

Tribhuvan University

Self-Transformation in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Nisha Sharma

Symbol No: 400337/2072

T.U. Reg No: 6-2-432-29-2010

November 2018

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled, " Self-Transformation in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*" is my own original work carried out as a master's student at the department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis/research/term paper's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis/research/term paper.

.....

Nisha Sharma

.....

Date

Tribhuvan University
Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Self-Transformation in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University by Nisha Sharma has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee:

.....
Toya Nath Upadhyay
Supervisor

.....
External Examiner

.....
Pradip Sharma
Head,
Department of English

Date:

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my respected supervisor Toya Nath Upadhyay for his continuous guidance, helpful correction, advice and suggestion in writing this research work and his enthusiasm, kindness and generosity.

I am thankful to, Pradip Sharma, Head of the Department of English for providing me an opportunity to work on this research by accepting my proposal and conveying his constant support and suggestion. Likewise, I would like to express my appreciation and thankfulness to all my respected Professors of the English Department of Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus who equally provide me invaluable advices and direction.

I am highly obliged to my guardians for their guidance and ideas. I am also grateful to all visible and invisible hands that provided me with the essential information for my final project.

November 2018

Nisha Sharma

Table of Contents

	Page No.
Declaration	ii
Letter of Approval	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Introduction: Gilbert, Transformation and Travel Writing	1-5
Travel and Spirituality	5- 10
<i>Eat, Pray, Love</i> as a Travel Writing	10-24
Conclusion: Liz's Journey for Self-transformation	24-26
Works Cited	

Abstract

This research work on *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert strives to project Liz's self-transformation after a severe breakdown in life through travelling. The thesis aims to explore the concept of spirituality by examining the fundamental truths of life. It focuses on the enlightenment of soul for a better living. Enlightenment can get much easier if a person starts to love oneself in course of meditation. This thesis carries the vision of life transforming wisdom through devotional and sacred effort. Liz, after ending her marriage in divorce charts down herself in search of changeover with acceptance. Surviving is not strength, it is continuing to breathe one day at a time; strength is learning to live despite the pain. After tolerating every form of isolation and mood disorder, Liz finally decides to live a guilt free life under her own values and ethics.

This study explores that each and every part of the world has their own level of importance; superiority if we name it other way around. The western superiority often relies on non-west land that is involved in several artistic untiring endeavors. This study can profoundly help us reach the fastest-changing area of human morals. The materialistic world and the commercialized society that people dive into is slowly rejected and denied in search of spontaneous energy, nature and grace of god. Liz becomes the witness of acts of her own life. Here, the study depicts the willingness that leads to self-discovery. The quest of happiness and satisfaction runs throughout this novel.

Introduction: Gilbert, Transformation and Travel Writing

This research aims at anyone who has ever had the problem tracing down the self-existence and for those who desire for spirituality in life through travelling. Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything* is an account of her travel which depicts the reflection of her self-realization and self-transformation. After the miserable failure of marriage, the leading character Liz, maps down herself to places where she can trace the colorful account of life. This travel writing is her own year long journey across Italy, India and Indonesia in search of peace in heart to unleash her burdens. In Italy, she does activities that make her happy such as eating pizza as much as she wants, studying Italian language and getting engaged in a long chat with people she meets. In India, she learns the art of devotion by participating in spiritual class i.e. Yoga and meditation. Her stay at Ashram is her meditated learning experience. Likewise, Indonesia is a place where she learns an art of balancing the life. White westerners consider themselves superior and believe the life everyone desires for lies nowhere else than in the West. Gilbert's piece in contrary has left a benchmark and proved the superiority wrong. The real pursuit of happiness lies in beholding ourselves to reach out to each of those places where one can lie down in piety defeating the vicious world. For Gilbert, travelling is the greatest true love of life that leads her to self-discovery and self-transformation.

Similarly, the research is confined in the analysis of the liberal approaches to which narrator seems to be harboring in throughout. Narrator dissolves herself in a strange world despite all the hardships and ups and downs. Cross culture denigrates her often in Italy, India and Indonesia but it was her failed marriage that led her to traveling which mirrored her to the reality and blissfulness of life. In her book, the

main character Liz is broken from her failed marriage and divorce with her husband. Despite living a luxurious life, she does not feel any joy inside. She is depressed and unhappy. She keeps shifting to discomfort and, distraction startled ghastly. She breathes through the fear, the tremble, and desire to escape. So this study raises questions like: why did she end her relation with her husband? Why does she desire to go away from home? Does the strangeness she gets from travelling hunt her down? Does Travel transform her despair into satisfaction? Will she be able to discover self-spirituality?

In *Eat, Pray, Love*, despite living a privileged life, Liz cannot save her marriage because of her unbalanced life. On certain perspective, the perfect American Dream that she craves for cannot provide her any joy and consistency in her life. She desires to go to the eastern side in hope of transforming her life from sadness and empowering herself. Flying far from the homeland helped her discard the anxiety of lonesome, befalling of love and the burdensome remorse. As every new place is a learning experience for her, she encounters herself as a happy person. This doesn't just reflect a physical journey but also a Liz's journey of emotions and realization.

The researcher makes use of the travel writing theory primarily focusing on the aspect of spirituality. Various insights have been applied to make the text more analytical. Some of the theoretical insights of Carl Thompson, Peter Whitfield and Tim Youngs have been used. In the same way, criticism of critics, internet, books, journals, supervisor's guidance too are used in the process of doing this research.

