

## PERSONALITY OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN *EAT, PRAY, LOVE* NOVEL BY ELIZABETH GILBERT

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### ABSTRACT

Psychoanalysis is a theory that is used to analyze the human psyche where the behavior that occurs is due to the mindset that is controlled under the human consciousness. One that can be influenced is the human personality which is described through literary works such as a novel. The purpose of this study is to identify how the personality of the main character depicted in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel. The researcher uses qualitative methods. The data used in this study are utterances and dialogues. The results of this study indicate that there are three aspects of personality structure found in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel. The aspects are id (biological aspect) has a role to fulfill the inner satisfaction to get pleasure, ego (rational aspect) plays a role in controlling the inner satisfaction by the id and prioritizes reality, and superego (moral aspect) focuses on morality where it comes from parental teachings and norms that exist in society. These three aspects bridge other to regulate the steps taken by Elizabeth as the main character in the novel.

**Keywords:** personality, character, *Eat, Pray, Love* novel, psychoanalysis

### ABSTRAK

Psikoanalisis adalah teori yang digunakan untuk menganalisis jiwa manusia di mana perilaku yang terjadi disebabkan oleh pola pikir yang dikendalikan di bawah kesadaran manusia. Salah satu yang dapat dipengaruhi adalah kepribadian manusia yang digambarkan melalui karya sastra seperti novel. Skripsi ini membahas tentang kepribadian tokoh utama dalam novel *Eat, Pray, Love* karya Elizabeth Gilbert. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana kepribadian tokoh utama yang digambarkan dalam novel tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah ucapan dan dialog dari tokoh utama. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga aspek struktur kepribadian yang terdapat dalam novel *Eat, Pray, Love* yang mempengaruhi representasi kepribadian tokoh utama. Aspek-aspek tersebut adalah id (aspek biologis) berperan untuk memenuhi kepuasan batin untuk mendapatkan kesenangan, ego (aspek rasional) berperan dalam mengendalikan kepuasan batin oleh id dan mengutamakan realitas, dan superego (aspek moral)

berfokus pada moralitas dimana itu berasal dari ajaran dan norma orang tua yang ada di masyarakat. Ketiga aspek tersebut menjembatani lainnya dalam mengatur langkah-langkah yang diambil Elizabeth sebagai tokoh utama dalam novel tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** kepribadian, karakter, novel *Eat, Pray, Love*, psikoanalisis

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Personality is the attitude and emotional state of an individual that determines adjustments to the environment that can change according to circumstances. Personality can be formed through the influence of others, the environment, and yourself. That is caused by different levels of human thought and emotion. Sometimes you cannot feel who you are. In fact, there are many people whose personalities are shaped by others and influenced by their surroundings.

Personality is closely related to a person's mental and mental health. In literary works, there are important points that concern a person's character issues. The theory used by Sigmund Freud has its interpretation of a person's personality which is divided into several parts. Meanwhile, literary works have a special analysis using various theories. Basically, psychology and literature have a relationship with each other. Literature is not only a matter of analyzing written texts but also concerns the character of the actors who play a role in literature. Human personality is always contained in literary works. Psychological problems such as those in literature can be explored through personality theories in psychology.

Personality refers to an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms - hidden or not - behind those patterns (Funder 5). Personality is not something that arises since we were born. Because it could change at any time and it can be formed by anyone, anytime. A person's personality can be temporary or permanent. In fact, sometimes unconsciously character and behavior that we have already can change very rapidly caused by many things. If we look at phenomena today, many people are very easily influenced by their circles. An inconsistent personality greatly influences other aspects of our lives. When that happens there are a few problems related to our personality caused by ourselves.

One of those related to personality is character. Personality and character are two different things but interconnected. Character is a combination of a person's inherent nature. The nature formed will make a person has her or his character. Personality focuses on the way or attitude is taken to interact and socialize with others. While the character is a habit that is inherent in themselves. Gulo argues that character is a moral starting point that has a relatively fixed nature (29).

