

**ESCAPING FROM ADVERSITY IN NOVEL *A MILLION LITTLE PIECES* BY JAMES
FREY (2003)**

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Obtain Strata One (S1) Degree in
English Department*



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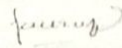
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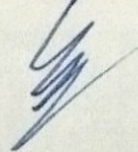


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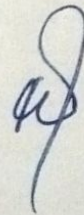
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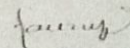
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The researcher realizes that her paper has not perfect yet, there are many mistakes contained in it. At the end, the researcher hopes that this paper will be a guidance for some literally study.

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DEDICATION

I decided my honor, my gratitude and my love to:

My beloved parents Ibu Ratnawilis and Ayah Tabrani thank you for always provide prayer and motivate me to not give up in any situations, especially in the process of writing my thesis, always listening to all my complaints, and always appreciating all my efforts, thank you for being my best support system physically and mentally. Next, thank you to my brother Aditio Rawilta Putra and my young sister Mutiara Shahira who always give me spirit. Furthermore, I also thank you to my best friends from the beginning of college until we be able to graduate together Meisha Rahmania and Verdi Firdaus, thank you for all the memories and emotional support during college, especially during writing my thesis. Besides that, thank you to my beloved best friend since Junior High School Dinda SF and Silvia Hayati who always listens all of my stories and give me emotional support. To my lovely cousin Tuffahati Rahman thank you for all of supports and be able when I need someone to talk. Next, thank you to Bunga Indahyani, Annisa Fadhila, Annisa Nur Fitriani, and Mutiara Oktavia Herlina who have given me support and motivation during my college. For NK-2 2018 thanks for the unforgettable memories.

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ABSTRACT

Putri, Winda Rawilta (2023). Escaping from Adversity in Novel A Million Little Pieces by James Frey (2003). Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Language and Art. Universitas Negeri Padang.

The purpose of this analysis is to expose the issue of escaping adversity in the Novel *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey (2003). The issue of escaping adversity refers to the ways the character makes efforts to get out of drug addiction disappear. This analysis is text-based interpretation based on the theory life instinct by Sigmund Freud. This analysis uses fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict) and setting that contribute in revealing the issue. The result of the study reveals the main character escapes his adversity. It can be seen through his behaviors such as raising self-awareness, a desire cooperate with others, and doing pro-social action.

Keywords: Escaping Adversity, raising self-awareness, a desire cooperate, doing pro-social action, A Million Little Pieces

ABSTRAK

Putri, Winda Rawilta (2023). Melarikan Diri dari Keterpurukan dalam Novel *A Million Little Pieces* Karya James Frey (2003). Skripsi. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Analisis ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap isu melarikan diri dari keterpurukan dalam Novel *A Million Little Pieces* karya James Frey (2003). Isu melarikan diri dari keterpurukan mengacu pada cara-cara tokoh ketika tokoh ingin keluar dari kecanduan narkoba. Analisis ini merupakan interpretasi berbasis teks berdasarkan teori naluri kehidupan oleh Sigmund Freud. Analisis ini menggunakan perangkat fiktif seperti karakter, plot (konflik) dan setting yang berkontribusi dalam mengungkap masalah. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan karakter utama lolos dari keterpurukannya. Hal itu dapat dilihat dari perilakunya seperti menciptakan membangun kesadaran diri, bekerja sama dengan orang lain, dan tindakan pro-sosial.

Kata kunci: Melarikan diri dari Kesulitan, membangun kesadaran diri, kerjasama dengan orang lain, aksi pro-sosial, *A Million Little Pieces*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Every people face different problems in their lives. Humans can certainly solve any problem in a variety of ways. Some of them can solve problems wisely, while others cannot. A lot of people try to avoid problems by going down the wrong path. One of the wrong ways is to abuse alcohol and drugs. People commonly use the drug out of curiosity or to feel better as they try to alleviate the stress they are feeling. However, the ability of drugs to temporarily reduce panic and anxiety causes people to believe in these things. This trust develops into habits, making people unable to stop using drugs. They will become dependent on these dangerous substances. This is what drives a person to become a drug addict. Some people, on the other hand, are strong and persistent in dealing with their problems. Their efforts to confront problems frequently result in good solutions. Those brave people will face their life's problems, no matter how difficult the problems.

