The Secret by Yuri Andrukhovych: An autobiographical novel in the form of an interview

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Yuri Andrukhovych,[1] one of the most significant writers in contemporary Ukrainian literature, is the author of seven novels, as well as various collections of poetry and essays.[2] Many researchers mark the beginning of contemporary Ukrainian fiction with the appearance of Andrukhovych's novel *Rekreatsii* (1992; Eng. trans. *Recreations*, 1998), which vividly portrays the carnival-like experience of the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of an independent Ukrainian state (Kharchuk 2008, 24). It also serves as a fictional reflection of the activities of the Bu-Ba-Bu literary group, which is associated with the emergence of Ukrainian postmodernism.[3] The theme of *Moskoviada* (1993; Eng. trans. *The Moscoviad*, 2008), based on the author's studies at the Higher Literary Courses at the Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow, can be summarized (using the title of Olia Hnatiuk's book; 2003) as a "farewell to the empire". *Perverziia* (1997; Eng. trans. *Perverzion*, 2005) is an exemplary postmodern novel, with its central character bearing a striking resemblance to the author himself. No serious research on the topic of Ukrainian postmodernism is complete without consideration of Andrukhovych's work.[4]

Andrukhovych's influence extends beyond the context of the formation of the postmodern Ukrainian literary process and encompasses his representation of Ukraine to the wider world, including his brilliant journalism that reconstructs the concepts of Central and Eastern Europe (see e.g. 2018). Thanks to numerous translations of his texts into Polish, German, English, and other languages, he has become a symbol of Ukraine and its latest literature for a global audience, and has received numerous literary awards both in Ukraine and abroad.[5] Judith Leister has rightly called Andrukhovych "the most important intellectual ambassador" (2008)[6] of independent Ukraine, and Jörg Plath has claimed that "since 2003 Yuri Andrukhovych has almost singlehandedly established his Ukrainian homeland on the literary map of Western Europe" (2008).

Taiemnytsia. Zamist' romanu (The Secret. Instead of a novel, 2007a) is Andrukhovych's fifth and most autobiographical novel, whose subtitle deliberately distances itself from the novel genre. The book (as the author prefers to call it) is written in the form of an interview with the German journalist Egon Alt, whose proverbial name clearly indicates a kind of author's alter ego. Allegedly, this interview was

conducted by Andrukhovych himself. Although Andrukhovych includes the traditional disclaimer in the preface that "all the characters of this work are fictitious, and any coincidences in names or similarities in situations are accidental" (2007a, 12), he immediately continues:

> This is only for me, one of its accomplices, they can mistakenly seem different, not accidental and not invented, but terribly close and real, as if this is the only possible life. […] [A]ll of us, and this world together with us, belong to another Author, much greater than us, and are his not entirely accidental invention. (12)

The interview lasts seven days, and the seventh day is set aside for rest – a clear biblical allusion to the creation of the world. The creation mirrors the personal world of the book's character, whose life story, according to Marko Pavlyshyn, "corresponds in almost all of its details to the verifiable biography of Yuri Andrukhovych" (2012, 188), and, more broadly, it reproduces a certain period of the history of his country and its inclusion in a myth (or even reality) of Central Europe. Despite apparently belonging to the category of the autobiographical novel, *The Secret* demonstrates an extremely ambiguous identification at the genre level. Therefore, our main task in this article is to establish the suitability of such a genre definition for the nature of this text.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SPACE OF ANDRUKHOVYCH'S WORK

As Philippe Lejeune once noted, the autobiographical genre is always associated with discussions about "the relationship between biography and autobiography, the relationship between novel and autobiography" ([1975] 1994, 13). If we accept the four categories to which, according to Lejeune, an autobiography should correspond (14), *The Secret* by Yuri Andrukhovych fully aligns with the required parameters. The distinction between an autobiography and an autobiographical novel is somewhat more complex. Lejeune's attempts to differentiate between these genres may not appear entirely convincing. In the end, he was forced to admit that "if we stay at the level of internal analysis of the text, there is no difference. All the procedures that autobiography uses to convince us of the authenticity of its narrative, the novel can imitate, and often has imitated" (26).

