

Celebration of Feminine Self in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*

Elizabeth Gilbert's best selling book *Eat, Pray, Love :One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia*, was published in 2006. This book is about the spiritual and personal exploration spent while traveling to three different countries Italy, India and Indonesia. It is based on a personal experience of Elizabeth Gilbert where every situation has been experienced by the writer herself. She is a feminist writer who celebrates her life having a feminine self. Although at the beginning she was depressed, when she goes for a trip she discovers herself and finds happiness and joy everywhere. This memoir tries to show the deeper malaise or in some level of female unhappiness but at last discovers the self identity of the author and makes her journey significant. She is also able to find out the art of pleasure in Italy, devotion and spiritual balances in India and Indonesia. She is a married woman of thirties suffering from unhealthy marriage and not satisfied of her life as she has to compromise on things being a female or a woman. She is a career focused woman and she does not find her life meaningful by focusing on family, husband and children. So, in order to find her identity of having a sense of self as a female she leaves everything behind and goes on a journey to search the meaning of her life. Going through many questions in her mind about the dissatisfaction of her life she goes out for a journey to reconstruct a more authentic identity and search for a happiness in her own way without caring about what happiness is for other people in the society. Through this journey she comes to reframe her existence of her identity and find the real definition of her happiness and reconstruct her new identity and the actual meaning of her life she was searching. She financed her world travel for the book with a \$200,000 publisher's advance after making the concept of writing a travelogue. In this memoir she has shown all the possibilities that are helping her to

search her identity. She has carried the trend of exploring herself by writing about herself in the book. Spending many nights on the bathroom floor sobbing and talking to god, she mentions that she wants to have a freedom from this patriarchal society where her voice has been suppressed. She goes to three countries where she can learn the situation of other women and also find her voice. Realizing she had to make changes in her life to keep her away from her sadness, Gilbert set out to search for the meaning of life and to cure her inner wound in Italy, India, and Indonesia. In her trip, she got to discover the pleasure of food in Italy, tranquility in India, and a new love in Indonesia. It was not easy for Gilbert to go on a trip for self discovery. In the three countries she went to, loneliness and depression still haunted her like unwanted visitors sneaking into her life when they could. But each time she got too sad, Gilbert allowed herself to feel the emotion instead of fighting against what she couldn't control. But she made it possible to find her identity and self discovery by traveling and writing a memoir which became most popular memoir of Elizabeth Gilbert.

Elizabeth Gilbert is an American feminist who herself suffers from the depression and unstable of mind because of her patriarchal society. So to show society a emerging role of woman in the society as well as literature ,she goes for a travel in three countries :Italy, India and Indonesia to search her identity through her book that she is going to write. Helen Cixous a french feminist who is best known for her essay *The Laugh Of Medusa* advocates for the freeing of writing, and making free of self through the writing which reader can see in the Gilbert's book *Eat, Pray, Love*. "Écritureféminine" or "feminine writing" theory is a theory that is discovered by Helen Cixous which foregrounds the importance of language for the psychic understanding of self. The theory draws on the foundational work in psychoanalysis about the way that humans come to understand their social roles. Here in the *Eat Pray*

Love we can see that Elizabeth Gilbert is also on the trip to make herself understanding self. She is going on the journey to discover herself by writing about the adventures she faces during the travel. Cixous challenged women to write themselves out of the world men constructed for women. She urged women to put themselves into the unthinkable and unthoughtable words. She says women should write about themselves. They must not hesitate to write. In her essay "The Laugh of Medusa" she mentions that "Almost everything is yet to be written by women about femininity: about their sexuality, that is, its infinite and mobile complexity; about their eroticization, sudden turn-ons of a certain minuscule-immense area of their bodies; not about destiny, but about the adventure of such and such a drive, about trips, crossings, trudges, abrupt and gradual awakenings, discoveries of a zone at once timorous and soon to be forthright". She demands that women write about "women and bring women to writing" she says women should create their own history, and develop a different understanding of society's relation to nature.