The result of facing problems make people strive for life. People do their best efforts to escape from adversity in their life. According to Cambridge, (2022) escaping means to get free for something or to avoid something. Furthermore, according to Stolz (2007:8) states that adversity is the intelligence that a person has in overcoming difficulties and surviving. Meanwhile, in Cambridge dictionary (2022) adversity means a difficult or unlucky situation or event. According to National Library of Medicine (2019) adversity can be identified as suffering and

discomfort aroused by difficulty, misfortune, or potentially traumatic events. The suffering and discomfort aroused by the difficulty that can be find or faced by a drug addict. The protagonist in this novel is a drug addict. In this analysis, escaping from adversity can be seen from the ways of the main character to survive and maintain himself from a drug addict to be a good person and get a better life. The ways to survive and maintain his good life happens because of his life instinct. According to Sigmund Freud (1920) life instinct can be seen through behavior. In this novel, the main character shows the behaviors of wanting to survive, such as he wants to get well because there is someone he loves. He does not want to lose his loved ones, so he tries hard to recover from drug addiction. The other behavior that Sigmund Freud categorizes is a desire or need to cooperate with others; for example, he wants to be rehabilitated and carry out all rehabilitation procedures. The last behavior is pro-social actions, such as helping and woman he loves to recover from drug addiction.

According to World Drug Report (2018), in 2016 around 275 million people were drug addicted. According to BNN (*Badan Nasional Narkotika*), in 2016 BNN provided rehabilitation services for 22.485 addicts and narcotics abusers (BNN,2017). Based on BNN's data, it can be seen that many people have experienced being drug addicts. When people experience addiction, they cannot control how they use a substance or partake in the activity and depend on it to cope with daily life. They continue using drug (Narkotika, 2017). substance or engaging in addictive behavior, even though they might be aware of the harm it can cause or when clear evidence of harm is apparent. Therefore, people who

experience addiction must be treated if they do not do that, so they will live a bad life and cannot get out of their problems in life.

The suffering from addiction can be treated and recovered. According to BNN (*Badan Nasional Narkotika*) People who are addicted to the drug must be treated immediately by rehabilitation (BBN, 2017). Through this recovery, they have to pass several treatment processes properly even though they are in a harsh situation. It is because the dangerous substances in their body already damaged them physically and mentally. This is why the treatment needs them to work hard to defeat the pains they feel during the process. This recovery may take quite a short time or even a long time. That all depends on how strongly the addict controls themselves from the effect of the substances. It is why addicts have to be more aware and wise to regain the freedom they deserve as human beings.

In reality, there are several people who can survive from the addiction. One of them is Robert Downey Jr. He is a Hollywood actor. According to Dream Life Recovery in *Robert Downey JR.'s Heroic Recovery: From Addict to Iron Man* (2022), he had the lowest point experienced in his life. When he was an addict, his wife left him and took their son. He was fired from his acting job on the show *Ally McBeal*. He was in massive debt and on the verge of bankruptcy. Then he decided it was time to take a year and fully address his substance abuse. It was time for recovery. In 2002, Robert Downey Jr made it through rehab and returned to his acting career. Robert Downey Jr.'s success out of addiction was also sparked when he fell in love with film producer Susan Levin. He committed to his recovery. He commits to recovering from reliving and reviving his acting career

to achieve his greatest success starring Tony Stark in Marvel's Iron Man and The Avengers film franchises. Today Robert Downey Jr. enjoys a relatively quiet life. The negative activities he did when he was an addict have now been replaced with positive ones, such as spending weekends with family. He said that his wife, his children, Eastern martial arts, yoga, and a twelve-step program help him overcome his addiction and stay sober.

The phenomenon of people who have escaped from adversity is not only can be find in real life, but also literary works. One of them is in the novel *A Million Little Pieces* written by James Frey (2003). It is an interesting issue because it shows the ways experienced by the main character, who is an addict in getting well and escaping from the addiction. The issue is important to be discussed because it will be an insightful shot for people who also have the same problems to get a better life.

1.1 Focus of the Problem

The issue of escaping from adversity has been exposed in the novel *A Million Little Pieces* written by James Frey. In this analysis, the escaping from adversity can be seen in character behaviors that experience difficult situations as an addict for better life. It is represented by the protagonist, James, who is twenty three years old. In his mind, only drugs and alcohol can make him feel happy and comfortable, but he can survive and maintain himself to be a good person without drugs or alcohol in some ways. Escaping from adversity can be seen from

character behaviors such as creating new life, desires or need to cooperate with others who help him, and do some pro-social actions.

