

## АКТУАЛЬНІ ПИТАННЯ ЕСТЕТИКИ ТА ПОЕТИКИ ЛІТЕРАТУРНОГО ТВОРУ

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### TYOLOGY AND FUNCTIONS OF READING PERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

Читання як міждисциплінарний феномен на сьогодні перебуває у фокусі багатьох наук – літературознавства, філософії, культурології, психології тощо. Сучасні дослідники активно звертаються до вивчення процесу рецепції художнього тексту, способів його впливу на людину свідомість та підсвідомість, а також розглядають читання як процес, що формує простір для співтворчості читача й тексту. Водночас не лише науковці, а й самі літератори нерідко роблять спроби осмислення феномену читання у межах своїх творів. Як результат сучасна література налічує безліч текстів, у яких головними персонажами стають читачі, а сюжетною колізією – процес абсорбції їхньої свідомості та умовної реальності світом тексту, який вони читають.

У статті окреслено окремі аспекти перформативності літературного тексту, серед яких чільне місце посідає зображення у творах процесу читання як перформансу. Попри значний інтерес до проблеми перформативності в сучасному українському та світовому літературознавстві, за межами досліджень досі перебуває дитяча й підліткова література, у якій особливо запитувани та виразно функціують художні моделі читання. Це яскраво репрезентують тексти сучасних авторів Володимира Аренева, Галини Вдовиченко, Катерини Бабкіної, Наталії Ясіновської та ін. *Мета* статті – визначити та **схарактеризувати модуси репрезентації читання як перформансу в сучасній українській літературі для дітей та юнацтва**, а також виявити художню функцію сцен читання у творах. Поставлена мета зумовлює використання засад перформативної теорії, зокрема її літературознавчих аспектів, обґрунтованих у працях П. Ківі та П. Косонен, а також застосування порівняльно-типологічного *методу*, окремих положень рецептивної естетики та транзакційної теорії читання, що були адаптовані до аналізу внутрішньо текстових сцен читання задля розкриття образу уявних читача та його процесу читання.

У проаналізованих художніх творах читання як перформанс реалізовано у низці форматів – *читання-перформанс як сімейний ритуал, театралізоване читання, інтерпретаційне читання, сторітеллінг як перформанс*. У статті схарактеризовано зображення родинного ритуалу читання, який зберігає питомі характеристики подібних дійств: наявність актора, глядача, мізансцен, реквізитів і соціального впливу. Визначено, що перформативні аспекти читання виходять за межі усної декламації і включають елементи інсценізації та подекуди лялькового театру. Доведено, що зображення читання засвідчує здатність героїв до повного занурення у текст та творчої взаємодії з художнім матеріалом, підкреслює міцний зв'язок між поколіннями та збереження культурних традицій. У багатьох текстах для дітей та підлітків перфор-

манс читання виконує терапевтичну функцію, допомагаючи персонажам долати емоційні виклики та травматичні ситуації. Репрезентація читання як перформансу в літературі слугує стратегією популяризації самого акту читання, що є важливим завданням дитячої та підліткової літератури.

*Ключові слова:* сучасна українська література, українська література для дітей та юнацтва, перформанс, читання, книга, оповідь.

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The field of performance studies has experienced a significant expansion in recent scholarship, drawing attention to the connection between various spheres of life and such concepts as 'action,' 'acting,' 'aesthetic provocation,' and co-activity of an agent and a recipient. Increasingly this research delves into the diverse ways literary texts employ performative strategies. One notable contribution is the monograph "Performative Practices: Experience of Comprehension" by Natalia Maliutina and Iryna Nechytaliuk (2021). This book focuses on theatrical performances, cinema, and drama, but it also explores the broader concept of performativity in reading, extending its scope to other genres. Notably, Yuriy Andrukhovych's prose serves as an illustrative example of mystification and metaliterary play [Малютіна, Нечитайлюк, 2021]. Predominantly, scholars analyse performance as a conceptual art rooted in past rituals and traditions. However, theoretical issues remain a priority for analysts in this area, in particular, the discussion of the correlation between the concepts of theatricality and performativity. Olena Levchenko, in her article "Theatricality vs. Performativity in the Aspect of the Performative Revolution" [Левченко, 2018], aligns with researchers viewing 'performativity' as a metaphor gaining relevance in interdisciplinary paradigms. Daryna Hladun, in the article "Poetic Performance and Poetic Reading: Touching Points", argues that the key feature of performance is "the dominance of action over text" [Гладун, 2020, p. 160], setting the boundaries for further exploration within this field.

