
The power of narrative: passion and boredom in Coelho's *Adultery*

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Abstract

Adultery is a novel written by Paulo Coelho which focuses on the story of a woman named Linda, who seems to have everything in her life. However, her perfect life seems to bore her and drive her to the brink of depression. Linda then gets involved in an affair to end her boredom. At the end of the story, Linda realizes that boredom is something which will always be a part of human's life, and mere adventures also distraction cannot abolish it. The only thing that one can do is to live their life the way it is with passion. This research analyzes the narrative techniques used in the novel based on Eastman's theory of narrative techniques, which include point of view, time and tempo, style, and distance. This theory will measure the distance between the readers and the story/the protagonist as well as the ability of the author in delivering the message through the very techniques he has chosen. The novel has been discussed mostly in the light of the psychological condition of the protagonist or the portrayal of the female protagonist while this research focuses specifically on the narrative techniques used by Coelho in delivering his message as the author of the novel using formalism approach. At the end of this research, it can be concluded that Coelho has successfully managed to deliver his idea about boredom and passion – which are inevitable in human's life – through the very narrative techniques he has chosen.

Keywords: point of view; time & tempo; style; distance; boredom

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Paulo Coelho is a prolific Brazilian author whose works have been well known worldwide. He has written numerous books, novels, short stories, essays, song lyrics, and many others. His novels, which are written originally in Portuguese, have been translated into 82 languages. Having published *The Alchemist*, the book which took off his writing career in 1988, he has sold more than 350 million books by 2016 (Heller). Besides *The Alchemist*, some of Coelho's famous works are *The Pilgrimage* (1987), *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* (1994), *Veronica Decides to Die*

(1998), *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000), *Eleven Minutes* (2003), *The Witch of Portobello* (2006), *The Winner Stands Alone* (2008), *Aleph* (2010), and *Adultery* (2014). His latest book is *The Archer*, which was published in November 2020.

Coelho maintains his active interactions with his readers through the social media, with more than 15 million followers on Twitter and 28 million likes on his Facebook page. In November 2014, he established a virtual Paulo Coelho Foundation after he finished uploading around 80.000 documents, diaries, photos, reader letters, press clippings, interviews, theatre appearances, etc. while the physical foundation can be found in Geneva (Biography). He also broadens his readership through blogging and making his books available online for free.

Coelho often writes about love, self-awareness, sexual desire, solitude, chasing one's dreams, and traveling in his novels – blending these issues with his characters and stories (Davies, 2022). Although many critics claim that his works are didactic and moralizing, Coelho's works remain very successful and well liked by readers in Brazil and abroad (Pallardy & Calvert, 2023).

Adultery, Coelho's novel published in 2014, centers around the life of a successful female journalist in Geneva, Switzerland. Despite her seemingly perfect life, she finds it boring and lack of passion. The fact that she is successful in her career, married to a faithful, kind husband with two kids, and lives in one of the most stable, peaceful countries in the world creates uneasiness in her, which she identifies as boredom, and almost leads her to depression. In order to banish her boredom and to bring excitement back to her life, she starts an affair with a politician who happens to be an ex-boyfriend. Thus, she begins an adventure that she mistakenly thinks will bring passion back to her life. However, at the end of the story, she realizes that her passionate affair cannot bring her to what she is looking for and she returns to her old life, with a realization that boredom and passion are both parts of human's life and living means accepting both in one's life.

The novel is criticized for the explicit content and is deemed a bit different from other Coelho's novels for the change of subject (Irfan, 2021). However, Coelho's message about life in *Adultery* is still apparent, not only from the events that make up the story, but also from the narrative techniques that he uses in writing the novel. This shows how the choice of the narrative techniques is an important element of the novel. Nevertheless, there seems to have been no previous study that addresses this aspect. Most of the previous researches conducted on this novel revolves around the psychological aspect of both the protagonist and the author (Desiana et al., 2018; Dorcas E. & Stylus, 2018a; Hamidah, 2015; Mauboi, 2018; Mayer & Maree, 2018; Nurhayati, 2017;) as well as the language aspect (Rekinagara, 2015; Ullah et al., 2023; Waskito, 2017; Wijayanti, 2017). Some other researches are concerned with the gender issues raised in the novel (Anggrainy, 2018; Dorcas E. & Stylus, 2018b) while the rest discusses several different aspects that are

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not related to the narrative techniques (see the literature review section below for the complete review on the previous studies). Therefore, to fill the gap in the previous studies, this particular research attempts to offer an analysis on the author's choice of narrative techniques.

The analysis itself is conducted using Richard M. Eastman's theory of narrative techniques. According to Eastman (1965), narrative techniques refer to the way / the technique an author chooses to tell the story to manifest effects that he wants the readers to feel. The technique will affect the relationship between the readers and the story. It will affect the readers' understanding of the story and determine whether an author can deliver his/her message through the story. This research will try to show that the techniques used by Coelho in writing *Adultery* are highly effective in delivering his message, and in order to do that, this research will focus on the discussion of the narrative techniques found in the novel.

