

## Psychosocial Crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert in *Eat, Pray, Love*

Ersyad Hamzah

English Literature, Languages and Arts Faculty, State University of Surabaya

[ersyad.hamz@gmail.com](mailto:ersyad.hamz@gmail.com)

### Abstrak

*Psychosocial crisis* dapat dijelaskan sebagai konflik individual di masa dewasa yang meliputi hal tentang taraf hidup seseorang. Kasus ini dapat terjadi pada setiap orang seperti yang terjadi juga dalam karya sastra.

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk: (1) Mengidentifikasi krisis psikososial yang dialami Elizabeth Gilbert dalam novel *Eat, Pray, Love* dan (2) Menjelaskan dampak yang terjadi akibat kegagalan pada salah satu tahap perkembangan psikososial terhadap kepribadian Elizabeth Gilbert dalam novel *Eat, Pray, Love*. Untuk menjawab tujuan tersebut, studi menggunakan dua teori, yaitu teori psikososial oleh Erikson dan psikoseksual oleh Freud.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan metode analisis. Sumber utama studi ini adalah novel *Eat, Pray, Love* karangan Elizabeth Gilbert. Kumpulan data diambil dari beberapa frasa, klausa, kalimat, paragraf, dan ekspresi yang digunakan untuk memaparkan krisis psikososial yang dialami Elizabeth Gilbert sebagai karakter utama dan dampak terhadap kepribadiannya.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa krisis psikososial yang dialami Elizabeth Gilbert terlihat dari malignancies Gilbert pada tahap kedewasaan berdasarkan teori perkembangan psikososial oleh Erikson. Kegagalan untuk menyelesaikan masalah pada tahap tersebut menyebabkan Gilbert menderita penyebaran identitas yang selanjutnya berdampak pada kepribadiannya. Dia menjadi ceroboh, impulsif, putus asa, depresi, pembangkang, dan sulit untuk membuat keputusan.

**Kata kunci:** *psychosocial, psychosocial crisis, Eat, Pray, Love*

### Abstract

Psychosocial crisis is defined as personal psychosocial conflict especially in adolescence that involves confusion about one's social role and often a sense of loss of continuity to one's personality to achieve ego identity. The crisis involves a shift in perspective, requiring us to refocus our instinctual energy in accordance with the needs of each stage of the life cycle. This case may happen to any people in this world and it can lead people to do something in order to escape from their problems, such as in literary works. In *Eat, Pray, Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert as the main character experiences psychosocial development crisis that leads to her personality problem.

This study aims to: (1) identify the psychosocial crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert in *Eat, Pray, Love* and (2) explain the impact of the failure in accomplishing the stage of psychosocial development toward Elizabeth Gilbert's personality in *Eat, Pray, Love*. To answer the objectives, this study used both the psychosocial theory by Erikson and psychosexual theory by Freud.

This study used a qualitative research with the content analysis method. The main source of this study was a novel entitled *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert. The data were some phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and expressions used to convey the psychosocial crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert as the main character and the impact of it to her personality.

The result of this study found that a psychosocial crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert based on Erikson's psychosocial development theory could be seen through Gilbert's malignancies in adulthood stage: intimacy crisis and isolation. The failure to resolve the problem in that stage made her suffer from the identity diffusion that later on brought impact to her personality. She became careless, impulsive, hopeless, depression, rebellious and difficult to make decision.

**Keywords:** *psychosocial development, psychosocial crisis, Eat, Pray, Love*

## INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth Gilbert in *Eat, Pray, Love* as the main character undergoes a certain feeling. She fails to handle crisis in a particular stage of the psychosocial development in her life. Through the psychosocial approach, this study shows how psychosocial crisis depicted in Gilbert's middle age as known as intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1968).

Aside from that, this study focuses on the main character, it clearly gives example how they occur in every person's life. Hopefully, when person is indicated in a stage of psychosocial crisis, there will be best way to solve these problems if there is a tendency for person who has not been indicated on which virtues of psychosocial crisis.

From those explanations, the questions in this study are broken down below:

1. How psychosocial crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert depicted in *Eat, Pray, Love*?
2. What impact does the failure have on Elizabeth Gilbert's personality in *Eat, Pray, Love*?

### Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of problems above, the purposes of the study are described as follows:

1. To identify the psychosocial crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert in *Eat, Pray, Love*
2. To explain the impact of the failure in accomplishing the stage of psychosocial development toward Elizabeth Gilbert's personality in *Eat, Pray, Love*

### Theoretical Approach

This study uses a close-reading method toward the sources and using psychological approach in order to identify the main problem for this study. Psychological that mainly used in this study is from Sigmund Freud psychological analysis theory and a theory from Erikson about psychosocial crisis in a form of intimacy and isolation.

### Source of Data

The data of this study is taken from samples and data from the novel of Elizabeth Gilbert, library research and any other sources that can be used in order to complete this research. The sources may come from books, papers, journals, previous research and online sources.

### Limitation of the Study

This study focuses only on main character from the novel "*Eat, Pray, Love*" named Elizabeth Gilbert. This study

uses the psychosocial crisis theory that analyzes the attitude and act from character.

### Procedure of Analysis

Firstly, the researcher chooses the topic which will be discussed. Then the researcher collects the data about Gothic literary and the works that indicate Gothic genre. Then finding the most important elements in the writing that defining Gothic genre using New Criticism theory. After collecting the data, the researcher learns and analyses them. Having analyzed the data, the researcher organizes the outline. Through the outline, the researcher writes the thesis.

### The Psychosocial Development Theory by Erikson

Erikson states that every stage of development has its own unique challenges. He calls these challenges as *crises*. Erikson believes that "these crises of the ego presented challenges to one's individual identity" (in Fleming, 2004: 3-4). According to Erikson (in Brown and Lowis, 2003: 416-17) if someone succeeds to complete each of the psychosocial stages, he or she will have a healthy personality and successful interaction with others. Failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further stages and therefore he or she will have a more unhealthy personality and sense of self. The balance outcome is necessary to have a healthy personality development. This balance outcome is called as 'basic virtue or basic strength'. Someone will extend a tendency of mental problems if he or she fails to go through a psychological crisis stage. Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development has eight distinct stages. Like Freud, Erikson assumes that a crisis occurs at each stage of development. These crises are of a psychosocial nature because they involve psychological needs of the individual conflicting with the needs of society Erikson (1963).

According to the theory, successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and the acquisition of basic virtues. Basic virtues are characteristic strengths which the ego can use to resolve subsequent crises (Erikson, 1963).

Failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further stages and therefore a more unhealthy personality and sense of self. These stages, however, can be resolved successfully at a later time and broken down are ordered below (Erikson, 1963).

Erikson groundbreaking work on identity and psychosocial development shows how the model of psychosocial development, focusing on adolescent development. It is stated that the adolescent stage consists neither of identity resolution nor identity confusion, but

rather the degree to which one has explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains from vocation, religion, relational choices, gender roles, and so on. Identity achievement argues that two distinct parts form an adolescent's identity: crisis (Erikson, 1963). Here are the explanation:

1. Identity Diffusion : the status in which the adolescent does not have a sense of having choices; he or she has not yet made (nor is attempting/willing to make) a commitment

2. Identity Foreclosure : the status in which the adolescent seems willing to commit to some relevant roles, values, or goals for the future. Adolescents in this stage have not experienced an identity crisis. They tend to conform to the expectations of others regarding their future, such as allowing a parent to determine a career direction. As such these individuals have not explored a range of options.

3. Identity Moratorium : the status in which the adolescent is currently in a crisis, exploring various commitments and is ready to make choices, but has not made a commitment to these choices yet.

4. Identity Achievement : the status in which adolescent has gone through a identity crisis and has made a commitment to a sense of identity (i.e. certain role or value) that he or she has chosen

Furthermore, the following are the eight stages of Erikson's psychosocial development:

Figure 1:

Stage	Psychosocial Aspect	Basic Virtue	Age
1.	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	Infancy 0 to 1,5
2.	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	Early Childhood 1,5 to 3
3.	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	Play age 3 to 5
4.	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	School age 5 to 12
5.	Ego identity vs. Role confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence 12 to 18
6.	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	Young adult 18 to 40
7.	Generative vs. Stagnation	Care	Adulthood 40 to 65
8.	Ego integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Maturity 65+

Those eight stages by Erikson are explained below:

### 1. Trust vs. Mistrust

The first stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development occurs between birth and one year of age. This stage is the most fundamental stage in life. In this stage, Erikson's theory centers on the infant's essential needs. This essential needs is being met by the parents. The newborn depends on the parents, especially the mother, for food, sustenance, and comfort. The parents and interaction with the other child will bring understanding and perceptive of world and civilization to the child. If the parents expose the child to warmth, regularity, and dependable affection, the infant's vision of the world will be one of trust. If the parents fail to provide a safe environment and to meet the child's essential need it will lead to a sense of mistrust.

