



CONFESSIONAL MOTIVES IN THE WORKS OF THE JAPANESE WRITER SAYAKA MURATA

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Abstract

This article devoted to autobiographical motives and their features in contemporary Japanese novels using the example of Sayaka Murata's works. Each of Sayaka Murata's works is original and original in its own way, but they are all united by the acute, most common problems of our society. The problems inherent in each country and especially concerning Japanese society are touched upon.

Keywords: I-novel, Japanese novel, autobiographical genre, autobiography, Sayaka Murata.

Introduction

Sayaka Murata is a modern Japanese writer, short story writer, essayist, who managed to gain great prestige in the West thanks to her I-novel "Convenience Store Woman". Since childhood, she has been a big fan of manga (Japanese comics) and short stories for girls. She is a graduate of the literary Faculty of Tamagawa University. Since she started writing from her youth, Murata's introductory essay "Ideal" was highly appreciated in the exams [5].

Murata started writing when she was in elementary school, and dreamed of writing novels for girls. At the same time, she was constantly thinking about how to find the real truth of life.

"I was one of those children who liked to think about different issues. I couldn't understand why my parents were feeding me. They would say it was because we were a loving family, but I couldn't accept such an unequivocal answer [3]."

Since childhood, she had doubts about various human actions that an ordinary child does not ask. "For example, murder is considered taboo, but then why is it considered acceptable if it is self-defense or the death penalty?". Such deep and acute questions visited her from an early age.

As she continued to create new stories, she wanted to experiment with the topic of various prohibitions in society. She thought it might be a way to get closer to the real truth about things she had been searching for since early childhood. She also says that her ability to write gradually helped her gain freedom and learn not to be afraid to express her opinion, to have her own judgment on everything.

As an elementary school student, Murata was greatly impressed by reading the novel by the French writer Jules Renard "Ginger" (French Poil de carotte) "I did not like simple and banal children's stories, in which, since mothers love their children, there was always a happy ending. So I felt incredibly relieved and happy that "Ginger" was a hopeless child in every sense of the word. Jules Renard had more gloom in his narration than I did, and he described everything as it is, without a single word of lies. It was the first time I felt close to the author, we were on the same wavelength." Thus, the autobiographical novel "Ginger" by Jules Renard had a huge impact on the formation of Murata's



character and served as an impetus for writing her works, and especially her autobiographical novel “Convenience Store Woman”.

The writer also experienced a painful adolescence, and she herself says that she even thought about suicide. "I was ignored by a girl I was friends with at first. After she talked to me for a long time, told me nice words about how funny and interesting I was, she suddenly started being rude, insulting me and stopped communicating with me. For a while I thought I could blame her for suicide, but I thought that even if I died, she would probably laugh at my funeral. So, in the end, I wanted to live. Then I also wrote works of art, which gave me another attachment to life. Whatever happened, I felt that the most important thing was to get through it."

Sayaka Murata began to take her work as a writer more seriously during her studies at the university, when she made her debut with the story "Breastfeeding", for which she was awarded the Gunzo Prize for Aspiring Writers [6]. Murata's works have won the Mishima Prize four times. In 2009, Murata was awarded the Noma Prize for a novel with a teenage theme – "Silver Song".

Murata's 2014 dystopian novel "The Murder of the Born" shows life in Japan 100 years later. Artificial insemination methods have improved, and the decline in the population due to a decrease in the birth rate has become a serious problem. So, as a measure to reduce the birth rate, a system was introduced in which one child out of ten born could be destroyed. A hundred years ago, murder was evil. But now if ten children were born, then you can safely kill one. Japan keeps its population under control, deciding the fate of infants with the help of a system developed by them to destroy "extra children". What will happen to a society where murder is allowed? With this work Murata asks questions about the traditional system of love and marriage and makes you think about their values. Murata reveals his writing talent in the dystopian genre in a completely new way, using the example of the novel "Murder of the Born", depicting the social system and society of Japan in the future, which the author finds undesirable, repulsive and frightening. But it is with the help of the literary technique of hyperbolization that the writer manages to raise such problems of modern society as the relationship between children and parents, problems of a social nature. The author gives food for thought, touching upon the issues of traditional values of love, marriage and allows each of us to draw appropriate conclusions after reading this work. Murata herself exposes the vices of modern society in this novel, showing how important it is to achieve gender equality in a society in which women and men have the same opportunities and rights.

In the following 2016, Sayaka Murata's novel “Convenience Store Woman” is published. It reflects the atmosphere of a store familiar to the Japanese, which is an integral part of city life in Japan. The novel is narrated by a woman named Furukura Keiko, who worked as a saleswoman in the same minimarket for 18 years, like the author of the novel herself. Eight directors were replaced, her colleagues came and left, and the girl is still there — she eats ready-made food from her store and drinks mineral water sold there. She became a person from a minimarket. And it gives her the feeling that she is an ordinary person. She made it a rule never to show her feelings or express her opinions. Instead, she has created a "patchwork personality" by copying behavior and adopting habits and mannerisms from the women around her, mostly work colleagues whom she considers correct and admires their style [1]. This



effective and convenient strategy allows her to adapt to her own environment. At the moment when, arriving at work shortly before the start of the shift, she changes into a work uniform, Keiko turns into a function, into a "minimarket person".

Murata never plans the ending of her works. "The plans for the ending of the work change while I'm writing, they are as unpredictable as chemical reactions. I don't really trust "Murata", who lives in our "human" society. She looks at things only with eyes that depend on public opinion and social stereotypes, clichés with which people are "brainwashed". I still write with the belief that through my stories I travel to the real world, which I cannot see myself [2]."

Murata's minor characters can also make a strong impression, in no way inferior to the main characters. The writer notes that she always begins the narrative with a portrait of the characters appearing in the work. While she describes their age, gender, hairstyle and clothes, she imagines things like what kind of childhood they had, and the characters gradually fall into place and acquire individual characteristics and traits. The writer also gets food for thought from strangers who are next to her in everyday life.

"When I write in a cafe, I catch the true feelings of people, for example, if a man shows terrible contempt for women, or if someone talks about his search for a marriage partner, and complains that it is not so easy to find a suitable person for himself. I think I unwittingly keep all these impressions in my head. Then, when I start to create, these various expressions of people I don't know, their emotions, experiences suddenly wake up in me, and I feel how they penetrate into the characters of my works and find their true place in them [2]."

Sometimes minor characters in the novels of this writer can play a decisive role in changing the composition of the work.

In many ways, Murata's works reflect her own reality. That is why one of the novels under consideration in this work, specifically "Convenience store woman" is autobiographical. Murata describes the realities of life by passing them through his inner state, his life experience and poses problems of loneliness, misunderstanding of society, social inequality to his characters.

A distinctive feature of Murata's writing style is the unity of the narrative, which is created by the evolution of images (main characters), which, changing, maintain internal unity.

In all the works, the writer's childhood and adolescence are felt, in which she faced the problems revealed later in her works in all the main characters: misunderstanding of others, her somewhat low self-esteem, complexes. Nevertheless, she struggles with these complexes, and in her novel "Convenience Store Woman", autobiography is especially felt, since the events of her life coincide – working in a minimarket for 18 years.

To sum up, despite the thematic and genre diversity that encompasses the novels of Sayaka Murata, in each of her works there is an autobiographical motive in one way or another, which undoubtedly gives impetus to the further development of the autobiographical genre in modern Japanese literature.



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