Literature review

Considering the popularity of Paulo Coelho as an author, it is deemed necessary to examine the previous studies that have been conducted on *Adultery*, the chosen research object, in order to gain a general idea on where the possible research gaps would be.

There have been various theses as well as journal articles discussing this particular novel, but most of those studies are concerned with the psychological aspect of both the female protagonist and the author himself. Hamidah (2015), for example, uses Sigmund Freud's theory of personality and theory of depression to show that the female protagonist indeed exhibits several symptoms of depression whereas Nurhayati (2017) explains how the female protagonist's personality is dominated by superego and that she practices denial and repression as her defense mechanisms in dealing with her situation. Mauboi (2018), on the other hand, utilizes Murphy's theory of characterization and Hurlock's theory of personality development to analyse the personality development of the female protagonist. The result of the study shows that the female protagonist's personality undergoes some developments which are caused by her own concept of self as well as the influence of the social pressures and significant people around her. Similar to Hamidah (2015), Desiana et al. (2018) also uses Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis to discuss the mental state of the female protagonist. They claim that the happiness the female protagonist experiences actually becomes the cause of her sufferings and that the female protagonist then tries to shift from those sufferings by seeking satisfaction elsewhere.

Different from the previous four studies, Dorcas E. and Stylus (2018a) focus not only on *Adultery* but also on some other Coelho's novels. They discuss the female protagonists in three of Coelho's novels – *Eleven Minutes*, *Adultery*, and *The Spy* – and show how the female protagonists' life experiences during adolescent period help to create their individual personality later in life, especially when dealing with their respective life problems. Meanwhile, Mayer and Maree (2018) use a

psychobiographical single case study approach within the methodological frame of Husserl's phenomenology to explore the magic and magical thinking in both Coelho's life and works. The result of their study shows that magical thinking can be used in one's life as a means of personal development as well as a tool for creative production.

Other than the psychological aspect, there are some studies revolving around the language aspect of the novel. Rekinagara (2015), for example, discusses two translation strategies – namely foreignization and domestication – used in translating culture-related terms from the English version of *Adultery* into the Indonesian version titled *Selingkuh*. The result of his study shows that, out of 48 data, 36 are foreignized and 12 are domesticated. The findings suggest how people are globalized enough to recognize foreign terms so that some of those culture-related terms do not need to be translated. Similar to Rekinagara (2015), Waskito (2017) highlights the translation issue of the novel – only in terms of censorship. In his study, Waskito (2017) uses Cisquella's censorship theory and Lars Liljegren's translation strategy to describe the type of censorship and the translation strategies used in the English-Indonesian translation of *Adultery*. The findings show that, out of 208 censorable items, the topic that is censored the most is the one related to public morality while the translation strategy that is used the most is replacement. Waskito (2017) also finds that more than 80% of censorable items are not actually censored, triggering him to suggest the publisher to put age-rating for the novel. Meanwhile, Wijayanti (2017) discusses the type of figurative languages used in *Adultery*. Out of 115 data, she finds that the most dominant type of figurative language used in the novel is comparative figurative languages (simile, personification, metaphor, and allegory) with personification being the highest in number. In line with Wijayanti (2017), Ullah et al. (2023) discuss the language style used by the author in the novel. Using the Voyant Summary tool, they analyze Coelho's style markers such as total words, unique words, vocabulary density, the average length of sentences, and the most frequent words in some of his translated works. One of their findings reveals that Coelho's vocabulary density ranges between 0.075 to 0.0263 words, with *The Zahir* showing the lowest vocabulary density and *Adultery* the highest.

There are also other studies on this particular novel that highlight the gender issue. Dorcas E. and Stylus (2018b), for example, discuss the female protagonist in five of Coelho's novels – *Eleven Minutes*, *The Devil and Miss Prym*, *The Spy*, *The Witch of Portobello*, and *Adultery* – and show how all of Coelho's protagonists are always portrayed as empowered women with free will and resilient spirit who always thrive to achieve fulfillment in everything they do. On the other hand, Anggrainy (2018) prefers to focus on the male characters in the novel. In her study, she uses Stuart Hall's theory of representation and R.W. Connel's concept of hegemonic masculinities to discuss the concept of masculinities represented through the two male characters in the novel, Linda's husband and Jacob Konig. The result of her study shows that the concept of masculinities represented through the male characters in the

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novel is related to Swiss culture, indicating that the concept of masculinities does not have certain constant, universal characteristics but, instead, is something fluid as it depends on the context and culture where it is seen.

Several other studies highlight various aspects of the novel. In terms of comparative study, Maryono et al. (2017) conduct a research comparing Paulo Coelho's *Adultery* with Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. In their study, they show how the main characters' effort in pursuing their happiness actually demonstrate Albert Camus' idea of absurdity. Meanwhile, Utama (2018) chooses to focus on the text itself; she utilizes the new criticism approach to analyse the character, the plot, and the paradox in the story to show how the affair experienced by the protagonist unexpectedly becomes the tool to mend her marriage life.