According to Erik Erikson in an article entitled "Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development" (Erikson, 19), learning other people especially the caregivers who will frequently satisfy the basic needs is the main development chore in infancy. If those caregivers become consistent sources of food, comfort, and affection, an infant learns trust- that others are dependable and reliable. If they are neglectful or abusive, the infant will learn mistrust. It will give an infant a perspective that the world is in an undependable, unpredictable, and possibly dangerous place.

Erikson believes that the child's development of trust depends on mother figure. It means that the mother plays an important role in this stage and it is not only by meeting the child's basic comfort and nurturance needs, but by having confidence in herself. Erikson believes that "an anxious mother transmitted this anxiety to the child, which he saw as unhealthy: a mother's tension causes a corresponding state of tension in her baby, resulting in a feeling of insecurity and lack of trust" (Fleming, 2004: 8).

### 2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

The second stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development takes place during early childhood. This stage focuses on children developing a greater sense of personal control. The child will start to explore his or her surrounding as he or she gains control over his or her own body and motor abilities. The parents' persistence and support will help foster autonomy in the child. The parents who are very restrictive will cause the child to have a sense of doubt and unwillingness to try new challenges. At the same time as the child gains muscular coordination and mobility, toddlers become able of fulfilling some of their own needs. He or she



starts to feed himself or herself, wash and dress himself or herself, and use the bathroom. "If caregivers encourage self-sufficient behavior, toddler develops a sense of autonomy- a sense of being able to handle many problems on their own. But if caregivers demand too much too soon, refuse to let children perform tasks of which they are capable, or ridicule early attempts at self-sufficiency; children may instead develop shame and doubt about their ability to handle problems" (Erikson, 2007: 6).

### **3. Initiative vs. Guilt**

Around age three and continuing to age five, children initiate to declare their power and control over the world through directing play and other social interaction. They start to arrange activities, make up games, and start activities with others. Thus, they can commence motor activities of various sorts on their own and no longer merely responds to or copy the actions of other children. They learn that they can do many things. They also discover that, though they can do things, it is not necessarily a good idea to do some things. Thus, they will feel a new emotion; guilt. They find out that some behaviors may make them feel less than happy about themselves. Children who are successful at this stage feel capable and able to lead others. Those who fail to acquire these skills are left with a sense of guilt, self-doubt and lack of initiative.

### **4. Industry vs. Inferiority**

This stage covers the early school years from approximately age six to twelve. In this point, children commence to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments. They also work hard at being responsible and being good. In this stage, they are more capable to share and cooperate and also they will gain a better understanding of cause and effect. The children are excited to learn and complete more complex skills such as reading, writing, and telling time. Besides complex skills, the children also form moral values, recognize cultural and individual differences. The children are also capable to handle most of their personal needs. The children may express their freedom by being disobedient, using back talk and being rebellious in this stage.

Erikson states that in this stage, the elementary school years are serious for the development of self-confidence. In an ideal world, elementary school offers many opportunities for children to achieve the recognition of teachers, parents and peers completing projects, solving addition problems, writing sentences, and so on. The children will express the sense of industry by being diligent and they will preserve their tasks until it is completed if the children are encouraged to make or do

things and then they are praised for their accomplishments. However, the children will develop the feelings of inferiority if they are unable to fulfill their teachers' or parents' expectations and they will be ridiculed or punished for that.

### **5. Ego Identity vs. Role Confusion**

During adolescence, the transition from childhood to adulthood becomes the most important stage. The adolescents are becoming more independent. They will start to look at the future in terms of career, relationships, families, housing, etc. As they transform from childhood to adulthood, adolescents consider the roles they will play in the adult world. In this stage, they are exploring their freedom and developing a sense of self. Initially, they are appropriate to experience some role confusion in which they will face the mixed ideas and feelings about the particular ways in which they will fit into society. They may experiment with a diversity of behaviors and activities. Eventually, Erikson proposes, where the adolescents live influence most of adolescents to get a sense of identity.