Instead, the study of the performative potential of prose texts is at an early stage, often focusing on examples from drama. Dmytro Kirichenko, for instance, analyses the performative orientation of fairy tales in Martin McDonagh's play "The Pillow Man". Kirichenko concluded that performativity "can be an integral part of the writer's artistic method, one of the ways of mastering reality" [Кіріченко, 2014, p. 167]. Zynoviya Budi, on the other hand, emphasises written narratives in general and identifies performance with the illusion of a spectacle, a description of a game-action that "is reproduced in the reader's imagination in the process of reading" [Будій, 2013, p. 55], creating a sense of direct and 'live' communication with the involved reader. Quite reasonably, texts with performative modes are often associated with postmodern writing. Uliana Tykha identifies this as 'performative poetics', determining it as "the orientation of the text towards a playful interaction with the reader, fostering their direct participation in meaning-making" [Тиха, 2014, p. 274]. Despite the centripetal movement of performativity issues in contemporary Ukrainian literary studies, adolescent and children's literature, in which artistic models of reading are particularly in demand and clearly function, is still outside the scope of research. Mostly, Ukrainian scholars only briefly consider this problem in their works. The exception is works by Lidiya Matsevko-Bekerska [Мацевко-Бекерська, 2009], Ulyana Hnidets [Гніздець, 2012], and Tetiana Kachak [Качак, 2019] that, while not directly addressing the issue of performativity, nonetheless, reveal the concepts of reader and reading in adolescent literature.

The article aims to define and characterise the ways of representing reading as a performance in contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and young adults, and to explore the artistic function of reading scenes within these works. To achieve this goal, we will employ the foundations of performative theory, particularly its literary applications, substantiated in the works of Peter Kivy [Kivy, 2006] and Päivi Kosonen [Kosonen, 2019], along with a comparative and typological approach, drawing on concepts from receptive aesthetics and transactional reading theory, which we have adapted to analyse in-text reading scenes in order to uncover the dynamics of interaction between the imaginary reader and the imaginary author.

In general, the phenomenon of reading is constantly at the forefront of literary, cultural, and philosophical studies. Researchers across these fields investigate both the process of readers' perception of a literary text and its impact on our conscious and unconscious minds, exploring the extent of co-creation between reader and text. Classical theories like the transactional theory (Rosenblatt), reader-response theory (Fish), psychoanalytic reader-response theory (Holland), and the theory of aesthetic response (Iser) continue to be influential, supplemented by ongoing studies.

In Päivi Kosonen's "Toward Therapeutic Reading", the researcher tries to summarise the studies on the phenomenology of reading conducted in the mid-twentieth century, which she reduces to four theses: "One: Reading is not passive but active reception. Two: By reading, we create the work actively in relation to ourselves and our own interpretive community. Three: Reading is an all-encompassing mental and somatic event. Four: We change, we create and we shape ourselves in our reading" [Kosonen, 2019, p. 7].

Commenting on Wolfgang Iser's ideas, Päivi Kosonen emphasises "the processual nature of reading and the importance of a constantly changing perspective, a kind of moving third space, a moving horizon, as a consequence of which something is brought into the world that previously did not exist (poiesis), and as a consequence of which the reader embarks on a transformational process" [Kosonen, 2019, p. 8]. Describing the reading process, during which "the reader fits themselves into the text; the reader fills gaps in the text, builds the meaning of the text in the light of their own memories, as well as their predictions and imaginings", the researcher resorts to a metaphor – "The text springs to life" [Kosonen, 2019, pp. 7–8].

Such a formulation can be found both in everyday speech and professional philological discourse, and it is, in our opinion, symptomatic of how multidimensional and promising the process of reading is from the perspective of interdisciplinary study. Traditionally, the effect of "springing to life" the images and plots of a literary work is considered in the context of the interaction between the author's and the reader's imagination. As Wolfgang Iser claims, "Thus author and reader are to share the game of the imagination, and, indeed, the game will not work if the text sets out to be anything more than a set of governing rules. The reader's enjoyment begins when he himself becomes productive, i.e., when the text allows him to bring his own faculties into play" [Iser, 1978, p. 108].

