

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Study**

Paulo Coelho is a famous writer whose works have been translated into 63 languages and over 85 million copies have been sold worldwide. With that achievement, he is named as the most translated living author and is compared with Shakespeare as the most translated of the time (“The Witch of Portobello”). Coelho’s writings are said to be able to enrich the lives of many people, as stated in *Times* magazine; “His books have had a life-enhancing impact on millions of people.” (“The Witch of Portobello”).

Among all his novels, I am interested in *The Witch of Portobello*. Paulo Coelho’s *The Witch of Portobello* is a unique novel because it is written in the form of an interview and it has an unusual protagonist: “He has written it as a series of accounts of individuals, and their first-person interactions with the unusual protagonist Athena, the witch of Portobello” (“The Witch of Portobello”). In this novel Coelho presents the life of a woman who is called a witch by people

around her, as indicated by the title *The Witch of Portobello*. In this novel, Paulo Coelho also delivers a question to his readers: “How do we find the courage to always be true to ourselves—even if we are unsure of whom we are?” (“The Witch of Portobello”). Besides, this novel contains a topic that has occurred many times in Coelho’s previous works and is praised as an interesting book; “‘Filled with Coelho’s recurring themes – spirituality, destiny, freedom – this is a riveting and inspiring read.’ Belfast Telegraph” (“The Witch of Portobello”).

Athena, the protagonist of this novel faces many conflicts in the story, such as with her family, with the church, and society. I believe that those conflicts show that the author wants his readers to understand that there is a person who finds the courage to be different and is persistent to get her true aim of life, even though the society is against her. At the end of the novel, Athena is said to manage to get everything that she wants in order to fulfil her true aim of life, which is to know her true self.

Since conflict is the most prominent element in the story, I am going to analyse the conflict in connection with the issue Coelho brings up in the novel. Conflict is “the opposition of person or forces upon which the action depends in drama and fiction.” (Shaw 91-92). Conflict is divided into three, i.e. social, psychological & physical conflict (Shaw 91-92). In my thesis, I will specifically discuss the social conflicts found in the story. Social conflict is a “protagonist’s struggle against society” (Shaw 91-92). In this novel, the social conflicts become clearer because the novel is written in a collection of interviews with the people who are directly or indirectly related to Athena. Moreover, those people give their

opinions about her through their points of view and narrate their experiences with her, so that the readers will be able to look at Athena's conflicts more closely.

### **Statement of the Problems**

There are three problems that I am going to analyse:

1. What kind of conflicts can be found in the novel?
2. What is the cause of each conflict?
3. Are the conflicts resolved?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is as follows:

1. To show what kind of conflicts can be found in the novels
2. To show what the cause of each conflict is
3. To show whether the conflicts are resolved

### **Method of Research**

The method I use is library research. I start by reading the novel, *The Witch of Portobello*. Then I analyse the novel by using formalism. I take some references and resources from the Internet and theory books to support my analysis in writing the thesis. Finally, I draw the conclusion from my analysis.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

I divide the thesis into three chapters. In Chapter One, I present the

Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the Analysis of Social Conflicts of the Protagonist in Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which include the Biography of the Author and the Synopsis of the Novel.