Travel writing precisely can be characterized as a visionary tool for spiritual betterment. Alex Norman remarks that "spiritual tourist experiences should be roughly grouped in five varietal categories-healing, experimental, quest, retreat and

collective” (20). Significant experiences by traveller should be assembled in different categories like mending, exploratory, travel, withdraw and collaborative.

Rachel Cusk in her book review in *The Guardian* questions the self- discovery of Liz. According to Cusk “this voyage of Self-discovery, it turns out, was a competition, at whose heart is a need to win” (n. pag.). Every exotic travel implies on an individual’s search for happiness. Each territory has their own social and cultural implication and to be able to be a part of them is an attempt to gratification. Cross culture can often be the reason to lead oneself to spirituality. This travel writing brings out the subjectivity of truth. Rather than a competition, it can be seen as the ultimate guide to a balanced living and actualization.

Eat, Pray, Love is basically memoir travel writing where Gilbert has shared her hardships, struggles and her fate on how all of it helped her engage in a solo travel across different countries. Liz in search of peace and happiness engaged in travel and set herself in a completely different land. Here, she is supposed to engage in what she aimed for but on a completely different notion, she was holding on to her own existential crisis. The way she has been acting up all westerner is sliding the story more as a memoir and less as travel writing. Kate Cantrell comments about a female traveler and writes:

The narrator is now a restless female who is writing at mature age and usually, in the midst or aftermath of an external crisis. This crisis is often knotted in the restraints of domestic duty. Her narrative, which emphasizes a desire for personal growth and the balance, employs travel as the register for this self-realization. (46)

Gilbert wrote this novel due to the problems she faced in her life. The problems started from her failed marriage and divorce. Having witnessed so much domestic

disharmony, she is in no rush to carry her relationship further and have a baby. Liz is depressed, unhappy, confused and worried about her life. Her journey means much more than just escaping harsh realities at home, it also means finding happiness.

Margaret Hartmann comments as, “Gilbert’s book wasn’t a runaway smash because it told the story of the woman who wrote it but because it reflected the stories-or fears, or fantasies of the women who read it” (n. pag.). Gilbert’s *Eat, Pray, Love* was a smash hit because it clearly reflects the belief of so many women. Every story she manages to note down is relatable to those women who want to travel to escape career stress and societal pressure. Gilbert presents a story about a woman who successfully breaks free from society’s norms and worthless expectations.

Elizabeth Gilbert was born in July 18, 1969 in Waterbury, Connecticut, USA. She grew up on a small family, Christmas tree farm in Litchfield, Connecticut. She is an American author, essayist, short story writer, biographer, novelist, and memoirist. The family lived in the country with no neighbors; they did not own a television or record player. Consequently, the family read a great deal, and Gilbert and her sister entertained themselves by writing books and plays. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from New York University in 1991. After college, Gilbert spent several years travelling around the country, working as a cook, bartender, waitress and magazine employee, collecting experiences to transform into fiction.

Eat, Pray, Love published in February 2006, is based on the Gilbert's memoir, her real life experiences. The book chronicles her journey alone around the world, after her miserable divorce. Her work is a travelogue of spiritual seeking which in a way portrays her travelling skills. It describes the adventurous experiences she gathered during her travel. It is one of the popular novels having a lot of audiences. This work has received some awards and been copied over ten million times till now.

This piece of work revolves around the author's trip around the world after her divorce and what she discovered during her travels. The work is full of escape and longing and sensual exploration with the thrilling touch of emotional imbalance.

Travel and Spirituality

Travel writing has been a dynamic and socially important genre. As a field of study, it acts as a global platform to share thoughts, ideas and social experiences. Yet, there is little argument about travel writing's ongoing importance as a vital medium of cross-cultural contact and exchange, and a form which profoundly influences global perceptions about diverse regions and cultures. Travelling reflects both on traditions of different countries and the role of spiritualism.

Spirituality is often considered as the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. It is a broad concept that typically involves a search for meaning in life. It is a universal human experience that drives the world with deep sense of aliveness. Human desire what might be called spiritual fulfillment seeks meaning through their connections to nature or art. The contemporary meaning of the word "spirituality" is sometimes vague and difficult to define precisely because it is increasingly detached from religious traditions. It tends to focus either on individual self-realization or on some kind of inwardness.

Human beings began travelling since the very origin. They travelled for various purposes. Traveling to places had and always has two sides; it provides pleasure and knowledge on the one hand and suffering and pain on the other. It is a hectic and boring task needing a lot of money and labor. Peter Fleming views that it is easier to be a chartered accountant than an exploring traveler. He notes, "It requires less courage to be an explorer than to be a chartered accountant" (257). Being specific

to the mentioned line, to be a chartered accountant it takes years of dedication, hard work and patience.

Carl Thompson explains, “To travel is to make a journey, a movement through space. Possibly this journey is pic in scale, taking the traveller to the other side of the world or across a continent, or up a mountain; possibly it is more modest in scope” (9). He further adds, “It takes place within the limits of the traveller’s own country or region, or even just their immediate locality. Either way, to begin any journey or, indeed, simply to set foot beyond one’s own front door, is quickly to encounter difference and otherness”(9). A vivid excursion takes a traveller to a completely new world, a complete new locality. Not necessarily, but it can also be within a familiar land. Either way, the notion can be set prior to experience the difference and otherness.