The phenomenon of reading has frequently been the subject of reflection by writers themselves, resulting in a plethora of texts where readers take centre stage, and the plot revolves around the absorption of their consciousness and their quasi-real world into the reality of the text they read. "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll, "The Neverending Story" by Michael Ende, "The Complete Ink Trilogy" by Cornelia Funke, "The Shadow of the Wind" by Carlos Ruiz Zafon, "The Cat Who Saved the Books" by Sosuke Natsukawa, and "Pages of the World" by Kai Mayer are just a few examples of this captivating genre, often characterised by a mystifying portrayal of the reading experience.

It is noteworthy that when describing the process of reading, Päivi Kosonen points out that it "can take the reader to some kind of intermediate or dual awareness, often to a third space termed creative or reflexive, in which the reader is simultaneously inside and outside his or her own self" [Kosonen, 2019, pp. 9–10]. Moreover, it is not about the space described or invented by the author, but about the space that is formed at the crossroads of the author's and the reader's experience, their interaction, and is in the domain of language and supported by its transformative power. Kosonen once again refers to the description of reading through spatial metaphor when she quotes the Finnish writer Siri Hustvedt, the author of the collection of essays "The Shaking Woman": "Reading is the mental arena where different thought styles, tough and tender, and the ideas generated by them become most apparent" [Kosonen, 2019, p. 11]. The figuratively used term 'arena' is obviously synonymous with a stage, an open area where a performance takes place. The agents of the performance are at least two consciousnesses – the author's and the recipient's: "We have access to a stranger's internal narrator. Reading, after all, is a way of living inside another person's words. His or her voice becomes my narrator for the duration" [Kosonen, 2019, pp. 11–12].

The metamorphosis of the narrative voice(s) is the subject of analysis in Peter Kivy's book "The Performance of Reading: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literature" [2006] whose concept resonated and became the impetus for rethinking the process of perceiving fiction. The author states that the purpose of his research is "to argue that we should come to see reading to oneself as a performance, <...> and that there is a deep affinity between silent reading and performing, which, if we recognize it,

will illuminate the activity of silent reading as an artistic practice” [Kivy, 2006, p. 49]. The researcher pays considerable attention to the comparison of silent reading (to oneself) of novels and short stories with the performance/experience of musical works, as well as with the reading of musical scores by qualified musicians, highlighting the key role of text interpretation by the ‘performer’ (musician or reader) in both processes.

The author reasonably notes that the modern form of reading practice is relatively recent. Peter Kivy refers to the recitative nature of the ancient epic and the tradition of reading aloud in family circle. According to Kivy, “read literature had its historical origins in performed literature” [Kivy, 2006, p. 6]. The quintessence of private reading in solitude was the novel, the format of which was established in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, but even then, the process of reading it differed from the modern one, as there was a practice of publishing sections and chapters in separate issues of periodicals, family or salon reading of new books, etc. Kivy claims, “In a way, then, the novel was both a private and a ‘social’ institution” [Kivy, 2006, p. 19].

The researcher’s thoughts on the genre invariants of the novel and the degree of their performativity are noteworthy. Thus, Kivy distinguishes the seemingly far-from-spectacular formats of the letter or diary novels, arguing that “when you read it you are performing it, even when you are reading it to yourself in silence” [Kivy, 2006, p. 20]. The author astutely notes that engaging with these genres involves a game-like element – “you are not reading letters: you are reading artistic representations of letters”. Moreover, the reader himself becomes a performer, “acting the part of a letter reader” [Kivy, 2006, pp. 20–21].

In contrast to diaries and letters, there is a type of novel written in the first and third person, where the reader is actually a ‘listener’ to the characters’ stories. Exploring the difference between reading a fictionally written letter and a fictionally told story provides valuable insights into the concept of ‘internal voices’ within the text. This distinction becomes particularly significant as these internal voices transform into voices in the recipient’s imagination. Furthermore, this exploration allows us to delineate the reader’s position in various forms of reading performance. As defined by Peter Kivy, performance is “*a story telling in the mind’s ear*” [Kivy, 2006, p. 63]. Importantly, such a performance is not only about conveying the ‘content’ of the literary work but also about capturing the ‘tone of voice’ of its creator and/or narrator [Kivy, 2006, p. 92]. In this dynamic, the reader actively ‘plays the part’ of the narrator.