Different from the others, Mardiyati (2018) attempts to delve more into the readers' perspective. In her study, she analyses the reception of young adult female readers regarding the issue of adultery depicted in the novel. She gains the data through an in-depth interview with several respondents. Then, through the encoding and decoding process of the data, Mardiyati (2018) reveals that 50% of the respondents belong to the dominant hegemonic position who agrees that adultery is a common issue in marriage and that people do not need to see it as something negative since it could also provide personality growth for the people involved. Nevertheless, she shows that the other 50% of the respondents belong to the oppositional position; they disagree with adultery in marriage, viewing it as something negative and should not be done whatever the excuses are. Mardiyati (2018) finds no data that belong to the negotiated position.

Meanwhile, Shaheen et al. (2019) use the concept of interdiscursivity and intertextuality to analyse twelve of Coelho's narratives: *Eleven Minutes*, *Adultery*, *The Witch of Portobello*, *The Alchemist*, *The Winner Stands Alone*, *The Zahir*, *Aleph*, *The Pilgrimage*, *Brida*, *The Fifth Mountain*, *Manual of the Warrior of Light*, and *The Devil and Miss Prym*. The result of their study shows that those twelve of Coelho's narratives have recurring themes (such as self-discovery, adventure into the unknown, learning, obsession, and death), symbols (such as fire, omens, and dance), speeches (such as shepherd, journeys, tragedies, orgasm), and ideas (such as happiness/unhappiness, dreams, quest, and love). The researchers then argue that those recurring elements become the uniqueness of the author and the works; they are what set Coelho and his works apart from the other authors and their works.

Based on the brief review above, it can be seen that no previous study has yet touched on the narrative aspect of the novel although it is definitely one significant element that makes the novel relatable for the readers. Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing the narrative techniques used in the novel in an attempt to provide a different insight on the topic.

Theoretical framework

According to Richard M. Eastman in his book *A Guide to the Novel*, narrative technique consists of four elements: point of view, time and tempo, style, and distance.

Point of view may be defined as the restriction of the readers' observation to a limited point of consciousness. There are four types of point of view, namely first-person point of view, third person limited point of view, third person dramatic point of view, and third person omniscient point of view.

In the first-person point of view, the story is recorded as the personal experience of 'I'. This point of view will hold the readers closely to the narrator and become very subjective. In the third person limited point of view, the story is told from one certain character who is now referred to as the third person. This point of view will become more objective compared to the first-person point of view while at the same time still hold the readers close to the character.

In the third person dramatic point of view, the character will act as a camera, capturing only the external expression or speech of the characters in the story. The readers will not be able to get any information about what is going on inside the characters' mind. In the third person omniscient point of view, or better known as the eye-of-God point of view, the story is again told from the perspective of the characters referred to as the third person, but the author may choose to reveal the thoughts from more than one character, or all characters, like God, as indicated by the name.

Time refers to the time sequence revealed in the story by the author. He/she may choose calendar order, a set of simple and continuous time sequences, or combine it with flashbacks. There are also alternating calendar order and fused time level. Tempo refers to the rate at which the events unfold to the readers. An author may choose to reveal the events slowly or hurry over years of events within a few pages.

Style refers to the way an author uses a language. Thus, there is no limit to style as it may vary from formal to informal, figurative or literal language, scientific terms or other terms, etc.

Distance is the last element in narrative technique and can be influenced by every other narrative element. Discussion of distance focuses on immediacy or directness of vision and empathy, the readers' identification of a given character.

Using Eastman's theory of narrative techniques, this research will show how the techniques that Coelho uses in writing the story *Adultery* support the message and the issue about boredom and passion in human's life.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This study is conducted using the library research method. The researchers start by reading the research object, which is a novel entitled

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Adultery by Paulo Coelho, to delve deeper into the research problem. The researchers also search for several additional sources that can be utilized to support the analysis. The researchers then analyze the novel using formalist approach, specifically using the Eastman's theory of narrative techniques, which includes the analysis of point of view, time and tempo, style, and distance of the novel. This theory is used to measure whether the narrative techniques employed by Coelho in this very novel manage to create immediacy between the readers and the story as well as the protagonist. After completing the analysis, the researchers then draw some conclusions from the findings and evaluate the effect that Coelho creates by employing such narrative techniques in his novel *Adultery*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The narrative techniques used by Coelho in his novel *Adultery* will be discussed in detailed below. The discussion will focus on the four elements of narrative techniques based on the theory by Richard M. Eastman, which consists of point of view, time and tempo, style, and distance.

Point of view

Adultery is written in the first-person point of view, which will create a sense of immediacy and empathy between the readers and the narrator because the readers are made known of the feelings and the thoughts of the narrator. The use of the word 'I' repeatedly will make the readers feel as if they are reading about themselves. As a result, the narrator and the readers will be very close as the author makes the readers feel involved emotionally with the narrator, thus feeling her boredom and her depression. The use of first-person point of view will be very subjective, but, in the case of the novel, it serves its purpose to make the readers feel exactly what the narrator is feeling.