Travelling is the experience of new places, peoples and life styles. It is an escape from all the restlessness in life. Anyone who wants to be full of life can jump into being a traveler and revisit the fun side of life. Travelling changes a person's life. Travelling brings out even the tiniest aspects of life that one enjoys to the fullest. Peter Whitfield claims that the utmost delight from exploration to the divine relaxation of mind, takes people on spiritual journey on a pace of their own, which is commendable. Travelling is much beyond the cultural act; it rebuilds oneself through prayer and pleasure. It bestows spirituality on the traveler. Whitefield notes:

Now, however, it becomes perhaps the principal aim of the travel writer to convey the strangeness, exhilaration, fear or loneliness that may wait in alien landscapes. Yet physically was seen as the gateway to something else, for in this sense travel means the opening of other worlds of being, worlds which the travel writer attempts to articulate,

something that goes beyond the curiosity, the description, the knowledge-gathering and the humor of travel writing in earlier centuries. (244)

Every travel writing has a purpose. It needs to be informative on a universal aspect. Traveling is always a mirror that is to be reflected in writing by the author. It is a movement that is to be passed by the writer. Travel suggests the opening of various universes of being; universe which the writer attempts to express, something that goes past the interest, the data gathering in earlier several years. Travel enhances spirituality to the traveler who is suffering from dread or depression and fear or sadness. Travelling brings the collective journey together, from suffering to happiness. It brings people back to who they are from what they have been through.

Cherry Garrard writes:

In such a world, violent, angry and tired, Wilson sets a standard of faith and work. In a world which destroys itself and beauty, desperately and impotently desiring peace, he helps. Looking back on the agonizing mystery of the expedition, he reflected that exploration is the physical expression of the Intellectual passion. (248)

Cherry Garrard goes back to those dreadful days where he along with two others went on an expedition and returned back only after coming close to death. The journey that was horrifying to the utmost showed them the reality of life. The ultimate experience of Comrade Edward gave him the confidence and faith towards humanity. Thinking back on that horrifying riddle of the campaign, he traced out that exploration is the utterance of intellectual energy.

Travelling isn't confined within a certain territory. It can take place in any part of the world. It is a journey that happens inside the points of confinement of the

explorer's own particular nation or area, or even only their quick territory. In any case, to start any voyage or, in reality, essentially to set foot past one's own particular front entryway is rapidly to experience distinction and otherness.

Travel in today's world has been an essential part of a human life. People travel often for various reasons and regardless of any case behind, it has helped in the rapid growth of the tourism Industry. People's increasing need for refreshment, their extending business policies, increasing global job opportunities has increased the numbers of travellers around. Besides, the economic growth, it helps in the spiritual growth and the cultural harmony throughout the world.

Travel gives one the freedom to express. It will help you to be less tense, less full of anxieties, less in anguish, and more in joy. One should have the courage to open your heart out to travel around for the spiritual betterment and the exploration of various aspects of life. Rather than being possessed by the world full of misbalances and chaos, one must have the power to be encircled by the joy of travelling and divine compassion.

Traveling is an extended period of recreation. It is often an escape from the daily chores. People who travels, discovers more. Travel writing was common even in the ancient time. For example, Indian *Mahabharata* describes the journey of the Pandavas; *Ramayana* of Ram, Laxman and Sita. Traveling brings certainty in life and it gives you the clear picture through long learning.

In the ancient times, people travelled for various purposes either for food, safety, trade, escape or any other. But the basic purpose was transformation; transformation from the previous position into new. Peter Whitfield clarifies this as, "the experiences of transition and transformation [have] been associated with travelling. . . . Traveling was associated with suffering, but a suffering which had the

power to transform the lives of those who survived it" (1-2). Transformation as the main purpose of travel has since come down to the modern period. In the modern period, people seek self-transformation from travel.

Travel writing involved transformation in the medieval period too. Travel had various purposes like trade, conquest, religion, romance and so on during that time too but transformation was at the Centre. It was primarily spiritual transformation. People travelled to holy shrines for spiritual transformation. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* presents travel for spiritual transformation. In the early modern time, there were various kinds of travelers such explorers, scientists, traders, ambassadors, pirates, slaves and so on. In the recent modern time, people have more purposes of travel than in the past because of commercial success. According to Carl Thompson, "We live, after all, in an era of increasing globalization, in which mobility, travel and cross-cultural contacts are facts of life, and an everyday reality, for many people" (2). Tourism has been growing as one of the largest industries in the world. Travel has been one of the necessary activities of modern life because life needs transformation in the contemporary context.

The West, both Europe and America, having great success in material and physical aspects especially after industrialization, failed to get happiness within. Thus, the Western peoples make travel in search of inner satisfaction and spirit of humanity. The West now has turned towards the non-West where industrialization or modernity has affected less. These travelers attempt to learn from the non-Western people, their cultures and unspoiled nature. In this regard, Tim Youngs writes, the West hopes to find "an essential self that has buried and distorted by the weight of the post-industrial, mechanized world. Before, other 'races' had generally been reviled; now they are embraced as offering a purer and more natural existence from which the

modern world could learn" (97). Youngs remarks that the West used to look at the non-West as inferior in the past but now it embraces because of its purer and natural existence. The West now can learn from the non-West.