In this context, it is essential to distinguish between reading as experience and reading as interpretation. The former involves encountering the familiar and understandable, while the latter is a co-creative process where readers fill in incomprehensible or unknown aspects of the text with visual and auditory images from their imagination. Simultaneously, this process involves a form of commentary on the text, constituting reader criticism. This differentiation aligns Kivy’s concept with Louise M. Rosenblatt’s transactional theory.

In “Literature as Exploration”, Rosenblatt, like Kivy, compares the process of reading a book to a musical performance: “The reader performs the poem or the novel, as the violinist performs the sonata. But the instrument on which the reader plays and from which he evokes the work is – himself”. According to Rosenblatt, “Imaginative literature happens when we focus our attention on what we are sensing, thinking, feeling, structuring, in the act of response to the particular words in their particular order”. Among other things, the researcher focused on developing a methodology for teaching literature to students, insisting that “Even the most modest work – a nursery rhyme, say – demands attention to what the words are calling forth within us”. In any case, the reader participates in a challenging action: “Out of his past experience, he must select appropriate responses to the individual words; he must sense their interplay on one another; he must respond to clues of tone and attitude and movement” [Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 201].

Considering the concept of reading as a performance, it becomes essential to explore how the performative potential of reading is realised when this process becomes integral to the plot of a literary text. To delve into this dynamic, we focus on contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and adolescents. Through analysing cases such as recitation, family reading rituals, and the silent perusal of literary works, letters, and diaries, we aim to uncover instances where reading transforms into an internal performance.

In many texts, reading appears as a social performance that due to Jeffrey C. Alexander has six elements: actors, observers/audience, means of symbolic production, mise-en-scène, social power,

and the systems of collective representation, which may “range from ‘time immemorial’ myths to invented traditions created right on the spot, from oral traditions to scripts prepared” [Alexander, 2006, p. 33]. The latter element deals with the ritual background of any social interaction. We can observe reading as a ritual performance in various Ukrainian works for children and adolescents, such as Anna Sydor’s short story “Christmas Kitten” [Сидор, 2020] from the anthology “When Snow Smells Like Tangerines” [Малетич, 2020], Halyna Vdovychenko’s story “Mistelphs” [Вдовиченко, 2020], Natalia Yasinovska’s novel “Love, Grandpa, and Tomatoes” [Ясіновська, 2021], Kateryna Babkina’s novel “Snow Warmth” [Бабкіна, 2022], etc. For instance, in Anna Sydor’s story, reading is an integral part of the Christmas celebration tradition. This process creates the effect of a sacred event, which corresponds to the atmosphere of the cycle of Christmas performances. The role of the actor in the story belongs to the grandmother reading to her grandchildren, who become the audience. The book and the festive decoration of the room become a kind of stage attributes (according to J.C. Alexander, means of symbolic production): “*Yarko and Marta loved Christmas at their grandmother’s house because it was something very special, something that was just theirs <...> they would stay overnight with their grandparents <...> Grandma would read them a book before bedtime, and when she turned off the lights, the garland on the Christmas tree would continue to flicker with colored lights*” [Сидор, 2020, p. 238]. The function (social power) of such a ritualistic reading performance is to strengthen intergenerational communication and to join Christian traditions.

The book “Love, Grandpa, and Tomatoes” by Natalia Yasinovska, an author of numerous works for adolescents and a translator of the popular teenage story “Judy Moody,” merits special attention. The novel reveals the inner world of a 13-year-old girl for whom her grandfather’s severe illness becomes a real trial. In the narrative, the performative potential of reading manifests itself in situations that play a crucial role in plot development. At the same time, various events described in the text influence the formation of the protagonist’s personality. The novel presents family reading as a special form of communicative play between adults and children, which later grows into a tradition passed down from older to younger generations. Family reading becomes symbolic in the childhood memories of the story’s central character, Olesia. In particular, the girl recalls: “*My mother and grandparents used to read to me about the curious snail*” [Ясіновська, 2021, p. 23]. The book in question is “The Lord of the Makutsa, or The Adventures of Onysko the Bear,” by Sashko Dermansky published in 2004 and recommended for primary school students. Including this work into the narrative of the Yasinovska’s work adds an extra layer to the story and resonates with the young Ukrainian readers’ real experiences.