The first proof can be found at the beginning of the novel when the narrator expresses how, despite her so-called perfect life, she suddenly feels there is nothing more in it. The use of 'I' in the novel makes the readers seem to ask themselves the same question that she asks herself: Is that all that life has to offer?

And yet, every morning, when I open my eyes to this ideal life that everyone dreams of having but few achieve, I know the day will be a disaster. Until the beginning of this year, I didn't question anything. I simply got on with my life, although now and then, I did feel guilty about having more than I deserved. One day, though, while I was making everyone breakfast (it was spring, I remember, and the flowers were just beginning to open in the garden), ***I asked myself this: "Is this it?"*** (Coelho 3-4)

Another quotation in the novel shows how the use of 'I' makes the readers able to relate to the character. It happens when the narrator interviews a writer who says that passion is everything in his life, then the narrator begins to ponder about her own life. She is comfortable with her life before, and she never questions about passion. However, the writer makes her feel that she is lacking something, thus begins her

feeling torn between boredom and passion. Again, the use of first-person point of view gives an honest and clear insight of what the narrator is feeling and makes the readers sympathize with her.

The following day, ***I realized that I never take risks at all.***

...

I think that passion is strictly for the young. Presumably, its absence is normal at my age, but that isn't what terrifies me.

Today I am a woman torn between the terror that everything might change and the equal terror that everything might carry on exactly the same for the rest of my days.

...

When night comes and no one is watching, I feel afraid of everything: life, death, love or the lack of it; the fact that all novelties quickly become habits; the feeling that I'm wasting the best year of my life in a pattern that will be repeated over and over until I die; and sheer panic at facing the unknown, however exciting and adventurous that might be. (4-6)

Later on in the story, when the narrator is admitting to herself that she is having a depression and that she feels that her routine is toxic, the use of 'I' or first-person point of view once again makes the readers feel immediate closeness with the narrator as they would be able to feel exactly what she feels. When the narrator expresses her feeling of being tired and hopeless towards her condition, the readers certainly feel the same way.

I don't have the strength to say what I do or don't want to do. Why don't I just give up yoga once and for all? Why don't I go to psychiatrist and start taking those magic pills? Why can't I control myself and stop thinking about Jacob? After all, he never suggested he wanted anything more than someone to talk about Saturn and the frustrations that all adults face sooner or later.

I can't stand myself any longer. My life is like a film endlessly repeating the same scene. (45)

Time and tempo

The next element to be discussed is time. The novel is generally written in chronological order, yet there is no clear indication of time sequence at the beginning of the story. This can be seen through the following quotations when the narrator describes her daily life and her regular family activities sometime before she has an affair:

EVERY morning, when I open my eyes to the so-called "new day," I feel like closing them again, staying in bed, and not getting up. But I can't do that.

.....

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Once a year, I go on holiday with the whole family, usually to some far-flung paradise with marvelous beaches, where we stay in exotic cities inhabited by very poor people who make us feel richer, more privileged, and more grateful for the blessings life has bestowed upon us.

...

And yet, **every morning**, when I open my eyes to this ideal life that everyone dreams of having but few achieve, I know the day will be a disaster. **Until the beginning of this year**, I didn't question anything. I simply got on with my life, although, now and then, I did feel guilty about having more than I deserved. **One day**, though, while I was making everyone breakfast (it was spring, I remember, and the flowers were just beginning to open in the garden), I asked myself: "Is this it?" (3-4)

...

TODAY, when I leave the house to walk the kids to school, I take a good look at my neighbor. (9)

...

ANOTHER day at the newspaper, trying to ferret out some interesting news other than the usual car accident, weaponless mugging, and fire (which dozens of fire engines manned by highly qualified firemen rushed to put out and flooded an old apartment. (15)

As can be seen in the quotations above, the narrator never mentions any particular time when describing her life. She uses several adverbs of time, such as "every morning", "once a year", "one day", and "today", but such adverbs do not show exactly when a certain event happens in relation to other events in her life. The clearest adverb of time the narrator uses in the quotation is "until the beginning of this year", yet it does not provide any clear information about the narrator's present either. The readers might know that the narrator starts telling them her story sometime after the beginning of the year, but they will not be able to pinpoint when exactly in that year she does the narration.

The use of such adverbs of time thus causes the readers not to be able to determine the arrangement of events in the narrator's life in their exact chronological order since they cannot be sure which event comes first and which event comes later. As a result, the readers will feel that the events happening in the narrator's life are all very similar, thus creating a sense of being lost in time and routine. Moreover, the adverbs of time used by the narrator in the story are also those which show routine or habitual actions, thus adding to the impression that the narrator's life is repetitive and boring. The unclear indication of time sequence at the beginning of the story thus helps the readers to feel the boredom experienced by the narrator.

Nevertheless, when the narrator starts having an affair, the story is told with clearer indication of time sequence. This can be seen through

the following quotations when the narrator narrates a series of events that happen sometime before she is caught having an affair with Jacob by Marianne, Jacob's wife:

TODAY is Saturday, the eve of the elections. I have a friend who says he hates weekends because when the stock market is closed he has no way to amuse himself. (75)

...