We should write as we dream; we should even try and write, we should all do it for ourselves, it's very healthy, because it's the only place where we never lie. At night we don't lie. Now if we think that our whole lives are built on lying-they are strange buildings-we should try and write as our dreams teach us; shamelessly, fearlessly, and by facing what is inside very human being-sheer violence, disgust, terror, shit, invention, poetry. In our dreams we are criminals; we kill, and we kill with a lot of enjoyment. But we are also the happiest people on earth; we make love as we never make love in life. (Helen Cixous)

Elizabeth Gilbert is from the western culture where individualistic success is considered to be the successful person. So according to this she was a successful

woman with all the luxuries like a house, money, husband, good career but was always under the pressure of patriarchal authority which made her feel that she was not happy. She wanted to leave everything and go to explore her voice of being a woman through a journey where she could find her feminine self and her identity Nancy Chodorow is an American sociologist, feminist psychoanalyst, and a professor who wrote a book called *The Reproduction of Mothering* where she has shown how a woman has to experience the tremendous growth, transformation and personal drain that come from combining professional growth, intellectual growth and parenting young children. She talks about the masculine self and feminine self where males are presented as egoistic and woman as relational self. Chodorow's work links psyche and culture, psychoanalysis and sociology. Her points in this book can be separated into four main ideas: How most women come to think of themselves as heterosexual?, Why women have the urge to mother?, What personality traits are specific to women?, and How the pattern of male dominance might be understood and might be changed?. We can also notice that Elizabeth Gilbert, an American woman as everything as a western woman but she is not satisfied. Like males in her society who can be happy with their individualistic success she could not become happy. Although she has money, successful life she could not be happy because she could not find inner peace in America and was able to discover this when she goes for a journey and becomes able to explore herself seeing at other women, cultures, people and their struggle for freedom. "To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one's family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one's own mind. If a man can control his mind he can find the way to Enlightenment, and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him" (Nancy Chodorow).

According to her one can be happy and healthy if the person can control his/her mind. If a person has self control over himself/herself he/she can be wise and can find the actual meaning of life. In *Eat, Pray, Love* Gilbert cannot be happy because she has no control over mind and suffers from depression. Although she has materialistic happiness, she does not have peace in mind. She is unable to control her emotions. But when she goes to India and starts practising meditation, she finds her inner peace. She is capable of maintaining the emotions and find her inner beauty of what she is. She applies the Butler's theory that gender is not identify by the society, it is known from the behavior of the human how the person presents himself in the society. She discovers her identity of being a self and finds herself cherished, happy and a healthy woman.

She always thinks she is forbidden by the society and so she cannot do anything. She has no right to choose her freedom. She is suppressed by herself thinking that she cannot do anything if she does not leave her husband and society. French philosopher Jean Paul Satre called this "badfaith": the habit of that people have of deceiving themselves into thinking that they do not have the freedom to make choices for fear of the political consequences of making choices. Person feels pity on himself of the circumstances in which he thinks himself inferior of himself. According to him the person thinks he is of no use, he has non choices, no freedom and feels pity of himself of the circumstances in which he thinks himself inferior of himself. Similarly Gilbert also embraces the struggle of personal freedom through personal choices. She explores this when she gives her all emotional attachment that was troubling her and goes out to carve her own identity. She also leaves all her luxurious life and goes for a trip to explore herself and find her identity.

We can find some similar characters between Nina, one of the characters from *Black Swan* and Elizabeth Gilbert in *Eat, Pray, Love*. The women in these novels go to the interior journey of self-realization, self-discovery through various experiments by expressing and attending to their desires. But from their journey they learn a lesson that how one can properly manifest feminism, social and sexual discipline. Both novels try to explore the feminist drive to break out the restrictions of the patriarchal society in the desire to find the balance. However, they are similar to each other. *Eat, Pray, Love* is a happy journey which has the happy ending with her self-discovery, but in *Black Swan* Nina goes into the self-destructive madness where she dies without reattending her idea of a self. In *Eat, Pray, Love* she leaves everything and goes for the search where women can find their voices. She learns about the different women around her journey, their struggle, their freedom and through this process she learns about herself and finds her own identity. But Nina is unable to search her identity, she is unable to make her stand on her own and leads to madness which leads her to death. On one hand, Gilbert is able to struggle, and find her identity whereas Nina from *Black Swan* is not able to identify herself and leads to her miserable death.