It is worth noting that reading in Olesia’s family was accompanied by elements of staging, thus transforming into a form of domestic theatre. All family members would participate in these performances, taking on roles of actors, directors, and stagehands. Usually, all family members participate in the performance, playing the roles of actors, director, stagehands, etc. Each of them was assigned a specific function, and the preparation process became especially exciting: “*Grandpa imitated voices well, so Olesia loved listening to him. Moreover, mum even crafted a Colorado potato beetle out of foam, named Jack, and sewed a slender worm called Kuzia. Olesia already had a mouse and a frog. So she played with the animals with her mom and grandfather*” [Ясіновська, 2021, p. 23]. Her grandfather played the most important role, as he “*imitated voices well, so Olesia loved to listen to him*” [Ibid]. The writer reveals the spectrum of voices articulated by one performer (a grandfather), which, together with elements of puppetry, convincingly transforms reading into a performance game. Notably, the grandfather is the central figure in the novel’s personosphere. Since the girl’s father died in a car accident, “*her grandfather was her father, grandfather, and friend*” [Ibid, p. 31]. Moreover, he constantly tried to make everyday life engaging for his granddaughter becoming her source of joy in her life – even from his hospital bed, he would “*squint mischievously*”, “*giggle*”, and “*burst into laughter*” [Ibid].

It is noteworthy that the development of the plot demonstrates the transposition of the participants in the literary action. Since home performances have become Olesia’s happiest memories, she tries to model similar situations to support her sick grandfather. Her childhood experience also influences her choice of book: “*Olesia would offer her grandfather the books he used to read to her. They brought back many pleasant and cheerful memories*” [Ibid, p. 49].

In particular, Olesia chooses one of the family’s favorite books, “Alice’s Birthday” by Tim Kennemore<sup>1</sup>. The heroine tries to visualize the characters as they were presented during their family

<sup>1</sup> “Alice’s Birthday” by Tim Kennemore was translated into Ukrainian by A. Porytko and published by the Old Lion Publishing House in 2007.

performances: *“Do you remember that merry family? Boring Oliver, polite Alice, and little mischief-maker Rosie?”* [Ibid, p. 49]. Both characters are pleased to recall even some of the monologues they learned by heart, such as the funny poem about peas: *“Peas, peas, musical sound, eat a lot, it will be...”* [Ibid], which fully illustrates Rosie’s cheerful nature. For his part, the grandfather also remembers pictures from the happy past: *“You were laughing so hard that you couldn’t read, and tears were rolling down your eyes!”* [Ibid]. Observing her grandfather’s reaction to the memories of the performance, Olesia notices: *“Grandpa could barely move his head. But his eyes were laughing”*. The heroine states with hope: *“Laughter therapy in action”* [Ibid]. This example activates the psychotherapeutic function of ritual performance, which, according to Olha Dunayevska, in critical situations becomes a unifying force for family members [Дунаєвська, 2012, p. 164].

Another noteworthy episode in Natalia Yasinovska’s text is a literary evening, which also allows Olesia to actualize the performative experience gained in her childhood. To participate in the event, the heroine prepares a script for her own performance, using excerpts from John Green’s novel *“The Fault in Our Stars”* in which the main character fights cancer, just like Olesia’s grandfather. She calls this book her desk book, the one she comes back to and re-reads. For a teenage girl, it is natural to look for parallels with her own experience in literary narratives that serve as a means of overcoming a traumatic situation [Мацевко-Бекерська, 2009]. However, it is significant that the heroine dares to share her experiences with a wide audience, which makes this performance quite exceptional. Olesia took a very responsible approach to creating her stage image, having thought carefully about her appearance, which should immediately set the audience in the right atmosphere. The girl appears on stage with tubes in her nose and a bag of glucose solution to recreate the image of the book’s main character, Heisel. Before going on stage, Olesia feels anxious and uncomfortable, which conveys on the external (*“The tubes in her nose were in the way”* [Ясіновська, 2021, p. 229]) and internal levels (*“Will the audience understand what she wants to express?”* [Ibid]). After the end of the monologue and a long pause from the audience, Olesia was worried about whether her idea was understood, but applause and smiles spread throughout the hall, which turned out to be the support she needed.

The strategy of presenting reading as a performance in a literary text is a factor in its popularization, which is one of the tasks of children’s and adolescent literature. In this aspect, the works of Kateryna Babkina, a Ukrainian writer, winner of the Angelus Central European Award, and the head of numerous cultural projects that promote reading, are notable. We would like to draw attention to the novel *“Snow Warmth”* [Бабкіна, 2022] among her works.

