

HISTORY DEPICTION WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL SEQUENCING IN AMITAV GHOSH'S RIVER OF SMOKE

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INTRODUCTION

River of Smoke (2011) is the second novel of Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* trilogy which is the extension to the first narrative *Sea of Poppies*, shifting its thematic focus from the voyage of migrants to the world opium trade in Canton, the First Opium War. This novel is going to present the richest tapestry of intercultural encounters, commercial ambitions, political tensions which shaped the 19th century in the global history. Amitav Ghosh in this novel achieved a significant master style by presenting psychological sequencing point of view to present the text in a cognitive narrative technique where readers can experience the events which are written in historical perspective through the multiple characters, where readers can sense the consciousness of those roles while reading. Ghosh used internal and external psychological sequencing to reveal the character thoughts, emotions, and memories, character like Robin, Chinnary, Neel Ratan, Halder, Mr Slade, and various traders and migrants.

Readers can see the utmost complex style of narration of Amitav Ghosh by employing novel with multiple perspectives, including narration, first person, epistolary narration, character focalisation to construct the complex, social and political atmosphere of Canton, where opium trade was taken place. With his fine technic of psychological sequencing, readers can experience the live actions by transforming historical events into live experiences where readers can witness the anxiety, aspirations and also conflict which are taken place by the opium trade. The present paper is going to discuss the craftsmanship of Amit Ghosh's internal and external psychological viewpoint to create mental images among readers as live and deep characterisation to take the narration into next level representing the historical, colonial Commerce and also intercultural interactions which were taken place in the 19th

century. This style of narrative technique demonstrates the strong relationship between individuals and larger historical processes.

METHODOLOGY

Leech and Short (2007)'s narrative viewpoint "psychological sequencing" developed the Uspensky (1973) model is chosen for the analysis. Fowler and Uspensky's Internal and External viewpoint are also discussed in this analysis. The extracts are taken in this study are from Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*'s passages which are chosen by the author to narrative this technique. The article adopts the qualitative analysis approach in Cognitive narratology. The data primarily sourcing from Ghosh's *River of Smoke* from the selected passage, illustrating narrative technique, psychological sequencing. This analysis is conducted based on the close reading of the text, with the multiple perspectives and shifting personalisation to represent the experience of colonial subjects. The emphasis made on cognitive policy and the study investigates how the internal psychological sequence, how the readers are understanding characters' roles, thoughts, emotions, memories, and also perceptions. The analysis explores the narrative viewpoints are exposed with the structures of power, subjugation and negotiations under the British colonial rule.

Analysis of River of Smoke

"And so, at last to the foreign enclave—or 'Fanqui-town' as I have already learnt to call it!" (181) "... And yet it is a *tiny* place!" (184) "... the lads will swarm after him, with their hands outstretched, shouting: 'Achha! Achha! Gimme Cumshaw!'" (185) Ghosh gets immersed into his character's mind, thinks as they do, speaks with their voice and watches with their eyes. This is called **psychological sequencing point of view technique**. In his narratives he draws a parallel between the individual process of psychological recovery and historical and national progress. It is through the omnipresent narrator, first person dramatized narrator Robin Chinnery and different character focalizers that the reader experiences the historical period of the opium war.

The same Canton is projected through different pictures with change in political scenario as Chinnery's letter focalizes the same place in the end of the novel in **different tones**. The pictures of Canton are projected through Chinnery's letter in a **mysterious manner** as he sees it in his vision when he closes his eyes and thinks himself "to be back in Canton" (550):

"From the top I looked down and saw a line of flames leaping above the river; the factories were on fire and they burnt through the night... I saw that the Fanqui-town had been reduced

to ashes; it was gone everything had disappeared... in the Maidan. They had all been wiped away and in their place here were only ashes..." (550-51)

Ghosh used the showing technique to picturise the Fanqui-town where he comes back to Canton and visualise in Maiden. This **Internal Psychological Sequencing point of view** creates the mental images for situation in "Fanqui-town" how it is going to be dimalised in the present tense of epistolary style of first-person narration of Chinnery "looked down" "flames leaping" "on fire" "reduced to ashes" "disappeared" "wiped away" "only ashes" as readers seeing directly from the top of the Canton. This epistemological discourse was presented in **Internal Psychological Sequencing point of view** creates the mental images for situation in "Fanqui-town".

Psychological Sequencing is one of the best styles of fictional writing. The order in which a character comes to learn about the components of the fiction. In Internal Psychological Sequencing, character captivating on the narrator role or by a narrator assuming an omniscient viewpoint, capable to enter the inner states of the character. And External Psychological Sequencing happens the minute events of a story are presented from the outside position of any specific character's consciousness, so exclusive of any thoughts or feelings that character may experience. In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh uses Internal Psychological Sequencing point of view to describe the fear and threat of the living, with "all she knew, inhabited by demons and pishaches" and "How could he, Kalua, or anyone else, know, that it wasn't true that the recruits were being fattened for the slaughter?". When Ah Fatt tells Neel about his past life, the following comment by omnipresent narrator indirectly presents Ghosh's views on art of story-telling in External Psychological Sequencing. Birds' Point of view narration where the author or character has the power of seeing things without knowing by live characters. Here Ghosh's comments on the past life of Ah Fatt expresses "It was not because of Ah Fatt's fluency that Neel's vision of Canton". This passage clearly suggests the authorial presence commenting on the art of storytelling.

