

The problem of "the individual and society" in the context of the ideological and thematic orientation of the I-novel "Convenience store woman"

Prof. DSc Khalliyeva Gulnoz Iskandarovna,
Teacher Petrosyan Naira Romanovna

Uzbekistan State World Languages University, World Literature Department, Tashkent,
Uzbekistan

Abstract. This article devoted to the problem of "people and society" in the context of the ideological and thematic orientation of the I-novel "Convenience store woman" written by Sayaka Murata. This is not only subtle, ironic prose about everyday life, but also a sharp statement about being different from others and about disobeying social norms. "Convenience store woman" is an emphatically Japanese and at the same time universal story about how cruel the unwritten laws of society are. Sayaka Murata explores the boundaries of "normality" and the enormous pressure that people have been experiencing since childhood: the ordinary and even more bitter story of the main character Keiko is about how harmless stereotypes seem and how dangerous they really are.

Key words: Sayaka Murata, Convenience store woman, I-novel, Japanese society, psychologist, main idea, character

Introduction. The main idea of this novel is very simple - the world is diverse, how different and individual are those who inhabit it and it is necessary to accept it in all its diversity. The main theme of this work is the struggle of a lonely person for his place in society. But to become a part of it, you need to be able to adapt to it, fit into its framework. Following this logic, Keiko Furukura, wearing a mask of "normality", tried to fit into society and adapt to it. This is the price she had to pay to be accepted in society, to hide her identity deeply from the outside world and thoughtlessly comply with all the rules of society. But it was thanks to the meeting with Shiraha that she felt even more keenly that her vocation was to be a part of the minimarket, its employee, and she was finally happy to understand what her purpose was. Now her choice has become conscious and no Shiraha is needed to create the appearance of well-being. She found her identity.

The author shows that today's society lives in a time of inclusivity, and it seems that this is not a universal victory over the invisibility of individuals, but the main achievement of modern society. All people are gears of a single society. Everyone has the right to fit into the general march to defend their rights. But Murata wonders what to do if a person does not want to fit into anything at all? Then it turns out that society, by expanding the slots of possible deviations from the norm, did not free a person, but only limited him more.

Critics note the similarity of the characters of the writer and the main character: both are lonely and withdrawn, and, it seems, do not live up to parents' expectations. However, Sayaka Murata herself claims that she is not exactly Keiko. Keiko is strong-willed and strong, and she doesn't care what people think about her. That's why Keiko is a real hero. For this, Sayaka Murata adores her.

This is a very deep story, imbued with subtle psychologism, about what can happen to a person if you adjust him to social standards and "burn out" his individuality from childhood.

As for the combini itself, or convenience store is a unique phenomenon of Japanese culture. There is everything there. Coffee, tea, provisions, ready meals, hygiene items, books and periodicals, alcoholic beverages, chargers and batteries, even cosmetics and medicines. Japan is a country that began the era of intellectual domination, which is also reflected in the novel written by Sayaka Murata. This is especially evident in the novel itself by the fact that all the food in such convenience stores in Japan is made by robots, not people. You can also print documents and photos, receive parcels, buy

tickets to concerts in the combini. It is not surprising that such stores become real centers of attraction in Japanese cities.

Students, visitors, musicians of garage rock bands, losers, housewives work in an ordinary convenience store. Under the working form, you can hardly distinguish a person. And few people will think for a long time about the fate of the cashier of this combini, what she lives outside the store, what brought her here [1].

"It was interesting to watch how a student, a musician, a freelancer, a housewife, an evening school student and other people, wearing a uniform, gradually turn into identical creatures called a Combini Worker. The training ended, the employees took off their uniforms and assumed their former appearance. It seemed to me that by changing their clothes, they were reincarnating into other beings again [4]."

"Convenience store woman" is just about such an employee. Eighteen years have passed, and it seems that nothing has changed - she is still there, behind the counter of a convenience store. Even regular customers ask, meeting the same Keiko Furukura in the store for years: "Nothing has changed here, right [4]?"

Keiko's small circle of friends looks at her with suspicion. Each of these people plays their own social role – someone is raising children someone is climbing up the career ladder. They all want to "fix" Keiko, because a person can't voluntarily give up a family and a decent job, right? Anyway, a normal person. "It seemed to me that my friends were trying to give my feelings a form that would be simple and understandable to them in the first place [4]."

All Keiko's thoughts and whole life are subordinated to the store, while society presses her with its questions: "Why aren't you looking for a normal job?", "Why aren't you married?". As a child, she learned to be silent and not to take the initiative when she saw that she was considered a little strange. At the combini, she learned to live by the job description. She is not interested in marriage or other work, but others care about everything. They don't approve of her actions and know exactly what's best. In order to strengthen her normality in the eyes of others and, the heroine copies the manner of speech of other workers of the combini, buys clothes, shoes and cosmetics of their favorite brands or in the same places. She "absorbs" their voices and alternately "turns on" them when required. But life - saving work ceases to suit family and friends: eighteen years in a part-time combine, without a husband and without children is "abnormal". At this moment, Shiraha, the male counterpart of the heroine, turns up successfully.