With his proposed category of "autobiographical space", Lejeune parries the common statement, particularly in André Gide and François Mauriac, that "a novel is truer than an autobiography", and makes a rather convincing assumption:

> If they did not write and publish autobiographical texts, even "insufficient" ones, no one would ever have seen what truth should be sought in their novels. Thus, these statements are, perhaps, involuntary, but very effective tricks: […] no one notices that, on the contrary, by the same movement the autobiographical pact extends in an indirect form to everything written. (42)

In this way, *The Secret* allows us to look once again at Andrukhovych's other texts through the lens of an autobiographical pact.

Andrukhovych has never hidden, and even emphasized the autobiographical basis of his own novels:

> From one novel to another I simply open myself more and more and still more talk about myself. *Recreations*: a conscious dispersion of my own features unto four characters – that is, when you cannot not talk about yourself any longer but at the same time do not dare to disclose yourself. *The Moscoviad*: certain fragments are one-on-one autobiographical, but the protagonist – on purpose – not I (in the gestalt understanding). […] *Perverzion*: about myself, but not so much "real" as "desirable for myself." […] *Twelve Circles*: the protagonist is not alone, again, but this is not dispersion anymore; practically almost all of me is concentrated in Artur Pepa, and the rest – that "almost," which is more important – in Zumbrunnen. (Hundorova 2019)

This gives Hundorova the grounds to claim, "All Andrukhovych's novels are tautological and auto-fictional" (2019), and for Serhii Borys to state that in these novels, you can observe "self-creation of the identity" (2002, 141) of the artist. *The Secret* can be considered as the completed stage of this process, surpassing all previous autobiographical constructs of his texts while providing many new interpretive keys to them. Although the writer himself warned in one of the interviews against considering *The Secret* as a "code book" to all his other works: "In *The Secret,* I really explain a lot or at least somehow comment on it, but it would be wrong to call it a 'code'. I want to say that *The Secret* itself is not enough to understand my other things" (2007b). However, this does not prevent it from being read in this way.

We will give only a few eloquent examples, the first of which refers to the poetry collection *Seredmistia (*Downtown, 1989) and shows the biographical facts, events, and people behind almost every poem:

> To some extent, this is my hidden biography. That is, these are not actually poems but events. "Lullaby of the First Day" is the first meeting with Taras, whom we have just brought back from the maternity ward, and hence the foreboding of spring, the smell of the first snowdrops at dusk. "Midnight Flight Down High Castle Hill" is one of my betrayals, but rather a lyrical one, when sexual excitement closer to dawn turns out to be just an idiotic misunderstanding. "Her Coat is Happy and Red" is about Sophiika, on Wednesday evenings I usually brought her from kindergarten. […]. "Football in the Monastery Yard" is our wanderings with Nina in old Chernihiv. (2007a, 258–259)[7]

There is also a real-life example from the search for housing with his future wife, who was already pregnant at that time. To describe that state, the writer quotes fragments from *Perverzion*, although he clarifies: "Yes, this story itself is, of course, something completely different from *Perverzion*, but those motives – homelessness and vomiting – are an obvious echo" (137).[8]

The Secret contains not only many clues about the "correct" reading of the previous texts but also a reaction to their already existing interpretations, which in some ways confirms these interpretations, and in some places, denies or clarifies them. Thus, recalling the times of the literary group Bu-Ba-Bu, the writer notes: "Science boys and girls even decided to classify us as a laughing culture. Later, I had to read

Bakhtin in order to understand what we were all about. It turned out that our poetry, or rather, our poems, is a kind of lyrical carnival. It sounded cool. We didn't mind at all. I will say even more – we believed it ourselves" (280).[9] This can be an emphasis on a particularly successful reading, the possibility of which the author himself allegedly did not suspect, as in the case of the essay read by a young Italian boy at one of the presentations: "So, according to his version, *The Moskoviad* is the destruction of the vertical, the overturning from top to bottom. And no Andalusian dog – including me – has ever noticed that the novel begins in heaven (the seventh floor of the dormitory) and ends in hell (Moscow dungeons)" (313).[10] When he mentions the article by Yuri Shevelov (Sherekh) indicating the probable sources of his novel *Perverzion*, it is not only as a possible reminder of the attention that an authoritative literary critic pays to the Ukrainian tradition, but also to add certain clarifications to his judgments:

> Old Sherekh shot absolutely accurately. After the release of *Perverzion*, he wrote such a hilarious article called "Ho-Hei-Ho" about three sources and three constituent parts. Both "Ho's" are an absolute hit, because they are Hohol and Hoffmann, your German E.T.A. But Hoffmann would appear in my life a little later, during my student days. The only thing Sherekh gets wrong is "Hei", meaning Heine, Heinrich, yours too. I am ashamed to admit, but to this day I have not held in my hands his Italian diaries, about which Sherekh has such a hundred percent confidence. As if I had to come under their influence. (64–65)[11]

Taking into account Egon Alt's remark – "Be sure to read these diaries. You should still like them very much today" (65),[12] – we can casually assume that at the time of writing *The Secret,* Andrukhovych did get acquainted with these texts written by Heine.