According to Erikson, identity formation is the step that is impossible to be avoided in developing identity. Adolescents need to establish an initial identity through a complete psychosocial moratorium in order to form a true sense of self. Otherwise, they will face series of psychosocial conflicts which add the complexity of identity crisis. If they can solve this conflict successfully, they will come out of this stage with a strong identity, and be ready to set their own plan for the future. If they cannot solve the conflict, they will sink into confusion, unable to make decisions and choices, especially the one which is related to several activities such as vocation, sexual orientation, and his role in life in general.

### **6. Intimacy vs. Isolation**

It is the stage of early adulthood when people are discovering their personal relationships. For Erikson, however, the previous achievement of a sense of personal identity and the engagement in productive work that marks this period will create a new interpersonal dimension of intimacy at the one extreme and isolation at the other.

Erikson interprets intimacy as the ability to share with and care about other people without fear of losing oneself in the process. In the case of intimacy, the parents will no longer contribute to their success or failure at the earlier stages. Social conditions may help or restrain the establishment of a sense of intimacy as well as in the case of identity. Intimacy does not involve sexuality but it includes the relationship between friends. Someone will develop a sense of isolation, sense of being alone without

anyone to share with or care for if he or she cannot establish a sense of intimacy with friends or in a bond of marriage. In the other hand, the sense of comfortable relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship will occur if someone is successful to complete a sense of intimacy. In sum, avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression.

### 7. Generativity vs. Stagnation

People will continue to build their lives during their adulthood. In this stage, they will focus on their career and family. The people will feel that they are contributing to the world by being active in their home and community if they are successful through this phase. However, for those who fail to attain this skill will feel unproductive and uninvolved in the world.

### 8. Ego Integrity vs. Despair

This stage happens in old age and it focuses on reflecting back on life. Integrity in the later years of life implies acceptance of a life that was well-lived. However, it does not mean that life is over instead for these can often be very productive years. In this point, a person will start to take a reflection and evaluation and look back at his or her life.

The strengths of Erikson's theory are its ability to tie together important psychosocial development across the entire lifespan. Thus, in the next chapter, there are some analysis to support this theory which is got by analyzing the Gilbert's intimacy and isolation that occur in her thirty.

Occurring in young adulthood (ages 18 to 40 years), people begin more intimately with others. People explore relationships leading toward longer term commitments with someone other than a family member. It is in form of capacity to give and receive love emotionally and physically, connectivity with others, socially and inter-personally comfortable, ability to form honest reciprocating relationships and friendships, capacity to bond and commit with others for mutual satisfaction for work and personal life, reciprocity give and take towards good.

Successful completion of this stage can lead to comfortable relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship. Avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of love.

In this study, Elizabeth Gilbert as the main character fails to pass the sixth stage which is called intimacy vs. isolation. It is the stage of early adulthood when people are discovering their personal relationships.

For Erikson, however, the previous achievement of a sense of personal identity and the engagement in productive work that marks this period will create a new interpersonal dimension of intimacy at the one extreme and isolation at the other.

Erikson interprets intimacy as the ability to share with and care about other people without fear of losing oneself in the process. In the case of intimacy, the parents will no longer contribute to their success or failure at the earlier stages. Social conditions may help or restrain the establishment of a sense of intimacy as well as in the case of identity. Intimacy does not involve sexuality but it includes the relationship between friends. Someone will develop a sense of isolation, sense of being alone without anyone to share with or care for if he or she cannot establish a sense of intimacy with friends or in a bond of marriage. In the other hand, the sense of comfortable relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship will occur if someone is successful to complete a sense of intimacy. In sum, avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression.

## ANALYSIS

### Psychosocial Crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert

The actions done by Gilbert is necessary either because the impulses are socially unacceptable, or because they cause great pain to Gilbert if they are expressed. It is the most important identity which the ego employs to control the id. It is essentially is Gilbert's consciousness lowering process. It consists of a class of operations that reduces the accessibility to consciousness of some target material. Furthermore, it is instrumental in bringing about a discernible goal for example, preventing the span of consciousness from being breached or preventing some intolerable psychological material from entering consciousness. So, Gilbert points out the identity diffusion again but only at the mind. It all happens before her consciousness state, without realizing that she is never spoke it out loud onto the others.