Oprah Winfrey is another woman who has been able to make her own identity in the world through her numerous works and shows on the media. Her biography includes her rise from poverty in Mississippi and sexual abuse to become the *Forbes*'s richest woman and the most powerful image in the media. She spoke openly about her own experience of sexual violence. Her book *Club* continues the infinitely renewable experience of finding a best self. Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* began its spectacular rise squarely in Frey's shadow. Her memoir claimed number 1 spot on the *Chronicle*'s list of "what they are reading on the College Campuses" It becomes the *New York Times* paperback best seller list. She also

appeared in TV and radios including two times on “OPRAH”. Gilbert appeared to people in the world by Time magazine. The Oprah Winfrey show in 2007 and has reappeared on the show to further discuss the book and her philosophy about book. She was named one of the 100 most influential person in the world by Times magazine. Oprah and Gilbert have the same circumstances for finding themselves because their both memoir explores the truth about the rise from the struggle they face in their lives. Oprah who was going through the poverty finds herself to be the richest woman and at the same time Gilbert who was going through the mental disturbance which lead her to lose everything she had and was able to find her identity of being a self to regain her all lost values and ideas.

Frankfurt Book Fair mentions what is essential to the self are the desires and cares that the self identifies with. In order for a self to transform then it must change its desires or cares therefore self transformation is possible through the modification of which it desires or cares for. Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat Pray Love*, claims to have transformed herself throughout the three years that the novel takes place, but the question is did she actually transform herself? Answering this question readers finds a transformation in the Gilbert’s life. She has changed her thinking as she moves from one place to another. She was not her true self during this time because these all could have been things which at one point she had desired for to be in her life but it is evident that who she is in the beginning of the novel is not exactly the same person at the end of the novel. The person readers find during the starting of the novel has been transformed to a new person in the sense that with a new thinking and new behavior. Her way of seeing to the society has been changed and now she is a healthy, beautiful and cherished woman.

Feminism does not mean issues about women or about women in a narrow sense. Feminism is a variety of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social gender equality. It works for the rights of women. It helps to establish the political, social and economic existences of the women. Sometimes feminism is wrongly understood as a negative movement or a "monster". In her view, feminism has been metaphorically located "in the belly of a monster," presenting a dilemma that demands that feminist critics adopt not only a critical but, above all, a political positioning. equates this "monster" that has hindered the development of feminism in terms of a specific location and a specific time frame: "the First World in the 1980s and after". Such a critical position, as observed in several articles in this volume, will enable the visualization of a contemporary feminist criticism that can be articulated through its local specificity, rejecting the uncritical acceptance of external models and rethinking the notions of gender and difference as an attempt to get out of the "belly of the monster." (Sandra Regina , 16)

Gilbert in her journey of self search faces this monster and sets herself free by truly understanding herself. Women were very back in writing long before. They were made subject by the males showing a dominant character. We could find some rare female writer who could write about themselves. In the beginning of travel ,writing women had to struggle to affirm their presence and contribution for the genre. This struggle certainly opened space for women to gain autonomy to move which provided these women with the possibility of transformation. In the case of Gilbert, she is also a female writer who crosses three countries in search of everything. She also makes a female subject that is herself which helps to explore the female qualities

through the life of woman. She inspires all the depressed and dissatisfied women to write about oneself so that they can explore themselves.

Elizabeth Gilbert finds herself in her writings in *Eat, Pray, Love*. The readers see drastic changes in her when she goes to travel and writes her book mentioning the activities faced in these countries. How her life changed after her travel ? What are the things that made her change herself ?

Actually she is not changed but her power of thinking is changed. She learns to use the power of her mind from Ketut Liyer who is a palm reader whom she meets in Bali. She frequently visits him and talks about Bali. They talk about the yoga. He tells her to smile always because that smile helps her to look a beautiful woman. It also gives her the power of pretty which she can use to get what you want in life. He suggests her not to argue with anyone about god. If they are speaking something just say I agree and then go home and pray for what you want. Through this ,he is also trying to say arguing destroys one's personality so just listen to what people say and follow what you want. It helps to maintain peace and you don't need to waste your energy. She studies about his lifestyle and feels great and happy spending time with him because he teaches her great lessons about her life to discover her identity. He always teaches about the love and says her to love herself if she wants to be loved. He tell her not to forget yoga because it is very beneficial for her to keep balance with mind and body. It will also help her to find her identity she was searching. He likes to talk with her and listen stories about different countries and he always had a time for Gilbert. She has been his friend who could tell him about the outer world that he has not travelled. They also exchange their thoughts with each other . Gilbert teaches him english and he teaches her about the things that helps her to find her inner beauty and identity. They feel pleasure talking and spending time with each other:

That's when I realized that I am not KetutLiyer's English teacher, nor am I exactly his theological student, but I am the merest and simplest of pleasures for this old medicine man— I am his company. I'm somebody he can talk to because he enjoys hearing about the world and he hasn't had much of a chance to see it. (Gilbert 254)

She feels being of help to a man who has never been off the island of Bali is certainly a matter of gratitude because she used to talk with him about the different places he has not been. Being present for Ketut, a humble man that dedicates almost all his day to others is, perhaps, a way of being less self-centered. She does not mention the past too much and seems willing to forget all the misery she has gone through. Gilbert tries to hide all her sadness and wants to reconstruct her new identity in each period of her travel. Bali represents the last part of Gilbert's journey and she has finally left behind all the "shame, and confusion and fear" to give room for a new, strong and selfless woman (Gilbert 10).