That Sunday afternoon, I'm at the party headquarters doing my professional duty. I managed to convince my boss of this, and now I'm trying to convince myself. It's a quarter to six and people are celebrating. Contrary to my fevered imaginings, none of the elected candidates will be holding a reception, and so I still won't get a chance to go to the house of Jacob and Marianne König. (83)

...

I SPEND **the whole of Monday morning** trying to call Jacob's private mobile number. I never get through. I block his number, on the assumption that he has done the same with mine. I try ringing again, but still no luck. (89)

As can be seen in the quotations above, the narrator uses more specific adverbs of time compared to the ones at the beginning of the story. She tells the readers explicitly that the first event – “the eve of the elections” – happens on Saturday, followed by some other events on Sunday and Monday consecutively. These kinds of adverbs show clearly when a certain event in the narrator's life happens in relation to other events in the story; they enable the readers to arrange the events happening to the narrator in their exact chronological order, thus creating a sense that the story moves forward. As a result, the readers will feel what the narrator herself feels – that there are various events happening to her and that her life becomes more exciting when she is following her passion and having an affair.

This clearer indication of time sequence is also seen in another part of the novel when the narrator narrates what happens to her after she is caught having an affair with Jacob:

It's been **one week since** I received Jacob's message saying I'd ruined everything. **One week since** I roamed the streets aimlessly, a moment I would soon be reminded of by the traffic ticket. **One week since** that conversation with my husband. (215)

By using the phrase “one week since...”, the narrator directly informs the readers of how long the time has passed since she is caught having an affair. The use of such phrase enables the readers to understand which event in the narrator's life comes first and which one comes later; the readers will be able to arrange the events happening to the narrator into an exact timeline. As a result, the readers will get the

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impression that the story moves forward while at the same time sympathize with what the narrator is feeling – that her life is eventful and no longer boring when she is having an affair.

The same thing can be said about the tempo of the novel. In the beginning before the narrator has an affair, the story is told in a slow tempo. This can be seen through one part of the novel where the narrator states that she sees her neighbor when she is taking her children to school:

TODAY, when I leave the house to walk the kids to school, I take a good look at my neighbor. I've never imagined having sex with him. I'd rather imagine having sex with a young reporter who works with me, the one who seems to be in a permanent state of suffering and solitude. I've never seen him try to seduce anyone, and that's what's so charming. All the women in the office have commented that "the poor thing needs someone to look after him." I reckon he knows this and is happy merely to be an object of desire, nothing more. Perhaps, like me, he has a terrible fear of taking a false step and ruining everything—his job, his family, his past and future life.

Anyway, I look at my neighbor this morning and feel like crying. He is washing his car, and I think: "Look at that, another person just like me and my husband. One day we'll be doing the same thing. Our children will have grown up and moved to another city, or even another country. We'll be retired, and will spend our time washing our cars even if we can perfectly well afford to pay someone else to do it for us. After a certain age, you have to do irrelevant things—to pass the time, to show others that your body is still in working order, to express that you still appreciate the value of money and can still carry out certain humble tasks."
(9)

This part of the story begins with the narrator's action – leaving her house to take her children to school and looking at her neighbor. However, the rest of the scene mostly contains the description of the narrator's inner thoughts that are triggered by what she sees. This kind of description will stall the plot as the narrator does not actually do anything to move the story forward when she is thinking, resulting in the slow tempo of the story. The slow tempo itself will then give the readers an impression that the narrator's life also moves very slowly and lacks excitement. As a consequence, through the use of slow tempo, the readers will also be able to feel the boredom experienced by the narrator.

The use of slow tempo can also be seen in another part of the novel when the narrator thinks about Geneva, the place where she lives, when she is taking a bus to go to her workplace:

I LEAVE my car at the park-and-ride (Take the bus into town! Say "No" to pollution!). **I catch the usual bus and look at the same things I always look at on the way in to work.** Geneva doesn't seem to have changed at all since I was a child; the grand

old houses are still between the buildings put up by some mad mayor who discovered “new architecture” in the 1950s.

I miss all of this when I travel. The appalling bad taste, the absence of huge glass-and-steel towers, the lack of highways, the tree roots that push through the concrete sidewalks and trip you up, the public parks with their mysterious little wooden fences overgrown with weeds because “that’s what nature is like.” In short, a city that is different from others that have been modernized and lost their charm.

Here, we still say “Good morning” when we meet a stranger in the street and “Good-bye” when we leave a shop after buying a bottle of mineral water, even if we have no intention of ever going back. We still chat to strangers on the bus, even though the rest of the world thinks of the Swiss as being very discreet and reserved.
(11)

Similar to the scene in the previous quotation, this part of the story also begins with the narrator’s action – leaving her car at a car park, taking a bus, and looking at some regular views on her way to work. Nevertheless, the major part of the scene eventually consists of the narrator’s thoughts about Geneva. The description of the narrator’s inner thoughts will, again, cause the narrator’s present to halt as there is no action done to move the story forward. As a result, the tempo of the story becomes slow, and this will, again, cause the readers to feel the slow development of the narrator’s life which lacks excitement.