Related to the discussion above, the researcher is interested to analyze *Eat, Pray, Love* novel by Elizabeth Gilbert. This novel is a best-selling work by Elizabeth Gilbert which has sold more than seven million copies. The main character in this object is the writer of the novel. She is Elizabeth Gilbert who makes her real-life story into amazing work. The story of *Eat, Pray, Love* novel tells about Elizabeth's travels in various countries to find her true self and seek peace in life. Elizabeth is a modern woman who has everything in life. She has a good career, a husband who loves her, and enough economy. But she feels that household life is not something that she wants. When she gets depression she chooses to get a divorce and travels to the three

countries. She has a reason why she takes major decisions in her life. She chooses to travel to the three countries that have meaning for her. The researcher is interested in identifying how the main character's personality is represented through her journey in three countries. The researcher is also interested in the way Elizabeth finds out her true self to get what she needs in her life.

Based on the background above, the objective of this research is to identify the personality of the main character that is depicted in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel. It was expected that this research can be used as reference material for analyzing psychoanalytic theory in literary studies.

## **B. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE**

### **1. Literature**

The term literature seems best if we limit it to the art of literature, that is, to imaginative literature. Literature is also produced by the imagination of the author. Literature is not just a document of facts, it is not just the collection of real events though it may happen in the real life. Literature can create its own world as a product of unlimited imagination (Wellek and Warren 22). Literature has its language in describing situations or feelings that can be related to various types of approaches and using related theories. Language in literature has its appeal to the reader and the listener.

### **2. Relationship Between Literature and Psychology**

Psychology in literature deals with human beings about perceptions of the world, needs, despairs, conflicts, and social concerns. Literature facilitates individuals to understand their identities by raising awareness. In the psychological approach, the author's perceptions, dreams, conscious or unconscious mind, the differences between the personality of the author and the author in the text. In the psychological approach, the writer releases his thoughts individually, both subconsciously and unconsciously. (Wellek and Warren 90). Psychology comes from the Greek word psyche, which means soul, and logos which means science. Psychology means the science that investigates and studies human behavior (Atkinson 7). Literature becomes an interesting material for psychology, especially the psychology of personality. Literature is not just analyzing texts but also becomes study material involving the personalities of figures, literary authors, and readers.

### **3. Personality**

Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine characteristic behavior and thought (Allport 28). Besides, Erikson divided the growth of the personality into eight psychosocial stages. The first four are similar to Freud's oral, anal, phallic, and latency stages. The major difference between their theories is that Erikson emphasized psychosocial correlates, whereas Freud focused on biological factors (181-183). From all the definitions of a personality above, it can be concluded that personality is a trait possessed by someone as an identification. A trait that is inherent in yourself. Identifiers

that are owned by someone will facilitate it interacting in the social sphere. A personality that someone has can change and develop following the process being passed.

#### **4. Character**

According to Saunders, the character is an original nature that is shown by each individual. He also said that the character of each individual must be different. In the statement, he assumed that the character is the original nature of every individual. Someone must have a character that is not influenced by others. But the fact is sometimes someone will change his character for certain interests. Nevertheless in the end the character remains an authenticity that is owned by each individual (126).

Repeated patterns of interaction will shape the next emotional experience. Especially interactions that occur between someone who has a significant relationship. That happened unconsciously. Reflectivity that occurs is what will shape one's character. The character has no type. Because each person is unique with their respective advantages.

#### **5. Psychoanalysis Theory**

Sigmund Freud is known as the father of psychoanalysis. Sigmund explains personality in three important elements which consist of a personality structure, personality dynamics, and personality development. These three elements are the results that he developed in developing the theory of psychoanalysis. The structure of a personality is divided into two. The first is a mental structure and the second is the human mind. (Perlman and Brandell 52). The structure of a personality that covers a human mind is divided into three structures id (biological aspect), ego (rational aspect), and superego (moral aspect) (Freud 14). According to Sigmund Freud the id, ego, and superego are not persons, places, or physical things, they are the names given to certain motivational forces whose existence is inferred from the way people behave (24).

##### **a. Id (biological aspect)**

The id is the concept of a personality that has appeared since birth. According to Freud, the id is a psychological basis that contains desires that can give pleasure (14). The id is a system where there are personality instincts or desire to be able to fulfill someone's wish as a form of enjoyment. This system works unconsciously and impulsively. If the pleasure is not obtained, it will cause anxiety. The id will try to get what is desired a form of fulfilling desires.