In Bali she meets with a women of thirties called WayanNuriyasin, who has a medicine clinic of herbs and restaurant at the same place. She was a divorced women and had a daughter, Tutti and live in that rented house. Gilbert finds her life full of sadness where she had to struggle and was winning her life over grief. They were poor but knew how to leave their life. She learns to be happy seeing the life of her friend Wayan since she has left behind her divorce and was living alone without the support of anyone. Seeing the poor condition of Tutti and Wayan, Gilbert decides to help them by raising the fund to buy them a new house in Bali where they could live happily. So, Gilbert mails everyone of her friends across the different countries to help how much they can to make a house for this family. In this circumstances, Gilbert feels great that she can help them to built a house. Through this activity she

feels a kind of relief because the struggle that she is facing is not bigger than theirs. She finds her pleasure in helping her. She is independent and she has everything but to them they are struggling to live a life.

Gilbert is from western culture where they are focused on their career and individualism. Readers can see that Gilbert is not happy because she feels alone and has no power to face patriarchy society where the voices of women are suppressed. So she leaves her everything in New York and goes for the search of her own identity and freedom. When she goes for a travel, she explores herself to the non western culture where she finds that women are more in miserable condition than her. She finds that she was lucky that she is traveling and writing about herself and exploring herself. She was independent and has no any boundaries like other women. In India she meets a seventeen years old girl Tulsi who works like her scrubbing the temple floors. They walk together talking about different cultures of India where she learns that Indian women have no right to choose her husband. Tulsi is a teenage girl who is adventurous and bold and wants to do many things but she is forbidden by her society. Tulsi represents a different kind of woman in the story who is very much unlikely than Gilbert. She has no option rather than listening to her parents but Gilbert who is already free from the marriage and is in search of freedom. There are so many restriction to follow during their marriage. She also discovers that they cannot end up their marriage as they desire. Society does not accept the divorced woman. They are seen with the negative attitude. If the woman in India are highly educated ,it becomes problem for them to get married because every man wants a woman who is less attractive, less educated so that they can keep them under their command. If a woman is not happy with a man she even cannot be separated from him. Tulsi also tells her that she was lucky because she did not need to worry about anything

like family, burden of having a children. When she learns the culture of India and Indian women, she compares herself with them and finds her life far better than theirs. She can enjoy her rights of having freedom. In India when a woman gets divorced she has to face lots of problems, no one is there to hold her hand again but in her case although she was divorced, she could choose her partner again. She finds her satisfaction there and celebrates her freedom.

Feminism helps to demonstrate the power of woman in every field. Elizabeth Gilbert, one of the feminist writers, who suffers from a severe case of depression goes for a trip to explore her female identity. She thinks she is dominated by the male and she has to be suppressed by the male dominated society. In order to discover the truth and forget her pain she goes to a trip and finally she discovers her identity of being a woman and enjoys her life accepting the truth of the society. She also accepts what she is and moves forward towards life. She celebrates her freedom of being a feminine self. During her travel, she finds and learns many cultural differences and subtleties from many people across different places and finds the real meaning of her life. She discovers herself and finds her voice being a woman and feels proud of herself being an independent woman. She is rich, a successful writer, she has family and friends, she has a steady relationship, therefore, she should be happy. However, Gilbert summarizes the only certainty she has by saying: 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 (Gilbert p. 10)

She does not want to have a child. She doesn't support in having a child because she is a woman. According to her, it must be a woman's decision to have a baby or not. She was not in the want of money, house and luxurious lifestyle and all she desired was the happiness and her self control over her life. and She was not

happy with her life so she wanted to go far away from that world to explore herself. She wants to move away from the male dominated society where she finds she is chained by the suppression of male. She has no freedom of choosing her way of life. Her journey starts with painful divorce which leads her to depression and unbalance of mind. She leaves her everything like money, house and well settled life of New York to search her identity. She decides to travel to Italy, India and Indonesia where she can get the pleasure of eating in Italy, pleasure of spirituality in India and the balance between them in Indonesia.