Nevertheless, after the narrator has an affair, the tempo of the story becomes quicker. This can be seen, for example, in one part of the novel when the narrator meets a drug dealer to buy some drugs to frame Marianne, Jacob’s wife:

I am going to meet my first drug dealer!

...

The first time ***I walk through and reach the other side, where I take a sip of mineral water and complain about the cold*** to a person I’ve never seen before. She doesn’t reply, immersed in her own world. I return and the same men are there. ***We make eye contact***, but for once, there are a lot of people passing by. It’s lunchtime and people should be at the overpriced restaurants that dot the neighborhood, trying to make an important business deal or wine and dine the tourist who came to the city in search for work.

I wait a bit and walk by a third time. I make eye contact again, and one man asks me to follow him with a simple nod. Never in my life did I imagine I would be doing this, but this year has been so unusual that I no longer find my behavior strange.

I feign an air of nonchalance and go after him.

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...

He waits for me to say something, but I worry that my voice will shake in spite of my self-confident pose. ***I sit quietly and forced him to break the silence:***

“Ganja, crystal, acid, or blow?”

Okay, I’m lost. I don’t know what to answer, and the man can tell he’s dealing with a novice. I’ve been tested and I didn’t pass.

He laughs. ***I ask if he thinks I’m with the police.***

“Of course not. The police would know immediately what I’m talking about.”

I explain that it’s my first time doing this. (115-117)

Unlike those at the beginning of the story, this particular scene shows more of the narrator’s action. She informs the readers of what she does at that moment – walking, taking a sip of water, making eye contact, sitting, talking to the drug dealer – instead of what she thinks. As there are lots of actions, the readers will feel that there are many things happening to the narrator, which in turn creates a sense that the narrator’s life moves forward more quickly than before. This will provide the readers with an impression that the narrator’s life becomes more exciting after she has an affair.

The fact that tempo speeds up after the narrator has an affair can also be seen in another part of the novel when the narrator comes to Marianne’s workplace to carry out her plan of framing Marianne:

I arrive at the building where Marianne teaches her philosophy classes – an annex that, to my surprise, is located on one of the University Hospital of Geneva’s campuses.

...

Having parked the car at the supermarket, I walked about half a mile to get to this jumble of low buildings that sit in a beautiful green field with a little lake in the middle.

...

I walk by something that, strangely, looks like the beacons one finds at the end of an airport runway.

...

I go to the reception desk and ask for directions to Mme König’s classroom. I am told that it is lunchtime (something there is no way I couldn’t already know). ***I say that I don’t want to interrupt her during her break,*** so I will wait for her outside her classroom door. (129 -130)

Similar to the one in the previous quotation, this part of the story also shows more of the narrator’s action. Instead of describing what the narrator thinks, the quotation shows what the narrator does, such as parking her car and going to the reception desk to ask for directions to

Marianne's classroom. This kind of description causes the events in the story to be revealed faster, which eventually moves the plot forward. As a consequence, the readers will feel that the narrator's life becomes full of events and excitement after she follows her passion.

Style

The next thing to be discussed would be the style of writing Coelho uses in the novel. There are three things about the style that Coelho uses in writing the novel. First is about the tenses he uses, second is about the length of the chapters, and third is about the absence of quotation marks. Each of the style used by Coelho will be discussed one by one in the following paragraphs.

The first thing which is noticeable is the tenses used. Unlike other novels, the events that happen in the novel are written in present tense. Past tense is only used to describe happenings that happened in the past, before the present time. Since the present tense in the English language is used to describe recurring events and things that are always true, the use of the tense indicates that the events that happen may happen again, or always happen. This strengthens the message about boredom in life which is inevitable and will come and go in one's life.

The use of present tense first becomes apparent when the narrator is explaining about her daily activities like cooking dinner, cleaning the dishes after dinner, etc. which is understandable considering she is explaining about a routine, as can be seen below:

Back home, there's the pleasure of cooking, the table set, and the family gathered around it, thanking God for the food we're about to receive. **Another evening when, after supper, each person goes about his business – the father helping the children with their homework, the mother cleaning the kitchen, tidying the house, and putting out the money for the maid the next morning.**

There are times during these months when I feel really good, when I really believe my life makes perfect sense, that this is the role of human beings on Earth. The children feel that their mother is at peace, their father is kinder and more attentive, and the whole house seems to glow with its own light. (13)

However, the same present tense is used when she mentions that she restlessly wakes up at two in the morning which readers may assume will not happen on daily basis. The use of the present tense makes it feel like it is also a routine that she wakes up at two, restless about her life:

I wake at two in the morning and lie starring up at the ceiling – something I've always hated – even though I know I have to get up early to go to work. Instead of coming up with a productive question like "What's happening to me?" I let my thoughts spiral out of control. (15)

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Furthermore, Coelho uses the same present tense again in describing the event when the narrator wakes up in the middle of the night because of the wind that only she herself feels. The same effect of the event being a routine is thus achieved by the use of present tense while at the same time, Coelho manages to cleverly strengthen the image of the narrator being restless and depressed which results in her inability to sleep well at night, as can be seen in the following quotation:

I wake to the sound of the wind rattling the windows. I blame my husband for not shutting them properly.