In the case of the writer, his autobiography concerns not so much the events of his actual biography as his texts. Obviously, here it is worth looking for a category that would combine the author as a textual and non-textual reality. For example, we can talk about the writer as a paradigm that includes both of these realities, as well as the image that is formed by various receptive interpretations (see Dzyk 2012). Autobiographical texts take a special place in this paradigm and require special scholarly attention.

From this point of view, *The Secret* is a unique research object. On the one hand, it is an autobiographical text that tells about a real person – the writer Yuri Andrukhovych – and on the other hand, it is a kind of metatext that resonates with all of his previously written texts. In this sense, there is an important episode in the preface to *The Secret*, where the writer accepts Egon Alt's offer of an interview, which ultimately makes the appearance of this book possible:

> He had with him a whole shoulder bag of my books – different ones, published in different years and different languages. I had to sign each of them differently. In the third hour of our meeting, it turned out to be good fun, quite exhausting for me. That night we couldn't help but agree that we would definitely do it. It was supposed to become a book. But not exactly the one you are reading now. (7)[13]

We can interpret this as a certain symbolic act: involving various previous books in a new book, adding something new, but also writing about the same thing. The result is a book about books, so to speak.

THE GENRE POLYMORPHISM OF ANDRUKHOVYCH'S NOVELS

Of course, *The Secret* must be considered in the context of the author's entire work, primarily his novels. The appearance of each of them became an important event in the Ukrainian literary process and was accompanied by lively discussions. *Recreations* was especially revealing in this respect. Roxana Kharchuk states that the novel "caused a real scandal": "One part of the readers, mostly from the diaspora, accused the writer of destroying national ideals, of mocking the Ukrainian language and literary tradition. Another, on the contrary, read the novel with pleasure, feeling that Ukrainian literature is on the verge of change" (2008, 132). In his introduction to the English translation of *Recreations*, the Ukrainian-Australian translator and scholar Marko Pavlyshyn compares it with Ivan Kotlyarevsky's mock-heroic *Eneida* (Aeneid, 1798): "In their transitional times, both works opened new possibilities for Ukrainian literature" (Andrukhovych 1998, 11). *Recreations* initiated not only postmodern but also postcolonial discourse in modern Ukrainian literature, and Pavlyshyn helped to spread the postcolonial interpretation of Andrukhovych's novels, as Vitaly Chernetsky does, for example, when talking about "the radical paradigm shift that Andrukhovych's writing had triggered, ushering Ukrainian writing into the postcolonial condition" (2007, 217). As Kharchuk emphasizes in particular: "After *Recreations* in Ukrainian literature, reformulation of the canon begins, realistic prose is replaced by carnivalesque, ironic, playful, outrageous, and moreover, intersemiotic prose, which combines not only different types of art but also literary genres" (2008, 132). This largely explains the critical attitude towards Andrukhovych's texts on the part of recipients whose worldview was formed by the previous literary tradition. In other words, the vast majority of critical objections to Andrukhovych's prose are related to the fact that it was approached with traditional ideas, while its primary aim is to deconstruct these ideas.

The specified deconstruction is particularly evident at the genre level. One of the principles of postmodernism is the blending of genres, and as we have already seen, Andrukhovych's novels fit perfectly into this paradigm. Even a cursory examination of the existing genre definitions of his novels confirms this thesis. To cite various scholars, *Recreations* "blends genres and text types such as novella, Gothic horror story, comedy of manners, inner monologue, lyrical verse" (Pavlyshyn 1998, 11), *The Moscoviad* is a "novel-apocrypha" (Hundorova 2019) that combines "journalism and anecdote with high poetry" (Kharchuk 2008, 132) and *Perverzion* is "an exercise in postmodernism and the carnivalesque in the form of a whodunit" (Andryczyk 2012, 21). We should also point out the attempts to find a common genre formula for Andrukhovych's first three novels, for example, a "Menippean novel" (Boichenko 2003) or a "pastiche text" (Berbenets 2007).