In Chapter two from page 27 to 38, the story goes both in present and past focusing on Deeti's life. Here, though the speed is decelerated to narrate her past yet unrevealed secrets of her past life—the truth of her first night and the real father of her daughter Kabutri. Ghosh presented her past with External Psychological sequencing viewpoint, the omniscient narrator recollecting her past "When Deeti was her daughter's age, things were different: poppies had been a luxury then, grown in small clusters between the fields that bore the main winter crops – wheat, masoor dal and vegetables". (29) From page 39 to 52 the narrative moves both in present and past, shifting back in time to unveil Neel's life. External Psychological

sequencing viewpoint, the omniscient narrator recollecting Neel's past "Neel Rattan Halder was a devout upholder of inherited traditions: for over a year now" (39, 40) and "Neel had but recently come into the title, having inherited it upon his father's death two years before: he was in his late twenties, and although well past his first youth" (41)

In Chapter three Ghosh narrated from omniscient narration of External Psychological viewpoint to reveal the status of Kalua in the society as "lived in the Chamar-basti", "a cluster of huts" and "doorless entrance." (54) In Chapter twelve pages 277 to 285 present a detailed commentary on migrants' shifting to Baboo Nob Kissin's newly built depot. In the journey the situation is changed after reach the pulwar from the ship. People who are travelling in this ship are detailed with external psychological sequencing viewpoint of men and woman "In the men's section, with its greater press of numbers, there was a good deal of jostling and pushing and not everyone was able to find a desirable vantage point; the women were luckier – with two windows to share between them, they were all able to look at the shorefront as the city approached." (273)

In *River of Smoke*, Ghosh used internal psychological sequencing style, "And so, at last to the foreign enclave—or 'Fanqui-town' as I have already learnt to call it!" (181) "... And yet it is a *tiny* place!" (184) ". . . the lads will swarm after him, with their hands outstretched, shouting: 'Achha! Achha! Gimme Cumshaw!'" (185) Ghosh gets immersed into his character's mind, thinks as they do, speaks with their voice and watches with their eyes. This is called internal psychological sequencing point of view style. In his narratives he draws a parallel between the individual process of psychological recovery and historical and national progress. It is through the omnipresent narrator, first person dramatized narrator Robin Chinnery and different character focalizers that the reader experiences the historical period of the opium war. Ghosh used internal psychological internal point of view to tell the character Neel's lamented situation as character narrator/author narrator. It is the history but Neel telling as he is the direct testimony "It was burnt to the ground". Here, the author is giving full details of the situation with place deixis "the city" time deixis "One night" to grab the complete attention of the reader.

This reflects the intense politics and seriousness of opium trade era in Canton. Though Ghosh started the passage with "I have looked into the matter", a first-person narration, with a slow pace and suspensive narrative start conclude and clears with "continued Mr. Slade" third person character narration. In this character narration passage tells the memory or personal history of Mr. Slade's Psychological internal point of view, "I have looked", and "I cite". And Ghosh tries to visualize readers the situation and reason for the war in Canton in 1622

“seizure of property”, “declaration of war”, “robbery” and “contemplated”. Ghosh used the showing technique to picturise the Fanqui-town where he comes back to Canton and visualise in Maiden. This Internal Psychological Sequencing point of view creates the mental images for situation in “Fanqui-town” how it is going to be dimalised in the present tense of epistolary style of first-person narration of Chinnery “looked down” “flames leaping” “on fire” “reduced to ashes” “disappeared” “wiped away” “only ashes” as readers seeing directly from the top of the Canton. This epistemological discourse was presented in Internal Psychological Sequencing point of view creates the mental images for situation in “Fanqui-town”.

CONCLUSION

Ghosh used sophisticated stylistic tools to present the novel in psychological sequencing point of view to narrative historical events into the live experience in the minds of the readers by demonstrating history through human consciousness. Readers can directly access the fictional world by perceptions by the internal psychological sequencing technique. And, readers can feel the perceptions, emotions and memories of characters as their own by connecting to the real history from the distant part such as Robin Chinnery and Neel perceives. External psychological sequencing facilitates the readers by offering personal experience opium trade and colonial expansion with omniscient narrator providing the broader cultural, political and social perspective contextualities.

Ghosh’s finest style of narrations like focalization, epistolary narration, descriptive visualization and perspectives in narration shifting are enriching the novel’s historical and psychological depth in the narration. Ghosh leads the readers by depicting the Opium War, Fanqui-town, Canton as they are stuck with the personal observations and recollecting their schematic historical transformation intersects. His stylistic historical fiction with cognitive experience successfully bridges the gap between personal and public history through his style of narration. Finally, readers can aware through *River of Smoke* that history is not mere recording political events, economic transactions rather understanding and memorizing the complex web of human perceptions, emotions, and memories. With this this novel is remarkable example that how writers can deepen the narratives into engaging colonial history and cross-cultural encounters with psychological sequencing.

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