

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Elizabeth Gilbert's novel *Eat Pray Love* was published in 2006. This novel recounts the author's journey as she travels across Italy, India, and Bali. The story reflects her thoughts on self-improvement, finding inner peace, and seeking fulfillment. Through an honest and heartfelt recounting of Liz's experiences, Gilbert explores themes like personal transformation, spiritual exploration, and existential questions. The novel's widespread popularity, along with praise from both readers and critics, highlights its inspirational influence, inspiring many to embark on their journeys toward healing and peace.

The main character, Liz, goes through a complex journey of inner transformation amid crisis, emptiness, and change. She struggles to break free from societal expectations and to pursue happiness based on her desires. At the start of the story, Liz feels trapped in a life that should seem happy and perfect, with a steady job, a seemingly happy marriage, and what is considered a successful lifestyle. However, Liz feels empty until she loses sight of the true meaning and purpose of life. This difficult period prompts questions about herself, her purpose, and what happiness means.

Italy is her first stop. Here, Liz focuses on learning to enjoy life through food and begins to make peace with herself. Italy symbolizes the pursuit of pleasure and beauty in everyday life. Through Italy, Liz learns to savor small moments and rediscover the joy she lost in her previously stressful life.

India is her second destination, where she spends time in an ashram exploring spirituality and meditation. India becomes a place where Liz confronts herself, overcomes inner pain, and seeks inner peace. It is in India that Liz delves deeper into the meaning of life and her spiritual goals.

Bali is her final stop, where, after attempting to make peace with herself, she learns to enjoy her life again and integrates the happiness and peace she found earlier. In Bali, she connects with locals and finds a balance between worldly pleasures and spirituality. The island represents the ultimate harmony and healing that Gilbert needs to start a new life with a more positive and balanced outlook.

The title "Self-transformation through Italy, India, and Bali in Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* " is noteworthy because this story describes a profound journey of self-discovery through each place the heroine visits, leaving a lasting impact on her after traveling.

The choice of Italy, India, and Bali in the novel is not accidental. Italy is renowned for its beauty and cuisine, which helped Liz rediscover happiness and joy after a painful divorce. India, with its rich spiritual traditions, provides the ideal setting for self-exploration and seeking peace. Bali, with its harmonious culture and spiritual vibe, becomes the place where she finds a balance between worldly pleasures and spiritual serenity. Analyzing this journey helps us understand how different environments and cultures influence personal growth.

Through Liz's experiences, we see how someone can find the way to recovery and happiness after emotional trauma. These themes are highly relevant to many people, making this story important not only academically but also practically for everyday life.

The novel also highlights the cultural differences and their impact on individuals. Liz interacts with various characters representing the cultures she encounters, each interaction teaching valuable lessons about life, spirituality, and human relationships. This analysis illustrates how encountering diverse cultures can broaden one's perspective and promote personal growth.

In conducting this research, the steps include careful reading, note-taking, identifying self-transformation in characters, thematic analysis, interpretation, and concluding. Close reading involves an in-depth focus on the text, paying special attention to how Italy, India, and Bali influence and shape Liz's journey of self-discovery. This approach enables a thorough examination of her character, traits, actions, and interactions within the story.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. How is Liz's internal conflict reflected before the trip to Italy, India, and Bali?
2. What is the influence of Italy, India, and Bali on Liz's Self-transformation in the novel *Eat Pray Love*?
3. How does her self-transformation occur in the process of finding the meaning of life and self-recovery

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1. To know and understand how Liz's internal conflict is reflected before the trip to Italy, India, and Bali.
2. To describe what is the influence of Italy, India, and Bali on Liz's Self-transformation in the novel *Eat Pray Love*.
3. To explain how her self-transformation occurs in the process of finding the meaning of life and self-recovery.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value in examining how the main character's transformation in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* unfolds through traveling to Italy, India, and Bali. It provides a deeper understanding of how each country's influence contributes to the journey of discovering new meaning in life and self-healing.

By analyzing the interaction between characters and these diverse settings, this study offers insights into the importance of cross-cultural experiences in the process of self-discovery and emotional healing.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

In conducting this research, several steps are taken, including careful reading, note-taking, identifying self-transformation in characters, thematic analysis, interpretation, and concluding. Close reading involves a detailed and focused study of the text, where the author examines how Italy, India, and Bali influence the self-transformation experienced by Liz's character. This method enables a thorough examination of their lives, traits, actions, and interactions within the novel.

The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, drawing directly from the source. The source for this research is *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert. The writer analyzes the theme of transformation in the main character of Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* through her travels to Italy, India, and Bali.