In general, there is a tendency to consider *Recreations*, *The Moscoviad*, and *Perverzion* as a certain unity: the "prose trilogy" (Hundorova 2019) or, perhaps, more precisely, a "quasi-trilogy" (Chernetsky 2007, 217), while the next novel, *Dvanadtsiat' obruchiv* (2003; Eng. trans. *Twelve Circles*, 2015), remains on the sidelines. At best, it is assigned the role of "a kind of epilogue to the earlier quasi-trilogy, instantiating a revision of earlier topoi" (Chernetsky 2007, 217). Hundorova believes that we can observe "the destruction of the novel as a genre" in *Twelve Circles,* which "aspires to be a meta-novel, and the author aspires to be a meta-author" (2019). Therefore, *Twelve Circles*, despite the close connection with the previous novels, serves as a kind of transition to a different type of literature in Andrukhovych's work, post-carnival or even post-postmodern, where the very genre of the novel is deeply questioned. In the self-commentary to the novel *Twelve Circles*, Andrukhovych noted that he planned to write a "fictitious biography" (2003, 30) of the poet Bohdan Ihor Antonych.[14] The fictional autobiography in *The Secret* seems to be a natural development of the technique used in the previous novel.

THE SECRET BETWEEN FICTION AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The reaction of critics to the release of *The Secret* was mixed. Many expected a new novel from an already recognized classic, the "patriarch" of modern Ukrainian literature, and felt deceived, at least at the genre level, as it "is not a novel after all" (Anonymous 2007). At the same time, the autobiographical nature of the book was practically not questioned. Even its honesty was emphasized, which favorably distinguishes it from many other autobiographies (Havryliv 2007). However, it is clearly an "insufficient" autobiography (according to Lejeune) or, more precisely, more than just an autobiography, which is essentially the same thing. Since autobiography is a correct but inadequate description of *The Secret*, the problem of a more adequate definition of its genre arises. It is necessary to single out those elements that are not characteristic of autobiography, but belong to the field of literary fiction, in order to apply the definition of "fictional autobiography" to *The Secret* (Iakubchak 2007, 23).

A necessary condition for distinguishing autobiographical and fictional components of the text is the distinction between the Andrukhovych-like author-writer and the Andrukhovych-like character. This fundamental difference is well formulated by Pavlyshyn: "What is added in *Taiemnytsia* is A.'s vision of himself as if from outside his body, a perception that announces a guiding structural principle of this interview-like text: the uncanny proximity, but not quite identity, of A. and Andrukhovych, and therefore the mysterious, doppelgänger-like existence of the 'real' and the 'imagined' and of 'life' and 'art'" (2012, 189). This "the uncanny proximity, but not quite identity" constitutes the essence of combination of autobiography and fiction.

Although this autobiography is completely true, it is constructed in a certain way, so it is only one of its possible versions. In the "Preface", which is defined as "one of the possible ones", there is a lot of talk about the "new novel", the writing of which the author "dreamt of taking on", but he "didn't want to come to it in any

way". In the end, he agrees to the interview from which this book is published, and describes the "transcription" process in the following passage:

> My processing of all the spoken material consisted in the fact that, firstly, I translated it from German into Ukrainian, secondly, I removed the superfluous from it, eliminated content gaps, and simply the already mentioned groans, thirdly, I tried to write it down in such a way, on the one hand, not to lose its colloquialism and immediacy, and on the other hand, to make it suitable for reading, that is, to a large extent, I still artificialized (literarized?) what was said. I would like to add to my sense of honor that I didn't embellish my answers, didn't make them in any way more reasonable or wiser than they really were – so, the nonsense I uttered was left in plain sight. And fourthly. I could not refrain from some self-censorship, that is, concealing, smoothing, and simply eliminating many moments that might seem particularly devastating or unfortunate about some of the people mentioned in this book. (Andrukhovych 2007a, 11–12)[15]

In the spirit of Umberto Eco, whose "Postscript to the *Name of the Rose*" he carefully studied (Andrukhovych, Boichenko, and Drul 2018, 114), the author conceals himself in several guises: the one who translated "chatter" into writing, who "artificialized (literarized?) what was said", who subjected everything to "self-censorship". It is Egon Alt, whom everyone rightly sees as the author's alter ego, who most determines the fictional component of *The Secret* and thus deserves special attention.