She was a depressed women with lots of things playing inside her mind and talking to herself. She used to cry inside bathroom at nights and talk to god alone. The novel *Eat, Pray, Love* tells how she travel to three different countries Italy, India, and Indonesia to search for her identity. Because of her depression she took this decision to heal her pain and unstable mind to find her self. She decides to travel to three countries India, Italy and Indonesia where she could explore the different aspects of life. She hopes to explore the art of pleasure in Italy, the art of devotion in India and to balance the both aspects in Indonesia. She was lucky because she got the opportunity to travel three countries she thought of, where she could write a book, which was sponsored by a publisher:

According to Nancy Chodorow female cannot live alone. They are relational self where they are directly or indirectly connected by the people but do not realize it. However, they try to escape from the truth they are bonded in a relation of a daughter, mother, wife and many more, they are always forbidden by it. When they try to escape they are lost somewhere. As a result ,they find themselves alone and feel anxiety and depressed as well as lack of identity. So, similar circumstances happen to Gilbert where she thinks she needs to leave everyone and go for a trip to explore

herself. Although she thinks she is alone she is searching someone to be with always so that she can forget pain and enjoy life. Her travel to these countries makes her realize that people around them are not the problem.

Not only did I feel unhesitating compassion and unity with everything and everybody, it was vaguely and amusingly strange for me to wonder how anybody could ever feel anything but that. I also felt mildly charmed by all my old ideas about who I am and what I'm like. I'm a woman, I come from America, I'm talkative, I'm a writer—all this felt so cute and obsolete.

Imagine cramming yourself into such a puny box of identity when you could experience your infinitude instead. (Gilbert)

When she discovers herself who she is she does not feel hesitating with anyone. She feels great after finding her identity of being woman. She changes her old ideas of being who she is and from where she is. She is not concerned about what other may think because she is happy with her own identity of what she is. She is an American woman who has discovered her feminine self.

"Self actualization" theory has been used where Gilbert has discovered herself with what she is and what she want beyond what she had. Self-actualization can also be defined as similar to the concepts such as, self realization, self-discovery, and self exploration. The term was originally introduced by the Kurt Goldstein who is the organismic theorist and can be used for the motive to realize one's full potential. He describes "self actualization" as creative drive within each individual, the innate drive toward self development, toward organismic completion or the realization of the innate potentialities. Self actualization is a processing of being a self where Gilbert is also on the process of becoming a self by traveling to three different countries and writing a her own autobiographical memoir. Although she had huge potentialities but

she could not realize that but, during the process of discovering herself ,her all the good potentialities have been seen in the memoir. Throughout the memoir ,reader can see how Gilbert transforms herself throughout the journey. She uses many symbolic resources like her guru, yogi wisdom, the stories of different strangers that she hears and comparing these with her own emotions to find her identity and happiness.

And when I think of the mental anguish I was going through right after I left marriage, I have no doubt that I could have been a great drain on everyone at this ashram had I come here at that moment. Far better to have rested first in Italy, gotten my strength and health back, and then showed up. (Gilbert 135)

These parses convey us the message that when one needs to get the desire spirituality, one needs to have a peace in mind first,So to give her mind peace ,first she goes to Italy, has the pleasure of eating and makes herself free from mental stress and comes to India for prayer and meditation. We can also say that in Italy she took a rest and made herself ready for prayer in India. This is a beginning process of becoming self where she tries to find her identity of self by leaving her beautiful and well- settled career. In the beginning of the narrative, readers see an unhealthy woman. Anxiety, sadness and fear are mental disorders that, in excess, affect the body and it is not different with Gilbert. She emphasizes this situation when she describes the scene where she is sobbing so hard in the bathroom floor that a great lake of tears was spreading before her on the bathroom tiles with all her shame and fear and confusion and grief .Thus, the trip to Italy is the first step to ‘heal’ her body, to recover from what she sees as traumatic experiences by giving the body nutrition; hence, health and pleasure. She always wants to find the reality of life being a female. She doesn't want to make her life end in making family and living for her. As our superstitious society always wants women to live under the restriction. It wants women to care their

husband, make a child and live for them but she did not believe in those things. She is a career focused woman and she wants to focus on her career. So now I have started living my own life. Imperfect and clumsy as it may look, it is resembling me now, thoroughly (Gilbert 108).