##### **b. Ego (rational aspect)**

The ego is made to carry out the rational function of personality. The desire of the id who always wants to fulfill his needs only for pleasure and get the desired pleasure makes the ego formed as a development of the id. The ego is formed to fulfill the wishes of the id in a realistic way. The role of the ego is to be able to solve problems realistically and solve conflicts against desires that differ from one another. The ego is a personality structure where it will try to think about what has happened and how it can be resolved realistically.

It becomes the controller for all demands desired by the id (Freud 14).

**c. Superego (moral aspect)**

Superego is formed through the rules obtained from individuals or groups of people who are considered to have an important role in the subject. Its idealistic principle makes the superego an example of the realization of what has been taught by people who are considered to have an important role for individuals such as parents. If what is taught is a command, then it is considered right by them. On the contrary, if a prohibition is given, then it is considered wrong. The superego will also make the ego change realistic ways of solving problems into a way that uses a moralistic aspect (Freud 47).

**C. RESEARCH METHOD**

**1. Research Design**

The researcher uses a qualitative method to analyze the study. The qualitative method is a method in which the researcher uses the sentences of the subject being analyzed as data. According to Creswell "qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes word, report detailed views of information, and conducts the study in a natural setting". It means that the researcher uses the sentences in the story as real data. The data that are clearly and cannot be changed (15).

**2. Data and Data Source**

The data is in the form of words, phrases, and sentences that show the personality's problem of the main character. The researcher takes the data from the utterances and dialogue in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel.

**3. Research Instrument**

In qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher herself. The researcher focused on collecting the data and analyzing the data based on the theory that the researcher uses. The researcher should re-read, highlight the data and then analyze it with psychoanalytic theory.

**4. Data collection**

The researcher used the data collected by reading *Eat, Pray, Love* novel. The data was collected through some steps. The first step was reading *Eat, Pray, Love* novel and understanding the whole story to make the collection of the data easier. The second step was identifying the issues of the personality problem of the main character in psychoanalytic theory which is in the novel. The third step was making some notes and highlighting the important sentences to help the researcher analyze the literary work.

## 5. Data Analysis

After collecting data, the researcher applied some steps to analyze the data. Miles and Huberman (10) define analysis as consisting of three steps to analyze the data: data reduction, data display, and drawing a conclusion. Data reduction is the process of selecting, simplifying, and transferring data in the form of records (Miles and Huberman 16). In this research, the researcher collected the data from several notes that had been made and retrieved the most needed data to facilitate extracting information. The researcher collected data from dialogue and narrative in the main character in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel that describes personality's problem in psychoanalytic theory. The second step was data display. After reducing the data, the researcher organizes the data for further analysis of the personality of the main character in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel. The researcher collected data that has been collected that was used in a paragraph. The last step was concluding. In this step, the researcher concluded the analysis result. The researcher described the conclusions that have been obtained through the data that had been obtained through several previous stages.

## D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this point, the researcher has collected the data to answer and explain the research question. To answer the research question the researcher analyzes the aspects of the personality structure of the main character in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel by using Sigmund Freud's theory about Psychoanalysis theory.

### 1. Findings

In the research findings, the researcher identified the aspects of personality structure of the main character in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel. The researcher presented the analyzed data, classified them into three aspects, there were id, ego, and superego then described the data in paragraphs. The analysis is presented below.

#### a. Id (biological aspect)

It is a personality system that is innate since birth. The id contains the impulse obtained from the nature of the human instinct that prioritizes inner satisfaction. The energy obtained is only to try all means to get pleasure. Because basically, the id principle prioritizes the satisfaction obtained by seeking pleasure. The id operates on the unconscious which makes it incapable of judging whether things are being done right or not. The pleasure obtained is a form of effort to relieve pain and tension.

Which all makes sense, given that I recently stepped on a scale in a fancy Italian hotel and learned that **I have gained twenty-three pounds in my four months of Italy---a truly admirable statistic. About fifteen pounds of that I actually needed to gain because I had become so skeletal during these last hard years of divorce and depression. The next five pounds, I just gained for fun.** As for the final



three? Just to prove a point, I suppose. **But so it is that I find myself shopping for an item of clothing I will always keep in my life as a cherished souvenir.** (Gilbert 147)

The data above is Elizabeth's thoughts when she realized that while in Italy she had gained significant weight. It certainly surprised and amazed her. She felt happy because before she had a very thin body due to depression. She also enjoys her time shopping in Italy and fulfilling her pleasure.