...

My perfect husband is asleep beside me; he doesn't seem to have heard the wind rattling the windows.

...

I lie tossing and turning in bed for what feels like ages before I fall asleep. After what seems only a second, my husband wakes me up. (55)

When the narrator is described having a meal with a friend in a restaurant that she has never visited before and the journey she takes to get there, Coelho still maintains the use of present tense, creating the same effect over and over again in the life of the narrator. The effect which is achieved is a strong suggestion that the narrator's having lunch with a friend in that restaurant is also a habitual action and happens all the time, thus, another routine, as seen below:

I have a lunch with a friend. She suggests meeting at a Japanese restaurant I've never heard of, which is odd because I adore Japanese food. She assures me that it's an excellent place, although quite some way from where I work.

It takes ages to get there. I have to take two buses and ask someone the way to the gallery, home to his supposedly "excellent" restaurant. I think the place is hideous – the décor, the paper tablecloths, the lack of any view. She's right, though.

It's one of the best meals I've ever eaten in Geneva. (17)

The second thing about style in this discussion is the length of the chapters. Since the novel uses first person point of view, the novel feels like it is being written in the form of a diary and the chapters are the entries. At the beginning of the novel, when the narrator is talking about her boredom and daily routine, the chapters are short, indicating that she has nothing exciting to write about her life. Some examples can be seen in Chapter 2, which is only 1 page long; Chapter 3 and 4, which is 2 pages each; Chapter 5, which is, again, 1 page long; and Chapter 7, with only 2 pages.

However, the same case as with the time and tempo, the chapters become lengthy once she starts having an affair and adventure. There are more events unravel in one chapter and the description of the day becomes more detailed. Again, this fact is an indication that there is

more excitement in the narrator's life that is worth mentioning. An example is Chapter 10, which is 8 pages long, when the narrator meets Jacob again for lunch after their initial meeting which marks the beginning of her affair.

Another example is the chapter when the narrator is meeting a drug dealer to buy some drugs for her plan to frame Jacob's wife so that she can have Jacob all by herself. This happens in Chapter 30, which is 13 pages long. Also, Chapter 46, which is 12 pages, when the narrator and her husband are meeting Jacob and his wife at the same event, and she explains in great detail what happens at the party and how she maneuvers around Jacob and his wife.

The last thing about the style Coelho uses in writing the story is the absence of quotation marks at the beginning and at the end of the narrator's speech. When other characters are talking, their speeches are indicated by quotation marks, like the normal consensus that is used in writing direct speeches. This fact can be interpreted in two things. First, it can be interpreted that the narrator is a closeted character who cannot express her feeling openly, thus leads to her depression and boredom. Second, it implies to the readers that the speeches may be a real speech or just a thought of the narrator, thus strengthens the fact that the narrator often keeps to herself.

An example of this style can be seen in the following quotation about the conversation between the narrator and her husband. It seems that her first few lines are spoken because clearly her husband responds accordingly to her sentences. However, the moment her husband leaves, the narrator is obviously only having a thought but it is written exactly in the same way as her speech, thus creates the impression that the narrator actually may not say anything at all, or the conversation only happens in her mind and strengthens the idea that she is not an open person.

"It's breakfast time," my husband says. "I'd better go and get the kid up."

Why don't we swap roles for once? I suggest. You go to the kitchen and I'll get the kids ready for school.

"Isn't that a challenge?" he asks. "If it is, you're going to have the best breakfast you've had in years."

No, it isn't a challenge. I just want to change things around a bit. So, you don't think the breakfast I make is good enough?

"Listen, it's far too early for arguments. Last night we both had a bit too much to drink, and nightclubs really aren't meant for people our age," he says. "Anyway, okay, you go and get the children ready."

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He leaves before I can respond. I pick up my smartphone and check what things I have to do today. (59)

The same thing can be seen when the narrator is having a conversation with her boss and again, there is no quotation marks to mark her speech. In this conversation, it becomes very unclear whether she is saying the things that are written in the novel or not because there is no clear indication. This can indicate her characteristic as a person who keeps her opinion to herself, which eventually leads to her depression.

My boss explains that Jacob König isn't our target; what we want is to denounce the people who are trying to corrupt our political system.

"And that shouldn't be difficult. We just have to say we're on his side."

Switzerland is one of the few countries in the world where a man's word is still his bond. In most other places you need lawyers, witnesses, signed documents, and the threat of legal process if the secret were leaked.

"We just need confirmation and photos."

So, I'll need to get closer to him.

"That shouldn't be difficult, either. Our sources tell us that you've already arranged another meeting. It's in his diary."

And this is the land of banking secrecy! Everyone knows everything.