We can say Gilbert was also a wise lady who does not blame anyone for the situations. Even though she goes through the unhappy marriage to the tough depressing divorce life and she still manages to make her life smooth. She does not give up on life, instead, she is motivated to build a new better life by doing the journey through Italy, India, and Indonesia. "So I stopped trying to choose-Italy? India? Or Indonesia?-and eventually just admitted that I wanted to travel to all of them. Four months in each place. A year in total. Of course this was a slightly more ambitious dream than I want to buy myself a new pencil box." "But this is what I wanted. And I knew that I wanted to write about it" (Gilbert, 41).

These sentences from *Eat, Pray, Love* makes us clear that she has decided to go to three countries Italy, India, and Indonesia spending four months in each of the countries to explore the dream of searching her identity. And she wants to write about all the experiences she collects from the trip to make her travel praiseworthy. We can see a huge transformation of Gilbert from the starting of her memoir to the final. Through the memoir *Eat, Pray, Love* Gilbert is trying to show her transformation from depressed, unhealthy and mentally disturbed woman into a healthy woman with enlightened mind.

Readers can see that she was able to meditate for two hours without any disturbance even there were mosquitoes biting her:

The itch was maddening at first but eventually it just melded into a general burning feeling and I rode that heat to a mild euphoria. I allowed the pain to

lose its specific associations and become pure sensation-neither good nor bad, just intense -and that intensity lifted me out of myself and into meditation. I just sat there for two hours. A bird might very well have landed on my head. I wouldn't noticed. (Gilbert)

This parse shows how she was able to concentrate on the meditation. Talking about the meditation, one evening she sat on the garden in a Vipassana style with no movement, no agitation whatever happens. Since it was evening she was disturbed by the mosquito bites. But she continues her meditation with peace and no movement. Slowly she goes to the deep meditation that she did not feel the bite of mosquito. Nearly two hours later, after her meditation ,she noticed lots of mosquitoes bites on her body. She was able to feel the pleasure of inner peace forgetting all her mental struggles she faced during her life. Gilbert started a journey alone around the world, in pursuit of self-discovery. *Eat, Pray, Love* is a candid, humorous and often self-indulgent account of how the author sets out to explore three different aspects of her own nature. She travels to Italy to learn the language, revel in the cuisine and the dolce vita. She then finds spiritual devotion in India, where she learns to meditate in an ashram. Her journey then takes her to Indonesia where she reconnects with a healer in Bali. Here she finds a happy balance between worldly enjoyment and divine transcendence. She finally finds the inner peace and balance of true love she had been searching for in Indonesia.

It is kind of a fairyland of language for me here. For someone who has always wanted to speak Italian, what could be better than Rome? It's like somebody invented a city just to suit my specifications, where everyone (even the children, even the taxi drivers, even the actors in the commercials!) speaks this magical language. (Gilbert 39)

In this extract she finds her dream place as a fairyland. She likes speaking Italian and finds a place that suits for her specification. Italy was always her favorite place and favorite language. She always wished of speaking Italian. It was not so difficult for her to make friends wherever she goes, so she was immediately in friendship with few friends. There were twin brothers Dario and Giovanni who used to teach them Italian and instead she taught them English. During her stay in Italy she enjoyed a lot. She loved the lifestyle and culture of Italy. The most fabulous thing she loved about Italy was the food. She eats many kinds of pasta, pizzas, artichokes, zucchini blossoms with cheese sauce and many more. She learns the history of the Italy which was very painful. She makes nice friends who make fun of her telling that Americans are too ambitious and do not know how to enjoy their life. So, they suggest Gilbert to laugh and enjoy her life forgetting all her grief and pains. In the company of these good people she was happy and was able to maintain her happiness. Italy is the place chosen for the first step towards the healing of Gilbert's body. Gilbert mentions that she struggled with depression and anxiety due to her unfriendly divorce. These things had an impact over her health and, in Italy, she had the opportunity to recover her strength by eating well and nurturing her body.

After the pleasure of Italy she went to India where she had decided to pray and get the pleasure of spirituality, The main pleasure that she got in India was through meditation. The next part of her journey provides Gilbert with Indian spiritual practices, which are important for her to find the balance between body and soul. According to the title of the book, by praying, meditating, controlling her negative and selfish thoughts, she would reach God and the divine. Moreover, Gilbert has the opportunity to develop patience, resilience and she becomes less self-centered by understanding that the chaos was necessary for her transformation. She went to the

ashram where she studied about the meditation. She started reading about the Vipassana meditation. It teaches about the grief and nuisance that are inevitable but eventually passed away. So Vipassana teaches us to hold our peace in the moment. In ashram she meets many friends who had lots of sufferings like her but still they were happy and were trying to overcome their grief.