As Youngs, Whitfield too emphasizes that the West can learn and transform from the non-West. He writes, "The time was ripe for western traveler to explore the world in a new spirit of openness, ready to learn from other cultures, or alien environments" (282). Similarly, he adds the West likes to escape from the material ridden modern world into something pagan or primitive, which is the non-West. He notes, "the theme of the escape is striking, the desire to return to something elemental, noble, primitive or pagan, suggesting a flight from civilization and its discontents. There is a distinct sense that western society has taken a wrong turning, and that by looking at the other cultures we may regain what we have lost" (282- 283). Whitfield makes the West aware to learn from the cultures of the non-West.

The present study aims at finding out how the protagonist, Liz, of *Eat, Pray, Love* undergoes psychological changes. It analyzes how she transforms into a cool lady from a psychologically depressed one after her travel.

***Eat, Pray, Love* as a Travel Writing**

The main objective of this research is to focus on how a foreign land can often be the reason for a fortunate and a happy-go-lucky life in a bizarre world. Travel writing is often considered to ridicule the contemplated global world. The study tends to focus on the importance of forgiveness to self from a deeply rooted pain, and a heavy weight of guilt and regret. The character learns the purpose of art in pleasure, the art of devotion, the meaning of healing and the balancing art of mind and soul in a land away from home. Liz has everything a woman dreams for—a loving husband, a house and a successful career. Despite, she cannot lead a happy life. The world Liz

lives in had become too rational thus, she often wonders if she is too rational in making decision. In midst of emotional crisis, she finds herself wanting a divorce and she steps into it. Liz speaks to herself and says: “I don’t want to be married anymore. I don’t want to live in this big house. I don’t want to have a baby” (10). She feels a pressure from her husband, and the society wants her to have a kid when she knows she is not ready for any of that. Newly single, Liz forms herself as a self-governing woman.

Liz seeks for a spiritual teacher and wishes if she had an Indian woman providing her some guidance. She writes: “I imagined that this radiantly beautiful Indian woman would come to my apartment a few evenings a week and we would sit and talk about the divinity, and she would give reading assignments and explain the significance of the strange sensations I was feeling during meditation” (26). Liz desires to use travel as the vehicle for what we call spiritual fulfillment. After reaching a crisis of faith in her life, she abandons her partner and sets herself to travel through Italy, India and Indonesia. She quits her job, pays off her divorce settlements and legal bills, gives up her house and apartments and leaves all her belongings in her sister’s place. She then packs up suitcase for her year long journey, three countries, and four months each. Her failed marriage becomes her major reason for her travelling and she states:

It wasn’t so much that I wanted to thoroughly explore the countries themselves; this has been done. It was more that I wanted to thoroughly explore one aspect of myself set against the backdrop of each country, in a place that has traditionally done that one thing very well. I wanted to explore the art of pleasure in Italy, the art of devotion in India and, in Indonesia, the art of balancing the two. (31)

Liz is not scouting around for any adventure. All she is seeking for is inner peace and self-gratification. Nasty divorce and her shocking move lead her to make a year travel to three different countries. She wants to explore pleasure in Italy, religious activities in India, and rebuilding the life in Indonesia. She argues that she has “I’d also been dying lately to get over to Italy, so I could practice speaking Italian in context, but also because I was drawn to the idea of living for a while in a culture where pleasure and beauty are revered” (30). She devotes her first four months of her travel in pleasure.

Liz flies to Rome to grasp the greatest pleasure of her life. Italy is symbolized as “Eat” where she enjoys the food that sparks up her heart and mind. She looks committed in enjoying the food and drinks that only Italy can offer. She tries learning Italian and she even tries her hand on a romantic relation with her Italian tutor Giovanni. Learning Italian fluently is her main motive to be in Italy. She exclaims: “I wish Giovanni would kiss me” (7). She wants to see how many different kinds of man can she make love with and still continue to fail. She obviously has not lost her interest in Love. In Italy, Liz’s journey is well justified as she says:

Is it such a bad thing to live like this for just a little while? Just for a few months of one’s life, is it so awful to travel through time with no greater ambition than to find the next lovely meal? Or to learn how to speak a language for no higher purpose than that it pleases your ear to hear it? Or to nap in a garden, in a patch of sunlight, in the middle of the day, right next to your favorite fountain? And then do it again the next day. (119)

Liz enjoys the pizza and her trying to communicate with the local people is on another level of fun. She enjoys hearing the Italian language everywhere she goes. She explores Italy not as a tourist but as someone who belongs to the city. She walks all

over the city, talks to as many people as she can, makes new friends and tries new eatery. Not following her diet plan, she eats so much of gelato and pasta that she happily gains fifteen pounds. In an exquisite place, she shops herself a handful of lingerie's as that's one thing she truly loves. People generally travel for self-satisfaction, joy and happiness and in search of knowledge. She thinks: "In such an environment, is it maybe a little too shallow to be thinking only about your next wonderful meal? Or is it perhaps the best you can do, given the harder realities" (120). She knows all that she cares for is herself and her peace of mind.

Liz travels for finding her way back to happiness and in the contemporary context, food is all that gives her happiness. She takes her where nobody will ask questions offering her an escape from all kind of troubles. Her growing impulse towards Italy is concerned more towards food, art and the people. She narrates: "Of course, one can't live like this forever. Real life and wars and traumas and mortality will interfere eventually" (119). Four months of her life, she executes herself to the narrowest lanes and spontaneous travels. She has the right amount of time to get the feel for a place, to look around, to ask people on the street where the good food is and then to go and eat. After all she attempts to be the happiest one throughout her journey, but she still finds herself low-spirited and hollow.