This unconscious action in the novel depicted in page 20, Gilbert stated with quotation as follows:

[...] "This was the exact joy my own face had radiated last spring, the day I discovered that the magazine I worked for was going to send me on assignment to New Zealand, to write an article about the search for giant squid. (p20)

From the quotation above, Gilbert strongly implied that she is very ambitious to be a famous writer. She likes to continue to reach a success that she has dreamed of. Her ego fully takes her feeling to write an article as it is explained literally. It is proven by the time in quotation "last spring, the day I discovered that the magazine I worked". The time when she is promoted to New Zealand is also explained in the statement. It talks about her career, dream, and success, but also a way to forget all her problems. It is hard for her, but she has to enjoy her job no matter happens. She has to be strong facing the reality to survive and be blessed of everything that she has had. Unfortunately, this moment is still unforgotten by her for her feeling does not agree.

The statement that shows a moment on how Gilbert's disjointed and incomplete sense of self that leads her to an inability to take a decision on certain things such as what she wants to be in her marriage as seen clearly below:

[...] "And I thought, "Until I can feel as ecstatic about having a baby as I felt about going to New Zealand to search for a giant squid, I cannot have a baby." I don't want to be married anymore."

As a conclusion, the identity crisis is marked by the rising of three psychosocial conflicts during psychosocial moratorium in adolescence. They are identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, and negative identity. However, in Gilbert's case there are only two psychosocial conflicts; identity diffusion and negative identity. From the various problems in Gilbert's psychosocial moratorium, it can be said that she suffers from identity crisis. Adolescents who successfully handle the conflict identity emerge with a strong new sense of self, while those who cannot successfully pass the identity crisis will suffer from what Erikson calls as identity diffusion. Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that Gilbert is unable to handle her problems and she suffers from identity diffusion, whereas identity is very important to develop a personality and relationships with others in the next stage; intimacy vs. isolation.

### **The impacts of Gilbert's Psychosocial Crisis**

Erikson (1959 : 134) states that the Intimacy vs. Isolation is the core conflict which follows Identity vs. Role Confusion. Based on the previous findings, Gilbert fails to complete the crisis in one of psychosocial stages called role confusion. Since role confusion deals with identity, Gilbert experiences an identity crisis that makes her has no strong sense of identity when she enters adulthood. Furthermore, it does give impact to her

personality. Erikson believes that a strong sense of personal identity is important to developing intimate relationships. Avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression (Erikson, 1936).

The intimacy crisis changes Gilbert's personalities in some factors; (1) marriage conflict and (2) Gilbert's neurotic tendencies. Meanwhile the isolation changes Gilbert's personalities in some cases; (1) Gilbert's wants to escape the usual, boring, and ruined life of her and (2) travelling to three countries alone; Italy, India, and Indonesia.

### **Intimacy Crisis**

Erikson (1963) describes intimacy as "the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises". Thus, the significant relation in this stage is partners and friends. In the case of intimacy, as in the case of identity, success or failure no longer depends on the parents but only indirectly as they contributed to individual's success or failure at the earlier stages. Erikson (1936) states that where a youth cannot resolve such tension, he or she will enter intimacy crisis which is marked by some careless acts such as throw away into acts of intimacy which are immoral without true fusion or real self-abandon. During her adolescence, Gilbert builds intimacy with some people. To understand the pattern of her personality, it is important to scrutinize her behavior toward her relationship with each person.

Erikson believed that psychosocial crisis is important to start an intimacy. This research shows that everyone who has less self confidence in facing their life tend to be isolated from the other people around them. They will feel alone and there will be long distant to interact to others.

In this context, Gilbert failed in this stage. She has psychosocial crisis which causes her feeling sad and unhappy. As it has been explained before, Gilbert faces many internal conflicts in her life especially those related to her psychological state. She does not know what is going on with her, but she knows that there is something wrong with her that made her get crisis of self - identity. Psychosocial crisis is a psychological state or condition of disorientation and role confusion occurring especially in adolescence as result of conflicting internal or external experiences, pressure and uncertainty about one's self and often producing acute anxiety (Freud, 1936). Because of intimacy crisis, Gilbert suffers marriage conflict and neurotic tendencies.



### Marriage Conflict

Gilbert feels hurt because of divorce, depression, and losing a marriage partner. It is explained by Erikson (2010), women in their age stage within twenty to thirty is a stage when they have a close relationship and ready to have a commitment to others. They, who succeed in this stage, will raise their own relationship safe.