She meets an old man named Richard who used to call her groceries because she used to eat much. She used to share her emotions with him. He also used to advice her with suitable situations. He was one of her good advisor as well as her guardian in the ashram. At the beginning it was really difficult for her to adjust in ashram but with the time she was able to coop with the environment of ashram. She was unable to concentrate on the meditation because of her disturbed mind but slowly she was able to manage.

I can prattle away to God about all my feelings and my problems all the livelong day, but when it comes time to descend into silence and listen. . . well, that's a different story. When I ask my mind to rest in stillness, it is astonishing how quickly it will turn (1) bored, (2) anger (3) depressed, (4) anxious or (5) all of the above. (Gilbert 138)

The most difficult aspect of being in the Ashram is the meditation practice that she takes daily, because meditation requires the act of listening which is extremely hard for her. Gilbert tries to keep patience day by day but when she tries for meditation she has to struggle with her emotions which does not let her be calm. She cannot rest her mind. Because she thinks of many things which disturbs in meditation and cannot make it successful. The life in the ashram was not so easy to her because every time she needs chanting, meditating and singing chores. She must clean the floors for hourseveryday. She even could not eat as she likes and the most difficult part was she

was depending on vegetarian food that was given in the ashram. She had the habit of eating too much and she has to learn to self control. During her stay in Indian ashram she always tried to be happy and gay by searching her inner peace of mind leaving the outer pleasure. She was able to move towards positivity and decides to forgive everyone whom she thinks was taking her to trouble. She accepts all the reality of life and finds her real identity of being herself. Her guru had told her that one thing will happen in the ashram that – you will discover who you really are. she was able to discover who she was.

In the memoir Gilbert herself perpetuates a model of tourism in which local culture is presented as the spiritual product that, once consumed and allows for her spiritual enlightenment. The purpose of her for traveling to Italy, India, and Indonesia is to learn about herself by observing different native culture:

It wasn't so much that I wanted to thoroughly explore the countries themselves. . . It was more that I wanted to thoroughly explore one aspect of myself. . . 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, Indonesia, the art of balancing the two(Gilbert 30).

Therefore the interactions done by Gilbert with the “natives,” especially those in India and Bali, are generally framed within the context of Gilbert’s spiritual search. . She realizes that she had all the requirements that she needs to live a life, well settled career. She had house, money, but still was unhappy. She was able to find that all she needed was a satisfaction with what she had. She was in the stage where she could realize all the good things around her and avoid the bad things. Her sympathy towards Wayan makes her feel her own sorrow which readers can say”self realization” made by Elizabeth Gilbert. In one overview, Mortimer Adler defines self-

realization as freedom from external coercion, including cultural expectations, political and economic freedom, and the freedom from worldly attachments and desires. (The Idea of freedom , p 127) Gilbert finds her actual pleasure in helping her because she has discovered that true fulfillment is not found in our outward achievements, but in what we accomplish within ourselves.

Her 'travel to Bali' was a good experience to Elizabeth Gilbert because during her trip to Bali she was able to find her true love whom she was waiting for years. She was able to leave away all her grief and learn to love. She was able to find happiness and knew that there is love everywhere if you know how to love. In Bali she meets a Brazilian man named Felipe with whom she falls in love. He is very romantic, wise and treats her very well and she gets in a committed relationship with him. She spends time with him roaming around in different places like beach, restaurants, café. They also spend nights together where Felipe tells her that she was beautiful where Gilbert always thinks that her beauty has faded away with her stress and grief she was carrying in her life. Readers can see how Gilbert transfers herself to a beautiful woman with a good soul with all the characters of being female by making herself happy and peaceful mind. Here love has been the most influential factor in the life of Gilbert in making herself love to oneself. Once she is out of her stress and grief she suddenly thinks she is the happiest woman in the world because she is able to find her inner peace of mind and soul.