Liz sets herself to India where she is fully prepared to learn the art of balancing the soul through patience. She wants to stay at ashram for meditated learning experience. Meditation is like an arrow in her intensity. She knows she is simply helpless when she wants herself to love her more. Not weak, that's not what she feels. Just, well overwhelmed by her emotional and physical power and that's where she wants to make a proper balance. She explores her spiritual side in a sacred ashram of India. India is the place where she can learn the art of devotion through

yoga and meditation: “I guess what I want to learn is how to live in this world and enjoy its delights, but also devote myself to God” (28). Like every normal person, Liz tries her level best to set a communication with eternal power in sake of inner peace but every time she tries, she fails. While she is still enticed with her husband in their house, all her nights go on crying in search of God. She is desperate to lean on and be a devote. Everything around that once gave her happiness is the reason she claims to be her sadness now. She is in a deep agony and all she wants is to get out of it. She wants God to take her out of her miserable condition. What she cannot get in America, it is waiting for her at the non-western part of the world.

In India, she seeks for a spiritual connection, and spends four months in devotion and meditation in an Ashram. India is symbolized as “Pray” where she tries to experience the real devotion to God by meditation and various assignments given. Spirituality is what provides people with peace and proper balance. Amidst the hectic roads and tired faces, who could have thought for the desired silence that is found in a non-west land? While she is in her Taxi ride in India, she sees bunch of thin woman’s, all striped up in saris with bundles of firewood’s on their heads and she is amazed with their hard work under scorching heat, all barefoot. She rumples over their spectacular smile mid those terrible conditions. She wonders how can someone be so happy when there is no situation for happiness anywhere around. A tailor mirrors her with the fact, “people in this part of the world were born to do this kind of hard labor and work is all they are used to” (168). She doesn’t make any comment but accepts the fact that these people are used to it. She calls the Indian woman as strangely beautiful in their jewel-colored saris. Liz makes a move in an ashram with high expectation. People who cannot love human existence start loving God because of the

belief that God is a means to possess happiness. A person will have many things but will not have any blissfulness when we don't surrender ourselves to God.

Spirituality gives one freedom and who doesn't love being free. When people are spiritually down, they know they are doing something wrong. One who works for God is happier than those who work for money. Liz struggles to cope up with herself in India. In a sacred environment, it's a little hard for her to abandon her chattiness. She fantasizes herself to be known as the quiet girl in ashram but she discovers that there is no such side in her. When she arrives in India, she sets to labor physically and emotionally. She demands for a physically challenging job but turns out; it takes her months to match with the environment. She finds the environment weird and she knows what she is in a foreign land. She is a foreign alien, wandering around. She is all of those things- a stranger in a non-west land. Despite the fact, she tries her best to pursue all of those mind power in a land that is generally refused by the westerners. She has no contact with people from back home and she has hard time making friends out there. This perfectly portrays the otherness in a land away from home. She doesn't want to communicate with the old souls and the new soul seems like a hard try. She only seeks solitude to keep her old memories far away.

Seeking for peace in an eastern land by a westerner shows that there's nothing such called superiority and inferiority as labeled by the world. Western world that follows the commercialized life cannot always enjoy their richness because of the guilt. They are deep down afraid regarding the life they are living. White people live a very fearful life; Liz here is one perfect example. They may be making love to the most wonderful person, but it will just be the body that is making love. They may be eating the best food in the world, but they cannot enjoy it. They know that their offerings have a short span and after that is nothing but darkness all around. Non-

western people are more gratified than Western people and in so many ways this can be surprising to know. If undergone, we can even find the poorest people in Eastern side of the world with no displeasure because they are inclined spiritually whereas, Westerners go around the world in search of spiritual guidance. They want to find some yoga, exercise and meditation for self-satisfaction. They compromise their happiness in white land, and seek for it in some other world.

Liz's main purpose of visiting India is to be with God and cut off from everything that distracts her. She is having a hard time in being completely devoted and giving her hundred percent. She narrates: "The next morning's meditation is a disaster. Desperate, I beg my mind to please step aside and let me find God, but my mind stares at me with steely power and says, "I will never let you pass me by"(156). Meditation is not everyone's cup of tea. It requires great concentration and willingness to do it.

Sometimes, it's all about the dissatisfaction, as we tend to compare what we own and what we don't. People surely deserve to have what they desire, but there is a good period for everything. So, it shall only make one anxious and insecure, if the sole focus is on what one lacks. Instead, we are depriving ourselves of the delightful present and what it has to offer. When people often suffer a great deal of ache, they willingly perform Yoga and meditation so that they can forget the pain and forgive the sin. She still finds it hard to accept the fact that her marriage is over and she is living a separate life from the one she used to be with. She wants someone to console it to her and there's no better option than self who can do it. Liz exclaims: "Much later I opened my eyes, and I knew it was over. Not just my marriage and not just my divorce, but all the unfinished bleak hollow sadness of it . . . it was over. I could feel that I was free"(196). Trying hard for days and weeks, she finally finds a relief and

breaths an air of freedom from burdensome vibes that was bothering her. She accepts the truth of her failed marriage, and sums herself to move when there's plenty of opportunities and love awaiting for her. There's no more the sign of fear, loneliness, and strangeness. She finally finds herself in a state where she knows she can fly high and enjoy the rest of her moment in a way she desires and deserves. She emphasizes on what is hers, and finds herself a bit happier. She finds herself spiritually rich and there's no sign of struggle she faces to trace a path to God. The prayer that makes us enriched helps to filter from the sin and the crimes one overpass in life. It helps us learn that there's nothing greater than kindness in life and nothing can give more happiness than us.