[...] "In daylight hours, I refused that thought, but at night it would consume me. What a catastrophe. How could I be such a criminal jerk as to proceed this deep into a marriage, only to leave it? We'd only just bought this house a year ago. Hadn't I wanted this nice house? Hadn't I loved it? I had actively participated in every moment of the creation of this life-so why did I feel like none of it resembled me?"(p12)

The changes brought on by modernisation do not only result in a more complex individual self-identity, they also affect the relationships between people. Marriage was a union between two families just as much as union of individuals and its main purpose was to contribute to the family's survival (Beck & Beck - Gernsheim, 1995)

### Gilbert's neurotic tendencies

Based on Behavioral Science (Freud, 1984) being with neurotic tendencies means a person suffered with mental illness. In other words, it is described as poor ability to adapt to environment, an inability to change one's life patterns, and the inability to develop a richer, more complex and more satisfying personality. Gilbert suffered neurotic tendencies which mean unconsciously she has neurotic anxiety. As reflected in quotation below:

[...] "Richard from Texas is not a guy who worries about a lot of stuff. I wouldn't call him a neurotic person, no sir. But I am a bit neurotic, and that's why I've come to adore him. Richard's presence at this Ashram becomes my great and amusing sense of security. His giant ambling confidence hushes down all my inherent nervousness and reminds me that everything really is going to be OK."(p149)

According to Anna Freud (1936), neurotic anxiety is a form of anxiety which comes from an unconscious fear that the basic impulses of the id will take control of the person, leading to eventual punishment such as pain, stress or discomfort. Then, Gilbert categorized as mentally ill person. This has clarified how easily she has an affair with David when she is still in marriage. She easily infatuated to David even she has husband. She is easily breakup from David. This is why the crisis occur.

The neurotic tendencies force Gilbert to make sure she is always in comfortable. It happens so forgetting her husband and David.

### Isolation

Gilbert feels isolated and does everything alone. It is basically causes two major actions: (1) Gilbert's wants to escape the usual, boring and ruined life of her and (2) Gilbert's journey to the three countries she chooses Italy, India, and Indonesia all alone. No matter the society think of Gilbert, whether it is acceptable or not, the important thing is that Gilbert feels happier and safer than before and she thinks she can go out from the trauma events as explained below:

The first impact is represented by doing what she wants. After deciding to divorce her husband, Stephen, Gilbert got rid of her belonging, quits her job. Gilbert is getting bored of her work as a writer. She wants to be alone and gets away from the people she used to meet. It is stated "I have quit my job, paid off my divorce settlement and legal bills, given up my house, given up my apartment, put what belongings I had left into storage in my sister's place and packed up two suitcases.

Gilbert undertakes a yearlong journey around the world, all alone. Gilbert chooses to travel in all of the countries, Italy, India, and Indonesia. She chooses Italy as the first country she visited to, as it stated "A few weeks later, I am living in Italy". It is what she wants. This means Gilbert does this to make herself comfortable, and avoiding all her problems behind. Second quotation showed that, Gilbert has given up all of her problems, jobs and life in order to go to new country and left all behind for a full one year as described "My year of traveling has commenced". During her journey to three countries, Gilbert suffers two disorder eating habits and trying to look for God as Gilbert's spirituality.

Moreover, in India, Gilbert feels that there is something wrong with her. She gets depression and then she tries to look for her God. She does some ways to praise her Lord in many ways, even the way is out of her religion doctrine meanwhile the society around her felt it was very awkward. It is reflected from the following quotation:

[...] "Culturally, though not theologically, I'm a Christian. I was born a protestant of the white Anglo-Saxon persuasion. And while I do love that great teacher of peace who was called Jesus, and while I do reserve the right to ask myself in certain trying situation what indeed. He would do, I can't swallow that one fixed rule of

Christianity insisting that Christ is the only path to God. [...]

From the words "Culturally, though not theologically, I'm a Christian. I was born a protestant of the white Anglo-Saxon persuasion", Gilbert clearly states Gilbert's religion. The words "I'm a Christian" strongly provides the fact that Gilbert is a Christian since she has born but she is not entirely believing and undergoing her religion. The word "culturally" means that it is a religion brought from people before Gilbert is born. It is originally brought from Gilbert's parents and some relatives in her life. Gilbert is born as a Protestant of the white Anglo-Saxon persuasion. Gilbert believes in her religion so far without doubt as it stated in the words "And while I do love that great teacher of peace who was called Jesus, and while I do reserve the right to ask myself in certain trying situation what indeed". Gilbert has a strong faith in which she always prays and gets a comfort zone as a Christian.

## CONCLUSION

In the novel written by Elizabeth Gilbert herself, *Eat, Pray, Love* can be considered as reflected mirror of how Gilbert reacts for her problems in her life. This novel is semi-biography of her, she writes about her journey to the three different countries in order to find peace and happiness after several incidents that happen.