The first form is raising self-awareness. He falls in love with the woman in rehabilitation, which makes him determined to recover. Falling in love makes him realized that he should recover and have a better life with the woman he loves.

The second form is a desire to cooperation with others. It can be seen as a relationship between the doctor and himself. He follows all rehabilitation procedures and all treatments. Even though he had some difficulties in establishing rehabilitation, but he continued his rehabilitation earnestly

The third form doing pro-social actions. He helps someone who does not have any motivation to continue their rehabilitation. He helps and brings back the woman he loves to rehabilitation because he wants her to get well and live a normal life together.

1.2 Research Questions

There are two research questions used to reveal the issue of escaping from adversity in the novel *Problems* (2016) by Jade Sharma, which is formulated as follows:

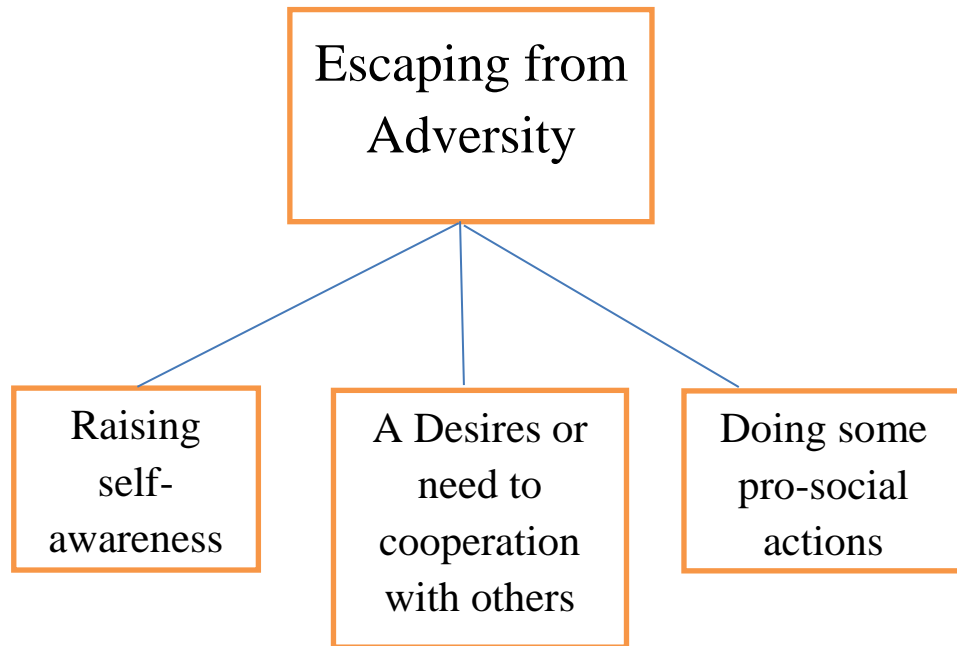
1. How far does the novel *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) by James Frey exposes the issue of escaping from adversity?
2. To what extent do the character, setting, and plot in revealing the issue of escaping from adversity in novel *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) by James Frey?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

This research is aimed to see how far the novel *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) by James Frey exposes the issue of escaping from adversity. Furthermore, this research analyses the role of the character, setting, and plot in the novel *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) by James Frey in revealing the issue of escaping from adversity.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Escaping from adversity refers to the ways how to survive and maintain from difficulties of an addict to get well and better life. In this analysis, escaping from adversity is represented by the main character, that has been an addict for a long time and experiences many difficulties but finds several ways to get well. The ways of the main character get well as an addict can be seen from raising self-awareness, then a desires cooperation with others, and doing pro-social actions.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Review of Related Theories

The analysis of the issue of escaping from adversity is related to the concept of life instinct and self-awareness. The concept of life instinct in this analysis is related to the psychoanalysis theory developed by Sigmund Freud. Instinct is an internal stimulus in the body that motivates or moves a person's personality and behavior. In the book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* by Sigmund Freud 1920, the instinct was divided into two parts. The instincts are the life instinct and death instinct. Instinct cannot be seen with the naked eyes, but it greatly influences a person. Freud in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920:28), said:

"The most abundant sources of this internal excitation are what is described as the organism's 'instincts' the representatives of all the forces originating in the interior of the body and transmitted to the mental apparatus at once the most important and the most obscure element of psychological research."