For another thing, I think I know what you're worried about. Some man is going to come into your life and take everything from you again. I won't do that to you, darling. I've been alone for a long time, too, and I've lost a great deal in love, just like you have. I don't want us to take anything from each

other. It's just that I've never enjoyed anyone's company as much as I enjoy yours, and I'd like to be with you. (Gilbert 298)

Gilbert was always in search of her love somehow and was afraid to accept because she had bad ending before. Her guru in Bali tells her that someone is about to come in her life who makes her happy and she will also enjoy his company like he did and she will fall in love with him. Gilbert's past love life was never happy so, afraid and knowing that her new-found balance Gilbert decides to give Felipe a chance to involve in her life and give herself a chance to live a new love story. The Bali period represents the place where Gilbert comes to the end with her past and opens her heart again with her love. This time she is more mature and sure of what she expects from her and from the other. Gilbert lost the balance of her life with the divorce and the fruitless affair with David. However, after a year and a half, she is finally aware of how long she has gone to find peace and contentment. She says: She falls in love with Felipe and decides to live with him. Finally readers find a woman who had to walk a long way to find and understand what kind of love she deserves. Even though the end of her whole journey readers find a love story which balances all the missing factors in her life. Readers can see the journey that helped to construct interesting process of self-transformation. Going away to find oneself is the motto of her journeys where Gilbert makes from the outer journey a way to identify and solve inner issues or, sometimes, as we have just seen from Gilbert's final speech, to understand that all the answers she is searching for are within her.

Readers can see the huge transformation on Gilbert but talking about the factors that made this change, can be the environment or the places she visits. According to Carls Rogers one's behavior can be changed according to the environment the persons get. Carl Rogers (1959) believes that humans have one basic

motive, that is the tendency to self-actualize by fulfilling one's potential and achieve the highest level of 'human- beingness'. (Rogers, p.487) He compares the human nature with the flower that will grow to its full potential if the conditions are right but which is constrained by its environment. Similarly people will also flourish and reach their potential if their environment is good enough. Here Gilbert also feels suffocated in her home town even she has all the luxury and suffers from mental disorder and seeks for a good environment where she could nourish her self identity of being a female in a society. When she travels across these three countries, like the flower mentioned by Roger, she also explores with that environment she finds in these countries. She discovers the new environment where she can throw away her all the bad things and nourish the new things that helped her to discover her new identity. Carl Rogers believes that for a person to achieve self-actualization they must be in a state of congruence. This means that self-actualization occurs when a person becomes who they want to be with their actual behavior. Gilbert has lost all her harmony and conformity before she started her journey. She was feeling shame of being a woman who were always dominated by patriarchal society. She could not find the suitable environment to raise and find her voice in that place. So when she makes the realization she goes for a new environment to learn about herself and find the environment. Rogers believed that every person could achieve their goals, wishes, and desires in life. Therefore when a person achieves these things we can say self actualization has taken place in the person's life. Gilbert also wants to explore her goals, desires and wishes by going to three different countries. She makes her journey meaningful by achieving what she wanted from her journey so we can say self actualization takes place in her life. In her memoir readers can see how she changes in her thinking after her journey. Even she is divorced from her husband she wants to

make him her friend. She thinks he could be his good friend forever because she has nothing to do with him and forgives him. During her travel she learns about the miserable condition of other woman and realizes the grief she had was not bigger than them.

In this way, Gilbert became the person she always wanted to be. She is a woman who did not want to stay married and have kids because this was expected from her. She could finally get rid of the guilt of not playing the per-established roles for her due to the experiences she lived in this gap year. In the beginning of the memoir she questions this: “But why must everything always have a practical application? I’d been such a diligent soldier for years – working, producing, never missing a deadline, taking care of my loved ones, my gums and my credit record, voting, etc. -Is this lifetime supposed to be only about duty?” (Gilbert 24) She explores all her emotions to find her self identity and her self discovery. In the end of her journey, she could answer all the questions that were emerging throughout the book. This journey made the self-discovery possible by observing different cultures, people, places, interaction with the strangers. She feels other’s emotion deeply and compares with herself which opens her inner part of the heart to realize that nobody in this world is free of problems and grief but what we need to learn is to overcome the sadness and move forward. Gilbert travels to three countries in search of everything that allows her to be free from the social constrains that are commonly attributed to women in her patriarchal cultural system where females are always dominated. The trip also allows her to undergo a self transformation that enables her to reinvent her identity through the traveling process. Although there are many other possibilities for further research she chooses traveling and writing where she could search all women’s voices collectively and at the same time it has been the way for

transformation of self with a new identity as it was in the past. She herself finds that she has been changed from what she was and what she is and now she has no shame on telling what she is because she has discovered herself and her identity of being a woman. She celebrates every factor that connects her being a woman by forgiving everyone because of whom she was depressed in the past.

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