After her wonderful days at Ashram, she flies to a new world and a new environment where she meets a Brazilian guy who eventually becomes her husband. Bali, Indonesia, place that is referred to "Love" provides Liz with the physical and emotional pleasure. It is not her first time here at Bali. She is familiar with the place and few people from her earlier visit. When she first came to Bali, she had met an old medicine man named Ketut Liyer who was amazing in making conversation healthier. They had formed quiet a bond so; Liz in her recent trip gives him a visit. Liyer suggests her to keep herself grounded on earth to feel the happiness that's around. He also suggests her to see the world with heart. Ketut spoke:

To find the balance you want, this is what you must become. You must keep your feet grounded so firmly on the earth that it's like you have four legs, instead of two. That way, you can stay in the world. But you must stop looking at the world through your head. You must look through your heart, instead. That way, you will know God. (28)

He gives her that spiritual guidance and a guideline for a merry life. Ketut besides is able to see the mere changes in her. He knows she feels lighter and worldly than the first time he met her. Ketut, the medicine man works hard every day to help those people who come to him seeking for help from their life burdens. He is master in traditional healing, and he uses it with full dedication as he believes it is his duty to help those people in need and make their life better.

Unlike Gilbert, Ketut has not seen much of the world but is still happy with what he has. He helps Liz in achieving a clearheaded life whereas; she helps him in viewing the rest of the world she knows. Liz spends most of her evening talking to Ketut and drinking coffee. Bali itself is a place that gives you the surreal feeling of relaxation. Liz speaks: "I spend my mornings with Wayan at her shop, laughing and eating. I spend my afternoons with ketut the medicine man, talking and drinking coffee" (271). Liz, full of life after her trip to India enjoys every second of her stay. Isolating doesn't help and she becomes aware of it. While on her stay at Bali, she spends her days with few people she loves being with. Wayan is one of the local residents who own a shop nearby. She is unique in her own way and her compassion leads her to take in orphans when she can barely feed herself and her daughter. She teaches Liz the local culture and introduces her to people she knows. In a way, Liz learns about the culture and tradition of Bali from Ketut and Wayan. Ketut helps Liz through his wisdom and teaching and acts as a mentor whereas, Wayan is very much relatable to her who just came out of a failed marriage. Liz utters: "Bali is a fairly simple place to navigate. It's not like I've landed in the middle of the Sudan with no idea of what to do next" (226). There's not much of complexity around. What it is, is easily plated. Being a touristic place, the people come easily to help anyone and they serve guests with the best service. Western tourist holds a special position in the

society since the locals are desperate for work. White privilege can be easily seen in Bali because people out there give an important consideration to tourists for money and living. Even tourists who are there on a tourist visa for a month can overstay if they swipe down the money illegally. Liz on one hand does the same. In Indonesia, she meets a Brazilian man named Felipe and falls in love. They both are quite relatable with one another as both of them have been wounded in love. Unlike Liz, he has not lost his faith in Love. Felipe is from different nationality and Liz is from different but nothing could stop them from getting married to one another.

Bali as already discussed being a touristic place brings many tourists together who in one way or another, has the similar motive of coming to Bali; to find peace. Emotional notion takes first place and nothing else really makes sense to her. He is the perfect companion for her as she regains her trust in herself and in her ability to be with a man since he is able to be totally committed and faithful with her. The journey and meeting the Brazilian man can be considered as Liz's expedition of self-awareness and search for identity. She plans not to overthink this time and take things slow. She exclaims: "What will happen with us? Why am I worrying about this, by the way? What have I not yet learned about the futility of worry? So after a while, I stopped thinking about all this and just held him while he slept. I am falling in love with this man. Then I fell asleep beside him and had two memorable dreams" (328).

Everyone dreams and hopes of the chance meeting, that moment when we feel we are really surviving. Instead of waiting for others to come and make the comfortable zone, this is what everyone should do to oneself: gear up for things. Liz after quite a thought felt different. It all felt nice. She notes: "Maybe I'm not getting across how fun all this is truly, trying to figure all this out. Or maybe I'm just enjoying this surreal moment in my life so much because I happen to be falling in love, and that

always makes the world seem delightful, no matter how insane your reality" (324).

Love moves in people's lives and occupies its space easily. There's no start to it and no stop. Trust doesn't come easily for anyone.

Liz fails to reflect on her privilege and trace why everyone is so eager to help, but later on she realizes that few things are preferred not to be seen or understood. She enjoys the surreal moment of life with Felipe after realizing that there's no point in remorse. It's better if you let it go all at once. She decides not to worry about her relationship nor her life; she decides to feel the moment and put anything else aside. It comes with the purpose of pain and the meaning of healing and the importance of forgiveness in life. Thus, forgetting everything that had happened in the past, she prepares to make a new life with Felipe. She holds him to learn the meaning of love and life. Her quest in Bali was to find a balanced life between devotion and pleasure and she becomes successful in finding one.