The protagonist of the novel, Mick, moves with his mother to his grandfather’s old apartment, the attributes of which testify to the family’s longstanding reading culture. These traditions have been passed on to Mick, who has his own library and usually keeps a book by his bedside to read before going to bed. A vivid example of family performance is reading together with the boy’s mother: *“After dinner, they wrapped themselves up in a blanket on the couch and read a book together <...> they decided to pick up something they loved from childhood and picked up Winnie the Pooh”* [Бабкіна, 2022, p. 148]. Gradually, this process takes on the signs of a theatrical game: mother and son read the text in turn, making their funny corrections, in particular, the amusing twisting of the hero’s name caused Mick’s delight. Instead, the boy *“didn’t read it out, but sang all the Pooh songs loudly, as he should”* [Ibid]. Thus, on the one hand, joint reading and the example of an adult reader in the family help the child to realize that reading is a part of everyday life that can be beneficial. The more Mick reads, the more his character traits such as curiosity, intelligence, and ingenuity become apparent. When he and his classmates come across a mysterious large animal, Mick immediately turns to reading books about animals and nature to learn about the animal, its life and habits. On the other hand, staging dialogues in different voices, adding elements of singing, making improvised corrections to the original text, etc. contribute to the transformation of the reading process into a performance.

In general, the novel presents two types of reading aloud. The first coincides with Peter Kivy’s concept of reading as interpretation. This type is represented by the description of Mick’s reading with his mother with comments and jokes, which led to further conversation about the text and their life situations. Thus, the reading-play enhances the emotional connection between its participants. This kind of reading was significantly different from formalised school assignments, when *“they read in a monotone voice, taking turns, and discussed only with the teacher’s permission”* [Бабкіна, 2022, p. 128]. The author appeals to the real challenges of our time, which are often the subject of debate

among teachers and writers – the need to find new approaches to turning the students into a reading community, and the lessons – into a space for active discussion and exchanging of ideas. To this end, Mick's school introduced an innovative program called Parenting Weeks, where parents take the reins in teaching classes on particular topics. Boy's mother, deeply passionate about fostering a love for reading, seized the opportunity to share her expertise with the students. She gave them a task: *"to create their own book about how to read in order to get the most pleasure and benefit from it"* [Ibid, p. 218]. The children responded with joy and great interest to the idea of creating a book about reading, and then actively exchanged their thoughts and ideas. This kind of monitoring has shown that schoolchildren like adventures, colourful pictures, play, and the opportunity to get rid of sad thoughts the most. It is worth noting the reaction of the school principal to the initiative proposed by Mick's mother. Realizing the importance of developing a reading culture and the influence of reading on the formation of young people, as well as the need to learn foreign languages, the principal invited Mick's mother to work at the school and create a book club for reading books in English. Thus, Like Natalia Yasinovska, Kateryna Babkina demonstrates the performative potential of reading, which is realised through numerous episodes: from silent reading and aloud in the family circle to performances for a wider audience.

The significant emphasis on the process of reading is found in the novel "Treasury of Stories" by Volodymyr Areniev [Аренев, 2022], who is known for his science fiction for teenagers, literary criticism, and numerous projects promoting reading. Literary critics have noted the experimental nature of the text [А. Пітик, К. Пітик, 2023], which combines the genres of fantasy and travelogue. The narrative unfolds around Ursula, a young girl on a quest to find the perfect gift for her grandmother, an esteemed writer. The heroine stumbles upon an ancient artifact – a treasure trove in the form of a book. The appearance of the seller in the story's opening becomes a true performance: an extraordinary man in peculiar clothes appears in the underpass: *"an emerald cloak with golden grape leaves embroidered near the collar, a snow-white shirt, and sage-green trousers"* [Аренев, 2022, p. 9]. His extravagant outfit is complemented by *"pointed cream shoes with orange laces – remarkably clean for someone who must have made his way here somehow"* [Ibid]. It is worth noting that the girl dismisses any mystical or magical explanation for the unusual man's sudden appearance, considering that she might be facing an actor who creates a fairy-tale image through his attire.

No less spectacular was the appearance of a genie named Sham who, as it turned out, had been living in the purchased millennium-old treasury book as if in a prison. Ursula undertakes the task of freeing Sham – and later also her family – from the enchantments. Here storytelling becomes the magical means of salvation, as the girl must craft a story whose conclusion the omniscient genie cannot predict. Sham himself is proficient in the art of storytelling and has wide reading experience: *"Creating stories <...> It's a high art, Ursula! Taught to me by such outstanding storytellers as Nestor the Chronicler, Snorri Sturluson, Scheherazade the Wise, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Farrokh-i-Sistani!... And now I will teach you"* [Ibid, p. 65]. Ursula diligently takes notes of genie's writing advice that cover a wide range of issues related to working with the text – from the characters' persona and motivations to the construction of conflict. Such a narrative structure allows the reader to explore aspects of its creation as if being in the writer's creative laboratory.