Internal stimulation is abundant, even though it cannot be seen immediately, and this is where the instinct comes from. Everything is ordered from here, or here is what drives a person's personality or behaviors. Hunger, for example, may be characterized psychologically as a shortage of food in bodily tissues, but it is exhibited mentally in the form of a need for food. Desire is the driving force behind conduct. Someone who feels hungry will look for food. As a result, instinct is the direction in which the behavior will go.

The instincts have different functions. In his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1955:36), Freud states that Thanatos was "an urge inherent in natural life to restore an in an advance state of factors that cause them to self-damaging behavior". Freud said the death instinct drives human beings to demise so that it will have real peace, and dying can remove anxiety and struggle. Another instinct is life instinct (Eros). He introduces the concept of life instinct as an opposite time period of the death instinct. Freud in his book entitled *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1961:55) said that:

"What is commonly called sexual instinct is appearance upon using as the part of eros which is directed in the direction of the object. Our speculations have advised that eros operates from the beginning of life. It appears as a life intuition in competition with the death instinct, brought into being by the coming to life of an inorganic substance. These speculations seek to solve the riddle of life by supposing that these two instincts were struggling with each other from the very first."

From this notion, it is clear that life instinct and death instinct fight with every difference for controlling self. Life instinct (Eros) is the instinct that helps maintain life and is the opposite of the death instinct. The passionate instinct for life and love met with acts of self-destruction and defeat. Ultimately, individuals who survive experience both extremes of instinct but can arrange and control themselves to make the life instinct work higher than the death instinct. According to Elsie Smith (2011,64), Freud said that much of life's goals are gaining pleasure and avoiding pain.

Life instinct (Eros) is an instinct that helps sustain life. It is intuition that keeps people's preference to keep alive. It serves as the survival intuition of the

character to satisfy the fundamental needs. In *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy: An integrative Approach* through Elsie Smith (2011:72), Freud said:

"The life instincts are those which deal with basic survival, pleasure, and reproduction, and they are something referred to as sexual instinct. These instincts are important for sustaining the life of the individual as well as the continuation of the species. They also include such things as thirst, hunger, and pain avoid. The energy created by the life instinct is known as libido. From a positive perspective, behaviors commonly associated with the life instinct include love, cooperation, and other pro-social actions."

From the quotation above, it can be inferred that life instinct is driven by strong energy known as libido. The libido drives an individual to something which is pleasurable. However, the libido aims to satisfy people for pleasure; it has to find an object of gratification. If it is successful, it directs the energy into that object through a process. The sexual instinct does not solely include something titillating in nature, but it pertains to anything pleasurable to a person.

The life instinct (eros) is associated with positive emotions of love, cooperation, and other behavior that support harmonious societies. It also makes people's spirit struggle in life, and trying to cooperate will support both individual security and the harmonious existence of a cooperative and healthy society. In other words, life instinct is a collection of all emotions and actions that make people preserve their lives and create new lives.

Humans who apply their survival instinct can overcome obstacles and hardship. According to Sigmund Freud (1920):

“The objection may be raised against it that it postulates the existence of life instincts already operating in the simplest organism; for otherwise conjugation, which works counter to the course of life and makes the task of ceasing to live more difficult, would not be retained and elaborated but would be avoided.”

Life instinct makes people able to get through difficult times. If their life instincts do not work, they may end their lives. This is because the person cannot overcome their death instinct. Furthermore, those who follow their life instinct will have a happy life. Alternatively, they might fulfill their life objectives even though they face obstacles posed by external causes.

Life instinct motivates humans to have a strong desire to maintain their life. According to Sigmund Freud (1961) argues that:

"They are conservative in the same sense as the other instincts in that they bring back after earlier states of living substance, but they are conservative to a higher degree in that they are conservative too in another sense in that they preserve life for a comparatively long period. They are the true life instinct."

It shows that life instinct helps human beings to keep living their lives. They fight everything that threatens their presence as human beings. The threat can be from their family, diseases, and neighborhoods. They seek to have a comfortable long life. Therefore if they get the comfort they want, they try to maintain it as long as possible. There is no hopelessness for people with a life instinct more than a death instinct.

The next theory used in this analysis is the self-awareness concept by Goleman. Self-awareness also plays an important role in creating the good life

instinct (eros). According to Goleman (2003), the person who can make decisions so that he knows what is right or not for himself is called self-awareness. People who have self-awareness not only recognize themselves but also understand the impact of an action.