Since Keiko herself is quite humble about the fate of an outcast, the author pairs her with a character in which Keiko is displayed as in a crooked mirror. This is a man named Shiraha, the same age as the Keiko, who also came to work in the combine. He is a misogynist who blames the failures of his life on the inferiority of the world and looks down on Keiko. Shiraha works poorly, sticks to the saleswomen and watches the customers, trying to find a partner. This unpleasant character was soon fired for stalking one customer, but does not show any signs that he can change and change his life for the better. When Shiraha finds out how Keiko lives, he offers her a deal: she will marry him to her young man so that society will no longer bother her with questions, and he will get a roof over his head in her eighteen-square-meter apartment. Therefore, after being fired from a convenience store, he shamelessly settles into Keiko's small rented apartment and lives at her expense, continuing to wail endlessly and complain about society. At home, they eat products decommissioned from the combine and drink cider from crumpled cans unsuitable for sale.

Her sister flooded her with messages and calls, and before that she had always been indifferent to her life. Later, Keiko realizes that the presence of a young man does not stop the flow of claims from society, as they continue to cling to her with various questions about her personal life and her plans for the future.

As it turns out later, the young man Keiko is up to his ears in debt and endlessly offended by life. Shiraha has his own philosophy: despite the past millennia, society continues to live according to the laws of the tribe — strong men get power and beautiful wives, weak - nothing. He is embittered and justifies this whole order of things by the fact that our nature is so arranged — we either belong to our

kind and obey its formal and informal rules, or we are expelled from it. So, it was and so it will always be, according to this character. This is how he explains to himself and others the reasons for his failures. Shiraha is afraid of this world, wants to hide.

Murata writes the following about the readers' attitude to this character. "When I did the portrait characterization of Shiraha, he had to be a person who arouses deep sympathy among readers, because other workers treat him rudely and cruelly. But when I started writing, Shiraha revealed the appearance of a terrible personality, and he became one of the main characters. I was surprised by how many Japanese readers said they couldn't hate him because they understood his feelings as an outcast. However, when the translation of this novel into English was published abroad, readers did not immediately fall in love with Shirah, so only the Japanese reader was on his side [5]."

In general, the "Convenience store woman" is, of course, a story about the rigid boundaries of what is permissible by society and how difficult it is to fit into these boundaries. Keiko starts working at the combini because it is approved by others. But in the end, it seems to find her place there. She feels that she is doing good.

Sayaka Murata does not describe anything ugly, disgusting or immoral. She manages to twist the familiar world in such a way that behind the norms and decencies, an alarming reality appears, which is about to reach its limit. Because as long as society adheres to certain "unwritten" rules, it will suppress some people and provide others with food, money, status, etc.

In this sense, the novel "Convenience store woman" can be compared with the sensational book "Normal People" by Sally Rooney (b. 1991). "Normal People" is a story about how one person can change the life of another [3]. And about how sometimes it is difficult for people to talk about their feelings. But if Sally Rooney writes about the topic of norms and anomalies in human relations, then Sayaka Murata quite accurately diagnoses emerging questions about our values. And without the help of the image of a modern city (Tokyo), it would hardly have been possible to do it so vividly.

This seemingly simple, but unexpectedly profound story diagnoses modern society: do we all live in a kind of dystopia and, like thousands of years ago, are ready to destroy and trample on those who do not want to live by generally accepted rules?

"Convenience store woman" is a caustic and grotesque satire, stating that modern society, in fact, is not much different from the great literary dystopias. Under the thin crust of humanism and humanity hides an ancient horror of everyone who is not like others and does not want to play by the accepted rules. And when society is afraid of something, it behaves like a virus-ridden organism – it tries its best to get rid of an outsider. Are we able, with all the tolerance of the XXI century, to overcome this instinct? Sayaka Murata strongly doubts this [2].

Sayaka Murata wrote a subtle story from the point of view of psychologism – a story about the conventionality of the norm and how "right" for some turns into hell for other people. A small segment of the life of an employee of the combini turned out to be a story that was suddenly close and understandable to many people struggling with similar problems in life.

It seems that many young people face similar situations, and in this regard, Murata very skillfully points out the problems of unjustified hopes of parents of their children, about the cruelty of others to people of low-prestige professions, to service personnel. And also, the author talks about the illusion of success. About the desire of many people for ephemeral success, which hides burnout, hard work, insomnia, the destruction of relationships for the sake of a career.

Thus, we can conclude that the writer wants to draw our attention to two trends that are rapidly developing in Japan. First: in the conditions of a modern successful capitalist society, there is a simplification of moral values. Secondly, there is a loss of self-awareness among modern people. Therefore, the author wants people to turn to the search for this lost self-consciousness.

Sayaka Murata tries to explore on the pages of her novel "Convenience store woman" where the boundaries of normality lie in modern society and what a person who does not fit into them feels. And the author also encourages people to live not according to templates, but as they want, if it does not infringe on the freedom of choice of others.

References:

1. 三島由紀夫賞・山本周五郎賞・川端康成文学賞贈呈式 (2013) 「挑戦してよかった」 喜びと感謝と
2. <芥川賞>印西出身の村田沙耶香さん 入学時文集「いつか理想の自分に」 (2016) 二松学舎大学付属柏高、母校も喜びに沸く / 千葉
3. 『コンビニ人間』で海外でも注目・村田沙耶香 (2020) : 「魔法少女」に変身できない私たちが生き抜くために”
4. 村田沙耶香『コンビニ人間』文藝春秋、2016 年 7 月 [www.amazon.co.jp/contributors/ref=AUTHOR?pf_rd_p=4163906185] .
5. An Indies Introduce Q&A with Sayaka Murata and Ginny Tapley Takemori, 2018. <https://www.bookweb.org/news/indies-introduce-qa-sayaka-murata-and-ginny-tapley-takemori-104717>