, are positioned as an element of human activity; a universal language of culture that functions in social time and social space. According to the definition of art as the universal language of human culture, the value of art pantomime is fixed in the artistic and figurative structure of the design, which makes it, as an art form, one of the most accessible for perception.

Pantomime is defined as a process (involving the entire body or only its parts) depicting objects and actions – transitive or non-transitive (the distinctive feature of transitive actions imitation is the fact that the gestures are performed with hands, with “imaginary objects”); it is characterized by iconic gestures (a type of a representative gesture that demonstrates a strong spatial similarity with the referent), carried out with a communicative purpose in the absence of a language (Brown et al., 2019). The essential features of pantomime that go beyond its ironicalness are improvisation, integrity and openness, and accordingly it has a great meaningful potential (Arbib, 2018, p.42).

Long-term representations of stimuli stored in semantic memory, prototypes, not examples used in simulation, peculiar categorical representations of actions or objects, which make a pantomime very symbolic, are usually used in it.

Some researchers position pantomime as a non-verbal, mimic and non-traditional means of communication, which occurs primarily in the viewer's channel through coordinated movements of the entire body, but which may include other semiotic perspectives, the most important non-verbal vocalization; an act of improvisational communication, which in general belongs to a potentially unlimited repertoire of events or sequential events that have been moved "here and now" (at that pantomime does not depend on semiotic conventions) (Żywiczyński, Waciewicz, Sibierska, 2018, pp. 308–309).

It should be noted that in ancient Greek culture the concept of "pantomime" (παντό-μιμος (pantomimos) – "everything" "portray") was applied to actors and theatrical art in general, and meant "the one who portrays everything", since it was believed that besides the skill of transformation in any character (gods, heroes, etc.), the actor must be an exponent of human passions and characters.

In theatrical studies, pantomime is generally positioned as a form of movements of the body, but according to J. Lecoq, this is a means of expression, rather than a conventionally prescribed theatrical form based on a "bodily representation", being a quiet image of real physical activity (Lecoq, 2006, p. 16). It should be noted that this approach is similar to the body pantomime of E. Decroux or the form of the physical theater of K. Stanislavskyi, in which the movements of the performer must naturally arise in the process of improvisation.

It should be noted that under such circumstances, pantomime, although understood as a dramatic form, is often defined simply as communication through gestures and movements, rather than words, based on visual and tactile channels of expression.

The specificity of pantomime culture is also reflected in the intensification of the study of some of its aspects by anthropologists, ethnologists and folklorists. For example, in the work "Folklore, Cultural Events and Popular Entertainment", edited by R. Bauman (1992), devoted to folk forms of entertainment, the term "mim" is mentioned along with folk tales and rituals and is present in practically every intracultural analysis of folklore of a certain group, from Asia and Africa to America. For example, in Africa, pantomime was often a way of combining the pre-colonial heritage of indigenous peoples in certain regions, usually in the form of an original ritual dance with a parody of colonial culture (Kerr, 1995, p. 59). D. Kerr gives descriptions of one of its most interesting forms – "militaristic pantomime": a kind of parody of a military parade (dancers dressed in semi-military clothing, marching in columns and reproducing the behavior of European colonizers) and dance "Chama", in which the participants copy local Arabic battle of swords (1995, p. 60). Note that these forms are similar to some pantomime performances in ancient Greece and ancient Rome.

It is worth noting that the term "pantomime" has an alternative etymology.

R. Broadbent (Broadbent, 1997, p. 6) states that "pantomime" comes from the combination of the name of the ancient Greek god Pan – the allegorical god of wildlife, the shepherd of Arcadia, whose cult has Arcadian origin, and the words "Mimos" ("mimos" gr.) – "imitator" and literally means "imitator of nature", since nature has been the source of art from ancient times. The scientist notes that the art of pantomime in one form or another (for example, as an element of the religious

dance of the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Egyptians) existed thousands of years ago, and primitive pantomime dances are still practiced among the population of the South Sea in the authentic form (e.g., martial dances, in which the pantomime form depicts scenes of chasing, fights, victories, ritual dances in which the habits of wild animals or birds are imitated, etc.), and even its development contributed to the human civilization evolution. In this case, “pantomime” (“imitator of nature”) means mimicry.