Eat, Pray, Love is the account of Liz's marriage, divorce, journey of spiritualism and finding a balanced life. This is her personal voyage for self-awakening and self-transformation. After unhealthy relationship with Stephen, she jumps into a romantic relation with David. After quite a time she couldn't find a balance between two and she starts looking out for separation. She further decides to divorce with her husband and embarks on a yearlong journey alone in spiritual quest. Italy associates with friendship and bonding, India with inner peace, and Indonesia is where love prevails. After all the disturbances within self, she finds happiness in food and drinks in Italy, she relaxes her mind with yoga and meditation in India and love surpasses by with all the butterflies all over in Indonesia. Her journey is a result of lack of instability which she finally pursues at the end of her journey resulting in her marriage with Felipe, a Brazilian man. Her engagement with the outside world, her

tiny observations about everything from the Balinese response, to Italian man watching, Food hunting to amazing Indian culture, everything forms an arch in forming Liz's life. She forgets about the depression and sadness and enjoys every single moment with the person she meets and the things she sees. Time heals everything, this thing turned out to be true in case of Liz as she is travelling throughout different nations in search of peace and happiness. Her transformational voyage, if analyzed can even be considered as self-centered and self-conscious.

Liz throughout her journey keeps searching for the true identity through various approaches. After facing all the troubles and ups and downs in life, she wants to cure herself from depression, confusion, and divorce with her husband: "I am choosing happiness over suffering" (89). This is what she thinks after she receives the email from David agreeing with her suggestions of separation and ends it once for all. More than ending her relationship, she is more prepared to go, travel and be the happiest person alive. Travelling is not merely a new thing for her. She worked for a travel magazine and she had travelled across various places writing about her course of visit. This time was different; she doesn't travel for work but for her happiness. She left all her privileged life behind in search of the core joy that hides behind the screen. She desperately wants to get out of that constant down mood, lack of appetite, weight loss issues, helplessness, and remorse from guilt and loathe. Travelling is the best option here for her since it can give her everything she wishes for. Italy is not much of fun for few weeks since she is not able to get out of all those depressing vibes but slowly as she gets used to the environment and people, she starts enjoying Italy to some extent. Yoga that she practices in India is more concerned with the Hindu mythology. Her stay at Ashram leads her to work on things she has never done. It is more of a physical work that helps on her concentration so that she would be able to

focus on brighter things. Everyone who stays at ashram is assigned to perform those tasks, not just Liz. Ashram teaches her about the selfless work that gives a person the immense pleasure.

When people learn to be focused, they rather focus on the beautiful notions of life. One thing that has to be noted is that healing and spirituality see no religion. In a world that fights over religion and caste the healing process is same for everyone everywhere. Western world, who boasts on being privileged in almost every aspect, relies on non-western land for calmness and peacefulness. To find the dovish alternative to war, they travel like Liz. Hence, the world sees no superiority. After finally escaping from the harsh realities of life from India, she wants to enjoy nature and people in a land far away. The numbers of traditional medical doctors are found throughout Bali, but Ketut is one Liz prefers to go to. On her visit, two years back, Ketut had given wisdom to her and she was invited to give him a visit if she returns back any day. Ketut helped her in physical treatment, treating emotional illness, and even personal problems that she was going through. On the island of Bali, Gilbert learns that she has achieved sustainable balance in her life and is able to enter into a healthy romantic relationship. She has a successful journey towards inner healing that involves embracing Italian food, Indian meditation and love in Bali. Her journey is a proof that suffering people can be healed in different ways, through medicine, friendship or Love.

In *Eat, Pray, Love*, travel and prayers go inseparable. Liz finds love in many ways everywhere she goes but one thing that is never missed out is the prayer. Liz has God everywhere she goes and the power of prayers is well understood. The narrator mentions:

Prayer is a relationship; half the job is mine. If I want transformation, but can't even be bothered to articulate what, exactly, I'm aiming for, how will it ever occur? Half the benefit of prayer is in the asking itself, in the offering of a clearly posed and well-considered intention. If you don't have this, all your pleas and desires are boneless, floppy, inert; they swirl at your feet in a cold fog and never lift. So now I take the time every morning to search myself for specificity about what I am truly asking for. (186)

Prayers are the greatest healing substances. Liz inclines to prayers and God since the very beginning but all she wants is the proper guidance. From her journey, she learns that prayers cannot be taught, it is to be understood. People are not always there to guide us; there are things we have to learn through our own efforts. Everyone has to be responsible for their own success and happiness, and shift focus to better things once and for all. This helps in self-realization, and self-exploration. It gives amusement and a happy coincidence. Her prayers involve pursuit of happiness, pleasure, search for self-identity and immense recreation.