This novel clearly represented psychosocial crisis. Gilbert's psychosocial crisis was showed on the relation of healthy balanced outcomes of Erikson's psychosocial theory of Gilbert as an individual. This study found a particular stage which Gilbert was unsuccessful to handle the crisis. It was Identity vs. Role Confusion. The psychosocial crisis that Gilbert had to deal with in this stage was related to the sense of self and the social relationships.

In this study, there are two problem statements; (1) How psychosocial crisis of Elizabeth Gilbert depicted in *Eat, Pray, Love* ? and (2) What impact does the failure have on Elizabeth Gilbert's personality in *Eat, Pray, Love*?

The answer of the first problem statement about in which stage of psychosocial development that Gilbert unsuccessfully handle the crisis was clearly seen from the healthy balanced outcome of intimacy vs. isolation stage. The novel put highlight during Gilbert's adolescence and adulthood. It was clearly stated in the findings that Gilbert's failure of passing the particular stage of psychosocial development, intimacy vs. isolation gave impacts to her personality known as psychosocial crisis. Furthermore, the answer of the second problem statement showed that the intimacy vs. isolation cause identity

diffusion and negative identity. Gilbert experienced identity diffusion which characterized by some main aspects; disjointed sense of self, excessive self-consciousness and difficulties to make decision. Meanwhile, Gilbert's negative identity can be seen in her rebellious behavior. Gilbert's intimacy crisis caused Gilbert's marriage conflict and her neurotic tendencies. Those problems make her developed growing into someone who was not adaptive and flexible. She became a careless and impulsive woman. Ultimately, Gilbert turned out to be a depressive lonely person. Whereas the isolation impacts on Gilbert's wants to escape the usual, boring, and ruined life of her and Gilbert's journey to three countries alone.

From the answers of the two problems stated in the statement of the problems above, it can be concluded that Gilbert valued that life is a choice; Gilbert could not successfully handled one stage of psychosocial development in one stage; that is intimacy crisis vs. isolation.

## SUGGESTION

As the study is about how to analyze psychosocial crisis depicted in the literary works, this study shows how to do it. The study hopes that people could determine the terms and factors which counted as psychosocial crisis are and what the effects on the characters life are.

It is necessary to be able to analyze some literary works with their own perspective and understanding as it necessary to emerge objective and independent analysis to the subject. Using Erikson's theory as perspective, this study is still needed a lot of improvement in the future, such as more data and sources to build better analysis. There are also a lot other theories that can be used to enrich the analysis. In the end those improvement will create more critic and scientific outcome which is makes this study to be more reliable to be references in future study.

## REFERENCES

- Brown. C. and Lowis, M. J. 2003. *Psychosocial Development in The Elderly: An Investigation Into Erikson's Ninth Stage*. Journal of Aging Studies.
- Erikson, Erik. 1959. *Identity and The Life Cycle*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Erikson, Erik. 1964. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Erikson, Erik. 1968. *Identity Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- "9. Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Stages" James S. Fleming, Ph. D. 2004. Taken from:



<http://swppr.org/textbook/ch%209%20erikson.pdf>  
retrieved on January 20, 2016.

“Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development” 2007.  
Taken from :  
[http://info.psu.edu.sa/psu/math/Erikson's%20Theory%20of%20Psychosocial%20Development%20\(2\).pdf](http://info.psu.edu.sa/psu/math/Erikson's%20Theory%20of%20Psychosocial%20Development%20(2).pdf) retrieved on January 20, 2016.

Feldman, Robert S. (2003). *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* (5th ed). New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

Freud, A. (1936/1937) The ego and the mechanisms of defense, trans. C. Baines. International Universities Press.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Edited and translated by James Strachey. Vol. 14, 1914-1916. London: Hogarth Press, 1957.

Gilbert, Elizabeth. 2006. *Eat, Pray, Love*. New York: Penguin Book Publisher.

Mayer, John D. 2007. *Asserting the Definition of Personality: The Online Newsletter for Personality Science* Issue 1.

Shaffer, David. 2008. *Social and Personality Development*. Cengage Learning.

“The basic of Social Psychology” Brown 2005. Taken from: [http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9905\\_045096ch01.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9905_045096ch01.pdf). retrieved on January 21, 2016.

Woodward, Kathryn. 1977. *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage Publication Ltd.