"Use the usual tactics." (40)

The last example of the third style that Coelho uses in this novel can be found in the following. In this quotation, the absence of quotation marks again manages to make the readers wonder about whether or not the narrator does tell her husband about her mental condition and the way she truly feels. When the two of them are having dinner at a restaurant, at first it seems that the narrator does say everything written in the dialogues to her husband because her husband's replies clearly reciprocate to what she says. However, after some dialogues, the conversation seems to be one sided again as her husband's reply does not match what the narrator seems to say. This will create a doubt within the readers whether or not she really pours her heart out to her husband before.

"Do you think you need to see a doctor?"

I don't know. Even if I did, I don't want to go down that road. I need to learn how to resolve my problems on my own.

“It must have been very difficult to keep all those emotions to yourself for so long. Thank you for telling me. But why didn’t you tell me before?”

Because it’s only now that things have become unbearable. I was thinking today about my childhood and my teenage years. Does the root of all this lie there? I don’t think so, not unless my mind has been lying to me all these years, which I think is unlikely. I come from a normal family, I come from a normal upbringing, I lead a normal life. What’s wrong with me? ...

“You are definitely not crazy. I haven’t noticed any of this. ...”

.....

“But we do need more exercise, more time outdoors. To run until we drop with exhaustion. And perhaps we should invite friends round more often”

That would be a complete nightmare! Having to talk and entertain people with a fixed smile on my lips, listening to their views on opera and traffic. Then, to top it all, having to clean up afterward.

“Let’s go to the Jura National Park this weekend. We haven’t been there for ages.”

The elections are this weekend. I’ll be on duty at the newspaper.

We eat in silence. The waiter has already been to our table twice to see if we’ve finished, ... (68 -69)

Distance

All the other elements of narrative techniques will affect distance. As stated previously in the discussion of point of view, the distance between the readers and the narrator will be very close with the use of first-person point of view because the readers will feel as if they were reading about themselves with the use of ‘I’ throughout the novel. The readers will feel immediate empathy towards the narrator when she finds that her perfect life is boring and lacks passion.

Next, the time and tempo used in the story also contribute to the close distance between the readers and the narrator. The unclear indication of time sequence at the beginning of the novel makes the readers unable to arrange the events happening to the narrator in chronological order, which in turn creates an impression within the readers’ mind that the events in the narrator’s life are all similar and boring. Meanwhile, the clearer indication of time sequence in the later part of the novel enables the readers to arrange the events in the narrator’s life in chronological order, which causes the readers to feel that the narrator’s life is more eventful and exciting. In terms of tempo, the plentiful description of the narrator’s inner thoughts at the beginning

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of the novel stalls the plot, which eventually makes the readers feel that the narrator's life moves very slowly. In contrast, the ample description of the narrator's actions in the later part of the novel helps to move the story forward and causes the readers to feel that the narrator's life has become full of events and excitement when she follows her passion.

Last but not least, the three discussions of the style that Coelho uses in the novel, also brings the readers closer to the narrator and story because the readers are brought to a deeper understanding of the narrator, who feels bored and begins to look for something to make her life more exciting. First, the use of present tense will create the effect of routine and repetitiveness that is apparent from the narrator's whole life. This makes the readers able to understand the narrator's situation better, that she is bored with her life. Second, the length of the chapters which is connected to the life of the narrator. When she has not begun her affair with Jacob, the chapters are short, an indication that nothing exciting is happening in her life. On the contrary, after she begins her affair, the chapters are longer because she takes time to describe everything that is happening in her life in detail, an indication that she is excited about it and cherishes it. Lastly, Coelho deliberately omits quotation marks from the narrator's speeches, which can be an indication that perhaps all the conversations that are happening in the novel are imaginary and only happen in the narrator's mind. It can also be read as an indication that the narrator is an introverted woman who keeps her opinion to herself, which in turns can explain why she is bored and later on depressed about her life. All the styles that Coelho use in the novel make the readers able to sympathize with the narrator, thus creating a close distance between them.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been conducted in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that Coelho as the author has used clever narrative techniques in writing *Adultery*. The use of first-person point of view, the specific and unspecific time sequences, the combination of slow and fast tempo, and the carefully chosen and distinguished style have closed the distance between the readers and the narrator and thus created the desirable effects on the readers. Whether it is boredom or passion that the narrator is experiencing, readers reading the novel can feel the emotion and feelings that the narrator is going through. Thus, readers of the novel share their empathy with the narrator and willingly take her side in deciding on what she will do in her life, including starting her affair, which she thinks will spice up her perfect boring life, as well as ending it when she thinks it changes nothing in her life. With the use of such effective narrative techniques, Coelho has succeeded in conveying his message to the readers of his novel – that life is full of ups and downs, including boredom, passion, adventure, and that it is even more important for people to accept and love life as it is.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Author 1: Conceptualization, collecting data, analyzing data, writing the manuscript, and compiling references. Author 2: Supervision, providing

advice, and analyzing data. Author 3: Supervision, manuscript editing, and proofreading

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