You need to learn how to select your thoughts just the same way you select what clothes you're gonna wear every day. This is a power you can cultivate. If you want to control things in your life so bad, work on the mind. That's the only thing you should be trying to control. Drop everything else but that. Because if you can't learn to master your thinking, you're in deep trouble forever. (187)

Liz is away from the commercialized life and that's how she is on her track to bring her life to balance. Away from the materialistic world, she is seeking for wisdom and growth. Undergoing a soul-seeking, spiritual journey in Italy, India and Indonesia,

she is in her part of achieving spiritual fulfillment. Liz's journey is religiously and spiritually motivated. Learning the ways to bring equilibrium in life, she enjoys spiritual travelling. She appreciates travelling, no matter what challenges she faces. Her travel writing is spiritual seeking and is a frank rundown of her travelling skills. Her true engagement with the outside world, her tiny observations about everything from the Balinese response to divorce to Italian men eating cream puffs after watching sports, covers the more conventional arc of her recovery story. Spirituality itself plays an important role in people's life in getting peace and balance. Liz's spirituality focuses on her experience of God's existence that is proved by her faith in the world. A well-faith person can devout to religious believes. Each place Liz travels helps her in balancing her mind through different aspects. Each country has given her different aspects of life between worldly feast and divine dominance. "Eat" in Italy gives her immense pleasure, "Pray" in India gives her a new vision of spiritual life and "Love" in Bali is where she finds the balancing act. Her journey is where she learns how to redeem her act and be a bigger person.

Conclusion: Liz's Journey for Self-transformation

Eat, Pray, Love is the depiction of Liz's experiences and her spiritual journey. It is based on Gilbert's real life experiences. In the story, Gilbert as the main character cannot find blissfulness in life despite being blessed with well-adjusted life and well-defined career. She feels consumed by panic and confusion. In order to abandon her burdens, she decides to travel to three countries: Italy, India and Indonesia where she gains pleasure, wisdom and Knowledge.

Liz's journey describes the human's need in contemporary context. She continuously longs for self-identity, self-gratification in each country she visits. One thing each of those places suggests is to be optimistic and cope up with every such

situation that comes to baffle you. She begins her journey letting go the twinge, asking for grace and forgiving her ex-husband which thoroughly helps her in beginning the rest of her life. All the spiritual instructions she gulps show how well she has been changed by it.

Spirituality concerns with living an appropriate life with moral, values and faith. It instructs people to negotiate peace with clashes; be it physical or emotional. Spiritual instructions are the way humans get in touch with the God and the world in a good relation. Trying to be connected spiritually, her travel sets a motive to bring out meaningful existence. Spiritual travel persuades people to bring out more kindness among people in your surroundings. This in brief explains the extraordinary experience of the main character. Her survival despite of the vicious struggles and problems must be canonized. She has triggered the level of curiosity through the tremendous way of her survival from anxiety about life. Liz, therefore, travels in order to find a harmonious life and an ideal life. She shows her participation because she wants to experience herself as a happy woman. She requires spiritual awakening in line with the purpose to get enlightenment from God. She chose travelling as the way to be closer to God and society.

A white western privileged woman uses travel as a therapic tool in pursuit of a fortunate and an honored life. Her exploration in a foreign (non-western) land bestows her with self-fulfillment and gratification. Western world that comes up with superiority has been wretched as Liz is the perfect example where white explores non-west land in search of space in life. This travel narrative by a privileged westerner, builds up a tourism firm for these places she visits as a spot that provides psychological enlightenment. Her journey is collectively her individualistic growth. Despite being at the lowest point in life, she pulls her up from the bad communication

that prevails around. The utmost desire to life, she achieves at the core Ashram of India and pleasure in Italy. She is able to let go her hollow of sadness eventually. She is able to enjoy her surreal moment of life that makes her world seem delightful despite the awful reality of her old life. Her structured plan to find happiness has been a smash hit as she finds pleasure in the beauty of Italy, spiritual connection in the Ashram of India and a balance between pleasure and spiritual devotion in Indonesia.

Liz's travel as a means to achieve self-gratification is considered to be the productive therapy even for spiritual growth. This travel writing presents Gilbert's willingness and effort to get better life quality that she manages to achieve at the end of her journey. Everything is intended to get felicity even in the suffering condition.

Works Cited

- Carter, David. *Literary Theory*. Reading: Cox and Wyman, 2006. Print.
- Crispin, Jessa. "How not to Be Elizabeth Gilbert." *Boston Review* 20 July 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2018. <http://bostonreview.net/books-ideas/jessa-crispin-female-travel-writing>
- Cusk, Rachel. "Eat Pray Love, by Elizabeth Gilbert." *The Guardian* 25 Sep. 2010. Web. 3 Aug. 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/sep/25/elizabeth-gilbert-rachel-cusk-rereading>
- Egan, Jennifer. "The Road to Bali." *The New York Times* 26 Feb. 2006. Web. 4 Aug. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/books/review/the-road-to-bali.html>
- Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything*. London: Bloomsbury, 2010. Print.
- Gilbert, Elizabeth. "Reviews and Profiles." *Publisher weekly* 20.2 (1996):1-15. Web. 18 March 2015.
- Hartmann, Margaret. Critics Find *Eat Pray Love* Very Pretty, Very Superficial." *Jezebel* 13 Aug. 2010. Web. 4 Aug. 2018. <https://jezebel.com/5612311/critics-find-eat-pray-love-very-pretty-very-superficial>
- Norman, Alex. "The Varieties of the Spiritual Tourist Experience." *Literature and Aesthetics* 22.1(2012): 20-37. Web. 3 Aug. 2018.
- Thompson, Carl. *Travel Writing*. London: Routledge, 2011. Print.
- Whitfield, Peter. *Travel: A Literary History*. Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 2011. Print.

Youngs, Tim. *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge
UP, 2013. Print.