This definition corresponds to the concept of “expressive” pantomime, which emphasizes the connection between pantomime and imitation inherent in human nature. J. Lecoq (2006, p. 3) makes an analogy between pantomimic performance and yawning – “uncontrollable and agile”. He sees the origins of a person’s desire to imitate and parody also in cases of copying the gestures, poses or behaviors of other people with whom we interact socially. The connection between pantomime and mimicry is also observed by R. Broadbent, who uses the term “mimicry” in the work “The History of Pantomime”, arguing that this is “the pantomime of nature, each of us is endowed with to a degree like we are endowed with a dramatic instinct” (Broadbent, 1997, p. 14). In this case, the researcher points to the universal nature of pantomime, noting that the inclinations for the use of pantomime are innate. He refers to B. de St-Pierre, who noticed that “pantomime was the first language of the man, known and understood by all peoples, natural and expressive” (Broadbent, 1997, p. 14). However, J. Lecoq (2006, p. 3) rightly states that pantomime is not synonymous with mimicry – this is not just an imitation, but a way to “seize real”.

The well-known theorist of the theater A. Lust (Lust, 2000, p. 19–20) calls pantomime a “sign language”, whose primary function was to promote pre-verbal communication: “before the language invention, developed systems of gestures served not only for communication, but also for promoting the development of vocal sounds, and later they were included in the first forms of written language, for example, by the Egyptians, Aztecs and in the pictography of the Jews”.

In traditional semiotics, pantomime is understood as “non-verbal text” endowed with its own “grammar” (for example, the new grammar of physical pantomime by E. Decroux), and from the point of view of performance semiotics it is often viewed along with gestures and movements in choreography.

Pantomime, as the origin of the ritual theater, games, celebrations and ceremonies, is a peculiar way of reproducing the world with the help of artistic means (gesture, facial expressions and movement), formed in the traditional culture of every nation and connected, first of all, with concrete ideas and beliefs.

It’s worth mentioning that the leading theorists and practitioners of pantomime art of the XX–XXI centuries proposed various definitions of this phenomenon as a type of stage art, in which the idea and plot, the characters of actors, their actions, feelings, thoughts and relationships are expressed by eurhythmic means, that is, through movement, body position, gestures and facial expressions of the actors. At the heart of pantomime is an action that manifests itself in a series of consistent and meaningful actions of the actors.

Instead, V. Loskutov (1999, pp. 58–59) positions pantomime as “a form of eurhythmic expression, the main means of which are the movements and positions of the body of the individual and the subject, revealed through physical actions,

gestures and facial expressions, character, content and the idea of “silent” state of mind, which has a certain level of stress, and also emphasizes the connection of pantomime with choreography (which is manifested in the clarity of form, eurhythmics completeness) and drama (meaningfulness and effectiveness of the gesture, internal references).

E. Decroux defined pantomime as the meaning of a dramatic play method, in which the actor’s body is a plastic instrument, and not an illustration of psychological life, since the nature of dramatic development is based on the logic of sudden events, attractiveness and separation from the realistic principle of the “life span”.

M. Marso (Yering, Marso, 2008, pp. 68–69) noted that the modern art of pantomime is the art of identifying human beings with objects of the environment and, at the same time, the art of narratives of history without words by means of imagination that gives the viewer an impression of a dramatic situation, “a silent tragedy, a lyrical recitative, a moon of silence that soundlessly transmits the rhythm of time”.

Consequently, we can define a pantomime as a statement without words in which the action is represented by movements and not a single word is pronounced, but the performance artistic imagery effect on the viewer is extraordinary, since eurhythmics is the natural language of the man.

## Conclusions

Based on the above the pantomime culture is positioned by us as an interdisciplinary concept, the essential basis of which is the triad: man – culture – gesture that allowed us to define it as a cultural and anthropological concept; the universal language of culture that is characterized by a special sign system and uses various artistic signs (icons, indicators and symbols), endowed with certain properties; a unique means of creative embodiment of emotional collisions between the man, art and society under the conditions of modern stage space.

The social and communicative significance of pantomime as a cultural phenomenon is difficult to overestimate, since the pantomime act can be interpreted as an interpretation of national or cosmopolitan culture codes, a social and cultural message, an expressive action of self-expression, a form of intercultural communication, etc.