The analysis will focus on the main character's journey in this novel, exploring how her experiences reflect broader themes of personal growth and self-transformation. This allows a thorough examination of how *Eat Pray Love* portrays the complex process of self-discovery and change, providing insight into how literature reflects and influences our understanding of personal life.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

In this novel, there are several characters such as Elizabeth Gilbert or commonly called Liz, Liz's ex-husband, Giovanni, Richard from Texas, Ketut Liyer a Balinese shaman, Nyoman, and Wayan but this research is focused on analyzing the main character in the novel *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert, as the protagonist who loses the meaning of life and is confused with who she is herself undergoing a journey of searching for the meaning of life and self-transformation.

Other characters present in the story, such as Liz's friend, spiritual teacher, or partner, are not analyzed in depth as their roles are more supportive and only relevant to the extent that they contribute to Liz's personal development. This restriction is intended to maintain the depth of analysis and facilitate a deeper understanding of the main character's development.

The main character in *Eat Pray Love* plays a central role in the narrative, with her journey focusing on self-improvement and happiness. Liz, the main character, faces significant challenges and undergoes substantial changes during her journey through Italy, India, and Indonesia. This analysis will explore how these experiences impact Liz's personal growth and emotional transformation.

1.7 Status of the Study

The writer found previous studies about this novel. Naafi'atun Nur Lathifah (2022) on the research entitled *Elizabeth Gilbert's Self-Healing Efforts from Past Trauma in the novel Eat Pray Love*. This study aims to identify Elizabeth Gilbert's trauma symptoms and the ways she struggles to come to terms with them.

A previous study by Putu Gita Andriyani, I Gst Ayu Gede Sosiowati, and I Wayan Renon, titled "*Feminism Analysis in the Movie Eat Pray Love*" by Elizabeth Gilbert. This study aims to find instinctively feminist-related components in the character Elizabeth Gilbert and feminism as it is reflected in Elizabeth Gilbert as the main character. Lukow, Natalia Kristin, Elizabeth Z. Oroh, and Delli Sabudu (2019), "*Women's Image in Elizabeth Gilbert's Eat Pray Love*." This study aims to shed light on how women are portrayed in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love*.

Garnis Raka Puti (2020) is entitled "*The Existence of Elizabeth Gilbert to Find Her Identity in Eat Pray Love*" by Elizabeth Gilbert. This research aims to explore Elizabeth Gilbert's identity and reveal the essence of the novel *Eat Pray Love*.

This is a qualitative study, with Elizabeth Gilbert's 2006 novel, *Eat Pray Love*, as the primary data source. A previous study by Edi Ardian, Samsul Amri

Edi Susrianto Indra Putra (2023) entitled *The American Woman Identity as Reflected in Eat Pray Love Novel in Her Pursuit of Happiness*. This study aims to identify the characteristics of American women as they are represented in the novel *Eat Pray Love* in the pursuit of happiness. This study examines the challenges that American women face in their pursuit of happiness, as well as how the novel captures the essence of the American woman's experience in seeking happiness.

There are also previous studies on transformation, such as the analysis of Debi Erlanda and Desvalini Anwar (2019) entitled *Life Transformation in Noviolet Bulawayo's novel We Need New Names (2013)*, and research from Ferdi entitled *Identity transformation of Josephine Alibrandi and John Barton in the Novel Looking for Alibrandi (by Melina Marchetta)*.

At the Faculty of Literature and Language, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, research was also conducted using the novel *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert. Analysis by Antonius Bruno Parulian (2012) entitled *Analisis Tema Pada Novel Eat Pray Love Karya Elizabeth Gilbert*. This research presents an analysis of themes in the novel *Eat Pray Love*.

This skripsi analyzes the main character's self-transformation process explicitly through these three travel experiences in Italy, India, and Bali, examining how these places play a crucial role in the psychological, emotional, and spiritual changes of the main character. This research combines the theoretical approaches of self-transformation, demonstrating that the protagonist's inner transformation is influenced not only by internal conflicts but also by interactions with the culture, spiritual values, and local environment of each place visited. Through this approach, the author reveals that Liz's journey as the main character in the novel is a reflection of an inner journey to find the meaning of life, balance, and true happiness.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The organization of the study in this *skripsi* consists of four chapters:

Chapter 1 is the Introduction. This chapter describes the background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Significance of the study, Methodology of the study, Scope of limitations of the study, Status of the study, and Organization of the study.

Chapter 2 is a Review of Related Literature. This chapter contains theories and related research studies in the same field. It provides the theories used in analyzing the data, specifically the Self-Transformation Theory.

Chapter 3 is titled "Self-transformation Through Italy, India, and Bali in Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love*." This section displays all the results of the data analysis. This research is based on a problem formulation consisting of three main topics, namely the problem of lost meaning of life and the main character's life before going on a journey, how three places influence the main character's self-transformation, and the main character's transformation in self-recovery and the process of finding the meaning of happiness.

Chapter 4 is the Conclusion and Suggestions. This chapter presents conclusion and recommendations based on the research findings from the previous chapter, which aim to address the research questions posed by the selected stories. This chapter presents the conclusion drawn from the preceding discussions and offers suggestions for future research.