

Silence as the Motive of Resistance in a Postcolonial Text

**(based on the novels of A. Roy *The God of Small Things*
and M. Matios *Sweet Darusia*)**

In the 20th and 21st centuries a phenomenon of silence has been under discussions in philosophy, culture, art, literature, and literary criticism abroad as well as in Ukraine. Though, there are not enough practical comparative research papers analyzing how this phenomenon is being presented as a literary motive in different literatures. We have chosen two novels: the first one is from the Indian literature and the second one is from the Ukrainian literature both written by female writers at the turn of the 20th centuries. Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* (published in 1996) and Maria Matios' novel *Sweet Darusia* (published in 2004) are analyzed through lenses of the comparative typological method that aims at finding out coincidences and parallel themes, motives and characters in two texts written independently without any genetic connections or influences.

Two novels have a number of common features giving the right to treat these texts as postcolonial. First of all, both writers describe nations, Indian and Ukrainian, which were subjected to the political domination of another population. There is a psychological and social interplay between pre-colonial cultures and what empire cultures imposed upon them in the texts. Main ex-colonial characters are left with psychologically negative self-images and a feeling of alienation from their own traditional culture, which had been forbidden or devalued for so long. The colonized characters are marginalized and presented as Others. There are also characters in both novels with so called double consciousness as they perceive the world divided between two cultures. Such a situation leads them to a feeling of unhomeliness, making them psychological refugees within their native culture.

Two characters, who are keeping silence, Esthappen and Darusia, are not voiceless. They started to avoid words because of trauma they had had in their childhoods. The traumas were caused by their betrayals of the closest people, but the

enforcement from colonizers had been behind each betrayal. That is why characters' choice of speechlessness becomes a key helping to understand their opposition to society and their role as alienated individuals.

Voluntary silence provokes changes in characters' appearances, behaviors, and body practices. People around them start to question their mental abilities and as a result Esthappen and Darusia are subjected to ostracism. Their modes of live and time-perception have lots in common: they are placed out of historical time because their consciousness is fixed in the past and they continue to live through their traumas again and again feeling physical pain when they meet things, such as sweets for Darusia, reminding them about the past. Though, they both do not remember the exact reasons of their speechlessness. As a result both writers use a specific structure to organize the narratives: A. Roy uses a circular flow of the narrative in which all and the same details are repeated many times in different variations, and M. Matios uses a retrospective form of narration.

Esthappen's silence "was never awkward. Never intrusive. Never noisy" (Roy 1996, 6) as A. Roy admits, but M. Matios often questions the power of speech and the power of muteness juxtaposing deep meaning of Darusia's silence and emptiness of her neighbors' talkativeness. In contrast to Esthappen, Darusia can still speak but only in very specific circumstances: first, when she visits a cemetery, a liminal territory, an anti-world, and, second, when she had to express her attitude to a male character Ivan. In these situations readers can still have hope that an oppressed and alienated woman can speak (in terms of G. Ch. Spivak).

There is a motive, which stands very close to silence of main characters. It is music in both novels. It is often treated as a medium of communication, as a tool making people to keep silence, and as a connecting link to archaic sacral practices. There is also much in common how both writers use the theme of water in their novels. Water is presented as a sacral thing that unites mythological and poetical worlds of Indian and Ukrainian writers.

Summing up, both novels represent the problem of silence as a metaphor of speechless generations of oppressed colonial societies and their national cultures.

Historical events and situations of post-independence have inspired the Indian and the Ukrainian writers to create post-colonial texts which have many common themes, motives, types of characters and ways to narrate about them.