The image of Egon Alt allows for dialogizing the story, and makes possible the very form of the interview. Behind him, you can see the universal image of the Other. Since Egon Alt is a "stranger", a foreigner, it allows us to talk about seemingly mundane and obvious things. This Other can also represent younger generations of readers, for whom the described realities that are distant in time are sometimes as incomprehensible as they are for foreigners. The writer's father is also hiding behind Egon Alt because he did not have time to tell him so much. In this perspective, the interview turns into a kind of confession, in the sense that Lejeune had in mind when discussing "autobiographical confessions […] which are read by everyone apart from the addressee. Or more precisely: who devote themselves to reading to everyone, without being able to find their real recipient" (1994, 53–54). That is, it is not about "erasing guilt (it is secondary), but about breaking communication" (54). The fact that the writer's father is not least hidden behind the image of Egon Alt is also graphically confirmed in the book. All of Egon Alt's lines are in bold font, and in the last fragment, the father speaks in this font. After all, Egon Alt seems to take on the obligatory role of the postmodern "death of the author". According to his plan, the interviews were to be published only after the death of the interviewee. However, it turns out that it is his death that allows Andrukhovych to create this book.

CONCLUSION

Trying to outline the genre nature of *The Secret*, researchers have created a number of possible definitions, such as an "adventurous novel-interview" (Drozdovskyi 2007, 358), a "brilliant memoir" (Leister 2008), and a "literary act of (self)creation" (Plath 2008). All of them capture one or another aspect of the text, but do not reflect it completely. In general, one can notice how cautiously the word "novel" was used

for *The Secret* at first, not least due to its provocative subtitle, "Instead of a Novel", which was often taken too literally. The opposite interpretation would be that denial is a reverse form of affirmation: by denying something, we involuntarily acknowledge its existence. This has been noted in several reviews, such as Drozdovskyi's statement, "In terms of genre, this is not a substitute for an autobiography, but nevertheless a substitute for a novel, for which fiction remains an attribute" (2007, 355), and Havryliv's observation, "*The Secret* bears the subtitle 'Instead of a Novel'. 'Instead' – but 'of a Novel'" (2007). In the text itself, we have an ambiguous but literal answer: "– Have you already got a name for this new novel? – It's a secret" (Andrukhovych 2007a, 415).[16]

Although scholars now mostly consider *The Secret* as a novel, they do not have a single opinion about what kind of novel it is. We would agree with Oleksandr Boichenko's well-formulated opinion, expressed in one of his interviews with Andrukhovych: "*The Secret* – despite unfolding in the form of a huge interview and the subtitle 'Instead of a Novel' – is actually an autobiographical novel 'instead of an interview'" (Andrukhovych 2008, 46). The problem with the genre of the autobiographical novel lies in its fusion of seemingly incompatible things: truth and invention, reality and fiction, and by proving the existence of one, we seem to deny the other. Only a rare combination of both elements leads to the emergence of a new integrity, and the form of interview used by Andrukhovych allows for the most accurate formulation of its genre definition. Straddling the boundary between two genres, *The Secret* embodies both at the same time, as an autobiographical novel.

NOTES

1 Transliteration of the Ukrainian follows the Library of Congress system.

2 Andrukhovych is also a translator from English (William Shakespeare, The Beat Generation), German (Heinrich von Kleist, Robert Walser), and Polish (Bruno Schulz) into Ukrainian.

3 Besides Andrukhovych, the group included Viktor Neborak and Oleksandr Irvanets.

4 See e.g. Hundorova [2005] 2019; Chernetsky 2007; Kharchuk 2008; Andryczyk 2012; Kratochvil 2013; Hofmann 2014.

5 In addition to the Ukrainian Blahovist, 1993, and the BBC Book of the Year for his novel *Lovers of Justice*, 2018, Andrukhovych has won the Herder Prize, 2001, the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize, 2005, the Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding and the Angelus Award, both in 2006, the Hannah Arendt Prize, 2014, the Goethe Medal, 2016, the Vilenica International Literary Prize, 2017, and the Heinrich Heine Prize, 2022.

6 Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the present authors.