However, first and foremost, the genie tries to awaken Ursula's imagination, emphasizing the importance of visual and performative aspects of the narrative: *"I can't tell you"*, Sham repeated, more slowly. *"But I can show you what happened then. If you're not afraid..."* [Ibid, p. 111]. The word "see" becomes a recurring motif in the text, as this ability extends the boundaries of perception, transforming reading and narrative comprehension into processes of co-imagination.

A powerful performance unfolds in the protagonist's final speech at the library, delivered to a crowd of people freed from the treasury's spell. Using a stool as an improvised stage, Ursula tries to reach the agitated audience, who are outraged by the ordeals they endured due to Sham's magic. The girl attempts to explain the genie's motives and convince them of his capacity for self-sacrifice. Here, the heroine acts as Sham's passionate advocate, employing various rhetorical devices and persuasion techniques. She begins by acknowledging that *"Sham was quite a scoundrel"* [Аренев, 2022, p. 342], then confesses that she herself was driven only by the selfish desire to "survive," and shows empathy toward the audience: *"I understand that you're all angry. And frightened. And you have every reason to be"* [Ibid]. Ursula even turns to humor, noting that while people might want to draw the genie's blood, and since he's made of fire, she's ready to fetch a fire extinguisher. In her imagination, Ursula anticipates a theatrical response from her speech's recipients: *"They had to laugh, perhaps even applaud"* [Ibid].

Overall, reading Volodymyr Areniev's book becomes a game that involves shifting narrative registers, leading to intense reader-text interaction. Essentially, it is a performative narrative where the reader assumes multiple roles: observer, student, researcher, and potentially a storytelling practitioner. Meanwhile, the genie Sham is also a vivid performer who embodies several personas: mentor, prisoner, prototype of the hero from Ursula's story, performer, and direct listener to the girl's recitation of her texts. The characters' interaction unfolds through spectacular scenes, transforming the treasury book into a performative space, a magical portal.

Thus, the use of the concept of reading as performance in the analysis of prose texts is a logical extension of performative studies and is the result of a combination of techniques from several literary methodologies. This approach contributes to the understanding of the ideological and aesthetic functions of reading scenes in literary texts, especially when it comes to literature for children and adolescents. The works examined in the article demonstrate that reading as performance is realised in a number of formats. First, it is **reading performance as a family ritual**, which retains the specific characteristics of such actions: the presence of an actor, a spectator, *mise-en-scène*, stage attribute, and social impact. The performative aspects of reading extend beyond oral recitation and include elements of staging and sometimes puppet shows, transforming it into a multidimensional experience for both performers and spectators. The portrayal of family reading demonstrates the characters' ability to fully immerse themselves in the text and creatively interact with the artistic material. An important function of such ritual reading performances is strengthening intergenerational bonds and preserving cultural traditions. **The theatrical reading**, analysed through Natalia Yasinovska's work "Love, Grandfather and Tomatoes," reveals a powerful therapeutic effect, manifested in the ability to maintain emotional connections between family members even during crisis situations.

**Interpretive reading** unfolds in Kateryna Babkina's novel "Snow Warmth", which presents two approaches: formalized school reading and vibrant, creative reading within the family circle. The latter is accompanied by comments, jokes, and improvisation, fostering a deeper understanding of the text and the development of reading culture. An important aspect is also the incorporation of innovative textual engagement methods in the school environment.

Some works elevate the performative aspect of reading to a meta-level, engaging readers in the reception of complex narrative role interactions and exploring the creative process itself. **Storytelling as performance** is most fully embodied in Volodymyr Areniev's "Treasury of Stories," where the process of creating and performing stories becomes a magical act. This type of performative reading involves active interaction between storyteller and listener, cultivates imagination and creativity, and demonstrates the metanarrative dimension of literary creation.