We believe that from the cultural point of view pantomime should be considered not only as an artistic phenomenon, but as a phenomenon of culture. This foregrounds the need of a thorough study of the problem of pantomime genesis as an ancient method of figurative reflection of reality associated with basic fundamental ways of bodily imagery and expression.

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## **«ПАНТОМІМІЧНА КУЛЬТУРА» ТА МІЖДИСЦИПЛІНАРНІ АСПЕКТИ ЇЇ ТЕОРЕТИЧНОГО ОСМИСЛЕННЯ**

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Мета статті. На основі аналізу понять «культура» та «пантоміма» виявити змістову сутність «пантомімічна культура». Методологія дослідження. Основними методологічними засадами дослідження є наукова об'єктивність і системність підходів у використанні взаємодоповнюючих методів: теоретичного (аналіз культурологічної, мистецтвознавчої, історичної літератури), емпірико-аналітичного (теоретично-мистецтвознавчий аналіз феномену «пантоміма»). Також використано загально культурологічні методи дослідження, історичний, аналітичний методи, епістемологічні принципи пізнання змістової сутності поняття «пантомімічна культура». Наукова новизна. Простежено взаємоінтеграцію розвитку та трансформацію понять «культура» та «пантоміма» в контексті еволюціонування соціокультурного простору; визначено поняттєво-категоріальний апарат дослідження, зокрема, запропоновано визначення поняття «пантомімічна культура». Висновки. Соціальне та комунікативне значення пантоміми як феномену культури важко переоцінити, оскільки акт пантоміми можна розглядати як інтерпретацію кодів національної або космополітичної культури, соціокультурне повідомлення, експресивну дію самовираження, форму міжкультурної комунікації та ін. Пантомімічна культура позиціонується як міждисциплінарне поняття, сутнісною основою якого є триада: людина – культура – жест, що дозволило визначити його як культурно-антропологічне; універсальна мова культури, що вирізняється особливою знаковою системою та використовує різноманітні художні знаки (іконічні, індикатори та символи), наділені певними властивостями; своєрідний засіб творчого втілення емоційних зіткнень між людиною, мистецтвом та суспільством в умовах сучасного сценічного простору.

*Ключові слова:* пантомімічна культура; пантоміма; культура; дефіціяція поняття.



## «ПАНТОМИМИЧЕСКАЯ КУЛЬТУРА» И МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ЕЕ ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКОГО ОСМЫСЛЕНИЯ

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Цель статьи. На основе анализа понятий «культура» и «пантомима» выявить содержательную сущность понятия «пантомимическая культура».

Методология исследования. Основными методологическими принципами исследования является научная объективность и системность подходов в использовании взаимодополняющих методов: теоретического (анализ культурологической, искусствоведческой, исторической литературы), эмпирико-аналитического (теоретико-искусствоведческий анализ феномена «пантомима»). Также использованы обще культурологические методы исследования, исторический, аналитический методы, эпистемологические принципы познания содержательной сущности понятия «пантомимических культура». Прослежена взаимоинтеграция развития и трансформации понятий «культура» и «пантомима» в контексте эволюционирования социокультурного пространства; определены понятийно-категориальный аппарат исследования, в частности, предложено определение понятия «пантомимическая культура». Научная новизна. Прослежено взаимоинтеграцию развития и трансформации понятий «культура» и «пантомима» в контексте эволюционирования социокультурного пространства; определены понятийно-категориальный аппарат исследования, в частности, предложено определение понятия «пантомимических культура». Выводы. Социальное и коммуникативное значение пантомимы как феномена культуры трудно переоценить, поскольку акт пантомимы можно рассматривать как интерпретацию кодов национальной или космополитической культуры, социокультурное сообщение, экспрессивное действие самовыражения, форму межкультурной коммуникации и др. Пантомимическая культура позиционируется как междисциплинарное понятие, сущностной основой которого выступает триада: человек – культура – жест, что позволило определить его как культурно-антропологическое; универсальный язык культуры, который отличается особой знаковой системой и использует разнообразные художественные знаки (иконичные, индикаторы и символы), наделенные определенными свойствами; своеобразное средство творческого воплощения эмоциональных столкновений между человеком, искусством и обществом в условиях современного сценического пространства.

*Ключевые слова:* пантомимическая культура; пантомима; культура; дефициция понятия.