In this case, it is very clear how Elizabeth enjoys her time for several months in Italy. She has pleasure in Italy. Unconsciously she gains weight. she spends her time enjoying a variety of foods. She does not even care about anything else. The role of the id is very strong in regulating Elizabeth's behavior in making decisions. The instincts contained in the id make her try to get pleasure so she can avoid pain and depression. The researcher can identify that the id operates in Elizabeth's mind to achieve self-satisfaction. The researcher sees that from how she enjoys her time to have fun until she does not realize that she gains weight. The energy that Elizabeth gets to find satisfaction in her pain and depression is her instinctive nature. That is how the id plays a strong role in regulating her behavior.

## **b. Ego (rational aspect)**

The ego is the part of the mind that uses the reality principle. The ego develops from id to deal with reality. If id prioritizes inner satisfaction, it is different from ego. Ego instead uses reasoning through its common sense to delay the inner gratification driven by instinctual nature. The ego plays a role in mediating the needs driven by the id and the environment. The ego plays a role in controlling the inner satisfaction desired by the id.

To be honest, I've been talking too much my whole life, but I've been talking too much during my stay at the Ashram. **I have another two months here, and I don't want to waste the greatest spiritual opportunity of my life by being all social and chatty the whole time.** (Gilbert 252)

**I'm going to make the remainder of my stay a completely quiet experience. This will be difficult, but not impossible, because silence is universally respected at the Ashram.** (Gilbert 253)

The paragraph above showed how Elizabeth tried to make decisions for the common good. For the rest of her time in India, she wanted to be a better person by obeying the rules in the Ashram and not doing forbidden things. She felt that what she did, did not have a good impact on her and the people around her. She decided to change and spend the rest of her time at the Ashram in peace and obedience.

Following the judgment of her common sense, Elizabeth tries to delay her gratification for the common good. She admits that she talks too much while at the Ashram. In fact, she does something that disturbs the peace of the holy place. The lust that demands her to fulfill these needs makes her realize that it can be postponed until the right time and conditions come. For the umpteenth time, the ego plays a role in holding back the lust driven by the id to fulfill its

inner satisfaction. Although she knows this is not an easy thing but she believes that she can do it with good intentions.

### c. **Superego (moral aspect)**

Superego is an aspect of personality that focuses on morality where it comes from parental teachings and norms that exist in society. In this case, the superego is concerned with right or wrong in an action. The actions taken are dominated by demands from other parties such as parents or the community. If the id follows the lust for self-gratification, the superego is the opposite of it. Because the superego follows the demands of others.

At the moment, **the person I'm enjoying the most is Ketut. The old man--- truly one of the happiest humans I've ever encountered---is giving me his full access, the freedom to ask any lingering questions about divinity, about human nature. I like the meditations he has taught me, the comic simplicity of "smile in your liver" and the reassuring presence of the four spirit brothers.** The other day the medicine man told me that **he knows sixteen different meditation techniques and many mantras for all different purposes. Some of them are to bring peace or happiness, some of them are for health, but some of them are purely mystical--to transport him into other realms of consciousness.** (Gilbert 346-347)

On this page, Elizabeth described how Ketut was in her eyes. Elizabeth felt happy because she was given the freedom to ask all the things she has not found the answer to. Elizabeth also liked the meditation taught by Ketut. In addition, Elizabeth said Ketut had told her that he knew many meditation techniques for different purposes. The technique is recognized by the people in Bali, so he dared to do it as a way of treating people in need.

The area of the human mind that exists in the superego allows Elizabeth to judge whether Ketut's actions are right or wrong. If Elizabeth uses the biological aspect of the id's mind or the rational aspect of the ego's, it will be contradictory. Because the superego uses aspects of morality that are following the values and norms that exist in society. Therefore, Elizabeth likes the meditation technique by Ketut because she believes in the truth that Ketut shows her and Ketut's experiences. As long as the things he learns do not conflict with the surrounding community, it will not be a problem for him. That is how the superego regulates the human mind.