According to Goleman (1996) there are three aspects in self-awareness. They are emotional self-awareness, refers to knowing how emotions affect mood or feelings and the ability to use values to guide decision-making. Second, accurate self-assessment refers to knowing the inner source, strengths, and weaknesses. People who are aware will be able to recognize the potential that exists within them. Third, self-confidence refers to a strong awareness of one's self-worth and abilities.

Emotional self-awareness, in this ability people, will know the meaning of emotions that they feel and why the emotion occurs, aware of the relationship between the emotions they feel and what they think, know the influence of their emotions or performance, and have an awareness that can be used as a guide for individual values and goals. Self-assessment refers to the knowledge of inner resources, abilities, and limitations. People with this ability to realize their strengths and weakness, take time for self-reflection, learn from experience, able to receive feedback and new perspectives, and be willing to continue to learn and develop themselves. Self-confidence refers to having self-confidence and a strong awareness of self-worth and abilities. Individuals with this ability dare to voice self-confidence as a way to express existence or existence himself, dare to express a different view or not common, and are willing to sacrifice for truth, as well as

firm and able to make the right decisions even in uncertain circumstances. Thus, self-awareness is crucial because it is a step that is believed to be able to lead people to get success in life by making a goal for what they want.

2.2 Previous Research

There are previous studies related to novel and analysis. The first title of the study is *Life Instinct Experience Reflected in Jenny Downham's Novel before I Die (2007): A Psychoanalytic perspective* by Raditiyawati Suryaningrum (2014). According to the psychoanalytic analysis, some factors influence how the main character has the spirit to live in the novel *Before I Die*. This thesis was written using a qualitative descriptive method.

The second study is by Stella Marissa Yuda Wahyu Lemek (2008) titled: *The Significant Role of Life and Death Instinct in Modeling Hendry Fleming Personality as Seen through His Action in Crane's The Red Badge of Courage*. In her thesis, the object of the study is *The Red Badge of Courage*, a novel by Stephen Crane. This novel describes the life of a young soldier during the war. This thesis, focuses on Henry Fleming's utterances. He is the major character in this novel. The discussion in this thesis is based on the study's objectives, which are to describe Henry Fleming's characterization, describe the forms of Fleming's instinct based on Freud's Psychoanalysis theory, and determine the significance of Fleming's instinct to Fleming's personality.

Those previous studies were concerned about the survival of their problems. These studies show how the main character faces problems and

survives. Both of the studies above give contributions to analyzing escaping from adversity. However, the life instinct discussed in this research differs from both of the previous studies. This research discusses how the protagonist can survive from his addiction through several ways to maintain his life to be a good person and better life by using the theory of life instinct. This research is analyzed according to psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud related to the concept self-awareness by Daniel Geolman.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A Million Little Pieces (2003) is a novel by James Frey that reflects the struggles and ways of the main character in escaping from adversity. The analysis of the novel deals with the concept of life instinct proposed by Sigmund Freud and self-awareness by Goleman. This novel shows how the main character through several ways to escape from adversity; they are creating new life, a desire to cooperate with other, and doing pro-social action.

Raising self-awareness is demonstrated when the main character falls in love with a woman during his rehabilitation process, which motivates him to overcome his adversity. This helps him recognize that he still has hope for a better life. He desires happiness in his life for the first time and is committed to his rehabilitation in order to achieve his objectives. As Sigmund Freud stated, people with dominant life instincts are more likely to be motivated in their lives. Even if he encounters difficulties or worse situations, he will try to survive and maintain his position in order to improve his situation.

A desire to cooperate with other can be seen when the main character agrees to be rehabilitated and undergo all kinds of treatment. It is because main character has self-awareness that makes him willing to recover and get some treatments. The willingness of the main character to be treated by the doctor and nurse is an example of a cooperation with other.

Doing pro-social action is demonstrated when the main character assists a woman he loves in her recovery from drug addiction. It is because he understands that overcoming addiction is difficult and requires the assistance of others. The woman assists him and gives him the love that motivates him to recover; when the woman returns to her worse situation, he wants to assist her as well. Aside from that, he hopes to have a better life with her in the future.

From this novel, it can be seen that everyone may have experience adversity in their life. This adversity is a form of a worse situation or difficult situation as a result of a problem in life. It will affect the life of an individual. Many of them do not have the spirit to live due to the adversity they have experienced. However, this will not happen to someone who chooses to struggle and rise in life and start looking for a way to get out of all the difficult situations that make their life worse. Therefore, every individual must have motivation, self-awareness, and life goals in his life. Everyone can escape from adversity as long as the individual has motivation and purpose in life.

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