7 "Якоюсь мірою це моя прихована біографія. Тобто це насправді не вірші, а події. 'Колискова першого дня' – це перше побачення з Тарасом, якого ми щойно привезли з пологового і звідси передчуття весни, запах перших пролісків у западанні сутінків. "Опівнічний політ з Високого Замку" – це одна з моїх зрад, але швидше лірична – з тих, коли сексуальне збудження ближче до світанку виявляється просто ідіотським непорозумінням. "Її пальтечко радісне й червоне" – це про Софійку, по середах увечері я зазвичай приводив її з дитсадка. […]. "Футбол на монастирському подвір'ї" – це наші з Ніною блукання у старому Чернігові." Taras and Sophiia are Yuri Andrukhovych's children; Nina is his wife.

[8] "Так, сама ця історія з *Первзії* – це, звісно, щось цілком інше, але ті мотиви – бездомність і блювотиння – це очевидне відлуння."

[9] "Учені хлопці й дівчата навіть вирішили віднести нас до сміхової культури. Пізніше мені довелося прочитати Бахтіна, щоб зрозуміти, до чого нас усе-таки віднесено. Виявилося, що наша поезія, а точніше, наші поезії є своєрідним ліричним карнавалом. Звучало це класно. Ми загалом не мали нічого проти. Я скажу навіть більше – ми в це самі повірили."

[10] "Так от, за його версією, *Московіада* – це руйнування вертикалі, перевертання верху і низу. І жоден андалузький пес – у тому числі і я – ніколи не звернув увагу на те, що роман починається на небі (сьомий поверх гуртожитку), а закінчується в пеклі (московські підземелля)."

[11] "Старезний Шерех усе абсолютно точно прострілив. Після виходу у світ *Первзії* він написав таку веселу-превеселу статтю під назвою "Го-Гай-Го" – про три джерела і три складові частини. Обидва 'Го' – це абсолютне потрапляння в яблучко, бо це Гоголь і Гофман, ваш, німецький Е. Т. А. Але Гофман з'явиться в моєму житті трохи пізніше, за студентських часів. Єдине, в чому Шерех помиляється, – це 'Гай', тобто Гайне, Гайнріх, теж ваш. Сором визнати, але я донині не тримав у руках його італійських щоденників, відносно яких Шерех має таку стовідсоткову впевненість. Начебто я мусив потрапити під їхні впливи."

[12] "Обов'язково прочитай ці щоденники. Вони й сьогодні мали б тобі дуже сподобатися."

[13] "Він мав із собою цілий наплечник моїх книжок – різних, виданих у різні роки і різними мовами. Кожну з них я змушений був йому підписати і кожну інакше. На третій годині нашої зустрічі з цього вийшла незла забава, для мене досить виснажлива. Того вечора ми не могли не домовитися про те, що обов'язково зробимо це. Воно мало стати книжкою. Але не зовсім тією, що її Ви зараз читаєте."

[14] Andrukhovych defended his PhD thesis on Antonych's work.

[15] "Моя обробка всього наговореного матеріалу полягала в тому, що я, по-перше, перекладав його з німецької на українську, по-друге, видаляв з нього зайве, усував змістові прогалини і просто – згадувані вже мимрення, по-третє, намагався записувати його таким чином, щоб, з одного боку, не втратити його розмовність і безпосередність, а з іншого – зробити придатним для читання, себто значною мірою я все-таки оштучнював (олітературював?) вимовлене. До своєї честі хочу додати, що я не прикрашав своїх відповідей, не робив їх жодним чином розсудливішими чи мудрішими, ніж вони були насправді – отже, висловлені мною дурниці залишилися на виду. І по-четверте. Я не міг не втриматися від деякої автоцензури, себто приховування, згладжування і просто усування багатьох моментів, які могли здатись особливо нищівними чи прикрими щодо деяких, згадуваних у цій книжці осіб."

[16] "– Ти вже маєш назву для цього нового роману? – Таємниця."

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The Secret by Yuri Andrukhovych: An autobiographical novel in the form of an interview

The Secret. Yuri Andrukhovych. Modern Ukrainian literature. Genre. Autobiographical novel.

This article examines the novel *Taiemnytsia. Zamist' romanu* (The Secret. Instead of a novel, 2007) by Yuri Andrukhovych, one of the most famous contemporary Ukrainian writers. It analyzes the expressive autobiographical nature of the author's entire work, particularly in the context of his previous novels, which positions *Taiemnytsia* as the final stage in a progressive movement toward the genre of the autobiographical novel. It also examines the central issue of this genre – combining truth and invention, reality and fiction – to establish that combining both elements results in the emergence of a new genre, straddling the boundary between autobiography and novel by using the form of an interview.

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