Performative strategies in epic narrative (*reading performance as a family ritual, the theatrical reading, interpretive reading, storytelling as performance*) create a tendency to organise the literary text as a verbal-plastic form, aimed at generating a visualising effect, where the aesthetics of narration transform into the aesthetics of the show, and an illusion of present action (real-time mode), which, in turn, determines the variability of temporal organization within the narrative. The tendency of the literary epic form toward visualisation may indicate that a trend toward the fusion (or synthesis) of literary genres and types is becoming more relevant in the contemporary literary process. This, in turn, shapes a unique form of reader reception, as noted by researchers who have observed that "the concept of performativity could serve as an ideal site for studying the interrelation between the degree of narrative performativity in visual or verbal forms of presentation and the more or less determinate visual and kinesthetic mental performance taking place in the mind of the reader or spectator" [Berns, 2014, p. 691]. Consistent with this viewpoint, we suggest that this aspect presents the opportunity for further research on the performativity of the literary text.

The representation of reading as a performance in literature serves as a strategy for promoting reading, an important objective in children's and adolescent literature. This analysis shows that the performative potential of children's and adolescent literature warrants more extensive scholarly attention. Further research within this framework could facilitate a more comprehensive examination of reading as an interdisciplinary phenomenon. Such literary studies will broaden our understanding of performance as a form of action art, a field of investigation that has gained prominence across various humanities disciplines.



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## TYOLOGY AND FUNCTIONS OF READING PERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

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The phenomenon of reading stands as a focal point in literary, cultural, and philosophical studies, prompting ongoing research into how readers perceive texts and the profound impact this process has on our conscious and subconscious minds. Classical theories, including transactional theory (Rosenblatt), reader-response theory (Fish), psychoanalytic reader-response theory (Holland), and the theory of aesthetic response (Iser) continue to shape discourse in these fields, supplemented by contemporary investigations.

Recently, there has been a significant expansion in performance studies, with Peter Kivy's "The Performance of Reading: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literature" analysing the metamorphosis of narrative voices. This highlights the notion of reading as a performance, prompting exploration into how this performative aspect is integrated into literary plots. Writers often reflect on the act of reading, yielding a genre of metaliterature where readers become central characters, engaging in conflicts that revolve around their absorption into the text's world.

Delving deeper, this article focuses on contemporary Ukrainian literature for young audiences, exploring instances where reading transforms into an internal performance through activities such as recitation, family reading rituals, and silent perusal.

The article *aims* to define and characterise the ways of representing reading as a performance in contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and young adults, as well as to explore the artistic function of reading scenes within these works. To achieve this goal, we will employ the foundations of performative theory, particularly its literary applications, substantiated in the works of Peter Kivy and Päivi Kosonen, along with a comparative and typological *method*, drawing on concepts from receptive aesthetics and transactional reading theory, which we have adapted to analyse in-text reading scenes in order to uncover the dynamics of interaction between the imaginary reader and the imaginary author.

The article outlines various aspects of performative strategies in literary texts, emphasizing the depiction of reading as a performance. Despite considerable interest in the issue of performativity in contemporary Ukrainian and global literary studies, literature for children and adolescents remains largely understudied regarding the artistic models of reading that are particularly sought after and prominently featured. This is vividly illustrated in the works of contemporary Ukrainian authors such as Volodymyr Areniev, Halyna Vdovychenko, Kateryna Babkina, Natalia Yasinovska, and others.

Performative strategies in epic narrative (*reading performance as a family ritual, the theatrical reading, interpretive reading, storytelling as performance*) create a tendency to organise the literary text as a verbal-plastic form, aimed at generating a visual effect, where the aesthetics of narration transform into the aesthetics of the show, and an illusion of present action (real-time mode), which, in turn, determines the variability of temporal organization within the narrative. The tendency of the literary epic form toward visualisation may indicate that a trend toward the fusion (or synthesis) of literary genres and types is becoming more relevant in the contemporary literary process.

In the analysed texts, reading as performance is realised in a number of formats. The article characterises the depiction of the family reading ritual, which retains the specific characteristics of such performances: the presence of an actor, a spectator, *mise-en-scène*, requisites, and social impact. It is determined that the performative aspects of reading go beyond oral recitation and include elements of staging and sometimes puppet theatre. It is proved that the portrayal of reading shows the characters' ability to fully immerse themselves in the text and to interact creatively with the artistic material, emphasising the strong connection between generations and the preservation of cultural traditions. In many texts for children and adolescents, the performance of reading has a therapeutic function, helping characters overcome emotional challenges and traumatic situations.

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