## 2. **Discussion**

This section presents the discussion based on the findings of the study. The study is concerned with how the personality is depicted in the novel. Based on the concept of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the results of this study have implications for the representation of three aspects of personality structure in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel by Elizabeth Gilbert. The three aspects are id (biological aspect), ego (rational aspect), and superego (moral aspect). The id (biological aspect) has a role to fulfill the inner satisfaction of the main character to get her pleasure. The ego (rational aspect) plays a role in controlling the inner satisfaction by the id and makes Elizabeth to prioritize reality. Then the superego (moral aspect) focuses on morality



where it comes from parental teachings and norms that exist in society. It influences Elizabeth to obedient and respect the norms that apply. These three aspects bridge other to regulate the steps taken by Elizabeth as the main character.

In the findings, the researcher found that aspects of id, ego, and superego influence the personality experienced by Elizabeth as the main character in the novel. The researcher can identify the personality of Elizabeth through three aspects of personality structure: id, ego, and superego. When Elizabeth had many problems in her life, her personality was sometimes easily influenced by those around her. It made her several times to make decisions that made her worse off. But then, she can learn from her mistakes and tries to be more careful in making decisions in her life. Her great curiosity makes her able to adjust everything to the existing conditions. Her desire to find what she was missing made her a strong woman and never gave up before what she was looking for could be found.

Over time Elizabeth can learn from her mistakes and experiences in the past. It can be seen from how several times she does not want to rush in making decisions. She learns to be able to know what is needed, not what is wanted. Often she considers something as a result of thoughts that arise that remind her of bad events in her past. That is why she does not want to rush into making decisions. And she did not want to be wrong again for the umpteenth time in taking an action that would be fateful for her and the people around her.

The personality structure used in this research helps the researcher find out the representation of Elizabeth's personality as the main character. The area of the human mind which includes the id, ego, and superego has a relationship with each other in shaping Elizabeth's behavior. Although all three have their own goals they are interconnected and difficult to separate. The researcher can see how these three aspects bridge each other in regulating the steps taken by Elizabeth in the novel.

The conclusion is that aspects of the personality structure that exist in the human personality found by the researcher in the novel *Eat, Pray, Love* is an illustration of how humans behave in their daily lives. Freud's concept of personality structure is the implication of various kinds of personality problems that are often encountered in the surrounding environment. Sometimes we do not realize it but our conscious mind will take us into thoughts that make us aware of it. Sometimes humans tend to blame other people or the environment for what has been experienced. Even though it can happen because we cannot recognize who we really are. Human consciousness will make them sensitive to themselves and the surrounding environment. And the human mind which consists of several aspects will help find the point of the problem and how to solve it. None of this is new in our life.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the personality of the main character in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* novel using psychoanalysis theory and the evidence of personality's problem of the main character in the novel, the researcher concludes that:

The id, ego, and superego has a strong role in regulating Elizabeth's behavior. It can be seen how the id makes Elizabeth gets her pleasure in fulfilling her inner satisfaction like shopping and enjoys some foods in Italy. Although she can find pleasure with following her

inner satisfaction, she must also balance it with the ego's principle of reality where the ego controlling the inner satisfaction by the id and prioritizes reality. When Elizabeth arrived in India, she does not get the peace and spiritual obedience that she hopes for after doing meditation. She feels like she wants to get away from the daily routine in the Ashram. Her selfish thoughts tell her to stop. But then she tries to convince herself that it is not something to stay away from. Elizabeth uses her ego to act by her reality. If she does not use her ego to think properly, then the original purpose of visiting India will be disturbed by her unstable emotions. And the last aspect is superego (moral aspect) teaches the values and morals of a society that are taught by parents to their children. Superego is also a description of the traditional values that exist in the surrounding environment. The superego plays a role that influences Elizabeth's mind to follow the orders that Ketut Liyer gives as an elder. Elizabeth considers that what Ketut order is a good thing and he can account for the truth. She believes in meditation that Ketut Liyer taught.

The id, ego, and superego play a role in each other to meet Elizabeth's needs which are tailored to their respective roles. When the id makes lust a demand that must be fulfilled, the ego and superego will hold and control it according to rational and moral aspects. Thus the problems that occur during Elizabeth's search for her identity will be resolved according to the initial concept.

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