

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A. Background of The Study

Novel *Eat, Pray, Love* (Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia) is one of the literary works written by a famous American writer, Elizabeth Gilbert. This novel based on the true story of Elizabeth Gilbert through her difficult choices in her life. It tells how Elizabeth Gilbert's life to find her real happiness. It all started when she made a big choice to divorce her husband. Before making her choice, she fights with herself whether her choice is right or not. It is about the responsibilities of her freedom of choice to make her life better and how to treat herself after her sadness of marriage life. That is why this research will use existentialism theory to analyze Elizabeth Gilbert's freedom of choice and also her responsibilities.

Every human has their existence in this world. The beginning of the word "existence" comes from the Latin word "*existere*" which means appear, exist, arise, or have the actual existence. In the concept of existence, the only factor that distinguishes everything that exists from nothing is a fact. In other words, everything that exists has an existence, or it is an existence. Therefore, human existence is the existence freedom of choice. They free to make their own choices to show the meaning if their life. Existence is a personal right. There are no identical individuals human in this world. Therefore, existence is a personal right, whose existence cannot be compared to one another.

Existentialism is philosophical, that is the understanding that each person must create their own meaning in this vague, chaotic, and seemingly empty universe. Every human realize that they exist. When we are talking about humans, we cannot separate from their essence. If we discuss its existence, everything in this world has two principles that explain its state, namely essence and existence.

The research is using existentialism theory to raise the issue of Elizabeth Gilbert's choice and responsibilities to define her identity in the novel. *Eat, pray, love*. The reason why the researcher using existentialism theory is because in the novel *Eat, Pray, Love*, we can see the struggle of Elizabeth Gilbert's life. She has to make up her mind to make many choices that she did to find her identity in her life. Elizabeth Gilbert shows her way to out from her depression by making a big thing in her life. There are also many lessons from Elizabeth Gilbert that we can take as a woman from the responsibilities of her choices and the way she finds her identity through travelling around three countries Italy, India, and Indonesia. After all of her sadness, she could through all her problems and finally find her identity in her life. That is why the researcher feels interested in analyzing this novel.

The novel *Eat, Pray, Love* published in 2006. it is a spiritually, romance novel. Elizabeth Gilbert, as the writer, uses the same character name in her novel because the novel is based on a true story from her experience in the way to find her identity. She bravely makes a big decision as a woman in her marriage life. She wants to tell anyone that might have the same problem as her and about how she can through all of her confusion in life until she can find her real happiness. Elizabeth M Gilbert is an American writer born on 18th July, 1969. Her best seller book is *Eat, Play, Love* that published in 2010 on the New York Times Best Seller list. This novel is very famous until it also made into a film in the same year. She started to write in 1997 entitled *Pilgrims* that is about short stories of the Pushcart Prize and a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award. The second book *Stern Men* in 2000, and then in 2002, she published *Last American Man*. These three books always get nominated awards. For example, the novel *Stern Men* selected as a "Notable Book" by The New York Times and the novel *Last American Man* that selected as National Book Award in non-fiction. Until in 2006, Elizabeth Gilbert published *Eat, Pray, Love* about her spiritual and personal exploration travelling around three countries. The fifth book, she published *Committed: A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage* in 2010. and the last book entitled *Big Magic* that released in 2015.

The synopsis of the *Eat, Pray, Love* novel is Elizabeth Gilbert or better known as Liz Gilbert as the main character, looking for serenity in her life. It is about her journey around Italy, India and Indonesia after she made a big choice, divorced her husband. Actually, Elizabeth Gilbert has a perfect life, but the “perfect life” that she has is not like what it looks like. As a woman, she might be one of the luckiest women in the world. A career as a writer, having a beautiful and luxury house, and also a loyal and kind husband. None of that made her feel ‘enough’. She always feels that something missing in her life. Something that she never knew. She prays to God, and finally, she bravely made a change in her life with decided to divorce her husband and give all of her assets to her husband. After the divorce from her husband, Stephen, Liz met a guy and tried to date with him. He is a stage actor named David. Liz hopes that David can fill the emptiness in her life. But she is wrong. After break up with David, Liz tried to think again about what she is looking for. After all of her problems, she began to make a plan for a long journey. In her mind, she thinks about three countries, first in Italy, she likes learning Italian. A sexy accent and also too many delicious foods like pizza to pasta that will make her very fascinated, or we can say that Italy is defined as Food (Eat).

The next country is India. The purpose of Liz coming here is about the spiritual aspect. She wants to meet with the power of prayer from a teacher. In India, she met Richard from Texas then she learns from him. He also has a big problem, he comes to India has the same purpose as Elizabeth, to make peace with himself and to forget his past. So in India, Liz wants to make herself balance with the spiritual aspect (Pray).

The last country that Liz visited is Indonesia. Here, Liz finds her true love. The first purpose why Liz visited Bali is to meet again with Ketut Liyer. He is a Balinese shaman, an old and toothless man. He had predicted about Liz’s life. And finally, in this novel, Liz met with a Brazilian widower named Felipe. And it makes Liz find her pieces that were missing for a long time (Love).

The researcher chooses this novel because it gives the readers especially women readers many lessons. We can learn many lessons from Elizabeth Gilbert

as the main character in this novel. It gives us many suggestions to be a brave woman, being not too afraid with something that we never know, and always take our decision in every struggle that we faced. The researcher conducts research entitled **The Existence of Elizabeth Gilbert to Find Her Identity in Eat Pray, Love Novel by Elizabeth Gilbert (2006): An Existentialism Study**. The aims are to analyze the existence and the essence of the main character.

B. Problem Statement

1. How does Elizabeth Gilbert show her existence to find her identity ?
2. How does Elizabeth Gilbert define her essence ?

C. Objectives of The Study

The objectives of this study :

1. To find out the way Elizabeth Gilbert show her existence to find her identity
2. To find out the way Elizabeth Gilbert define her essence

D. Benefit of the study

The result of this study are expected to be used theoretically and practically :

1. Theoretically

The result of this study can broaden knowledge, especially about existentialism, and hopefully it can be a source for the other.

2. Practically

a. For readers

This research will show many information or knowledge about existentialism study based on this novel.

b. For college students

This research can be a reference to other for existentialism research.