

**SELF-DISCOVERY AMIDST THE POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS
DISORDER IN SABAA TAHIR'S NOVEL *ALL MY RAGE* (2022)**

THESIS

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Obtain
Bachelor's Degree (S1) in English Department*



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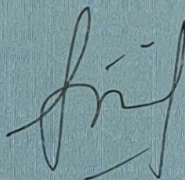
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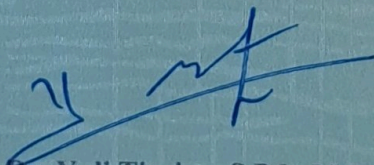


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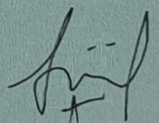
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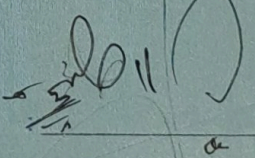
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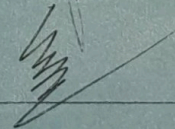
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ABSTRACT

Mahdiyyah, Difa Rosa. 2025. Self-Discovery Amidst The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Sabaa Tahir's Novel *All My Rage* (2022). Thesis, English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Language and Art. Universitas Negeri Padang.

This study explores the theme of self-discovery of Sabaa Tahir's *All My Rage* (2022), focusing on Noor, a Pakistani-American teenager struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and cultural tensions. This qualitative research utilizes Sigmund Freud's drive theory. The research examines Noor's psychological journey through self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-actualization. Her PTSD, rooted in the trauma of losing her family in an earthquake and enduring abuse from her uncle, manifests in intrusion, avoidance, and hyperarousal. These psychological struggles are further compounded by the cultural expectations placed upon her, creating an internal conflict between her personal aspirations and familial obligations. Noor's journey toward self-discovery unfolds as she recognizes the impact of her trauma, reconciles with her dual identity, and ultimately reclaims her agency by leaving her abusive environment to pursue higher education. This research highlights the intersection of trauma and cultural identity in shaping one's sense of self, offering insights into resilience and mental health representation in contemporary Young Adult literature.

Keyword: Young adult literature, Self-Discovery, PTSD, Cultural tensions, Sigmund Freud's drive theory, *All My Rage*

ABSTRAK

Mahdiyyah, Difa Rosa. 2025. Self-Discovery Amidst The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Sabaa Tahir's Novel *All My Rage* (2022). Skripsi, Program Studi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tema penemuan diri pada novel *All My Rage* (2022) karya Sabaa Tahir, dengan fokus pada Noor, seorang remaja Pakistan-Amerika yang berjuang dengan Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) dan ketegangan budaya. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan teori Drive Sigmund Freud. Penelitian ini mengkaji perjalanan psikologis Noor melalui kesadaran diri, penerimaan diri, dan aktualisasi diri. PTSD yang berakar pada trauma kehilangan keluarganya akibat gempa bumi dan penderitaan yang didapat dari pamannya, bermanifestasi dalam intrusi, penghindaran, dan hyperarousal. Perjuangan psikologis ini semakin diperburuk oleh ekspektasi budaya yang dibebankan padanya, sehingga menciptakan konflik internal antara aspirasi pribadi dan perannya dalam keluarga. Perjalanan Noor menuju penemuan jati diri terungkap saat dia menyadari dampak traumanya, berdamai dengan identitas gandanya, dan akhirnya mendapatkan kembali hak pilihannya dengan meninggalkan lingkungan yang penuh tekanan untuk melanjutkan pendidikan tinggi. Penelitian ini menyoroti titik temu antara trauma dan identitas budaya dalam membentuk perasaan diri seseorang, menawarkan wawasan mengenai ketahanan dan representasi kesehatan mental dalam sastra remaja kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Sastra remaja kontemporer, Penemuan diri, PTSD, Ketegangan budaya, Teori Drive Sigmund Freud, *All My Rage*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The theme of self-discovery has long been a central element in literature, especially in narratives that explore personal transformation and growth. Many literary works depict characters who undergo significant internal journeys as they confront past trauma, societal expectations, and personal dilemmas. These stories reveal how individuals struggle to understand themselves, accept their experiences, and redefine their futures. Self-discovery is often portrayed through key literary elements such as character development, setting, and conflict, which shape the protagonist's journey toward self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-actualization.

In literature, self-discovery frequently emerges from adversity. Characters who face trauma, cultural tensions, or oppressive circumstances are often forced to reflect on their identities and redefine their sense of self. This process is rarely straightforward; it involves moments of doubt, resistance, and eventual growth. As Thapa (2023:1) suggests, self-discovery is shaped by past experiences, personal struggles, and the search for meaning. Through literary exploration, it becomes evident that self-discovery is deeply intertwined with past experiences, personal struggles, and the search for meaning. These narratives allow readers to examine how self-discovery is constructed within a story, how external and internal conflicts influence a character's transformation, and what this journey reveals about the broader human condition. Given that trauma often plays a pivotal role in shaping these

internal conflicts, it is essential to understand its profound impact on a character's path to self-realization.

The term "trauma" in an emotional context is widely recognized around the world. This term spread rapidly because everyone has likely experienced negative, highly disturbing, and painful experiences that are difficult to forget. Some individuals can quickly forget about these experiences, but for others, forgetting traumatic experiences is challenging and can sometimes interfere with daily activities. This difficulty can be triggered by the intensity of the negative experiences in the past, making them hard to forget even years after the frightening event occurred.

The fear that arises from experiencing a scary, shocking, or dangerous event is a normal human reaction known as the "fight-or-flight" response (Surayya & Purwarno, 2022:350). Although fear is a natural reaction and the term "trauma" is commonly used in everyday conversations as something ordinary, the term actually refers to serious stressors that have the potential to cause long-term mental health issues. Furthermore, if the impact of a traumatic experience continues to show disturbing struggles for at least a month or even years after the event, this is known as PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).

PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, and rape (Fadillah, 2021:545). Surayya & Purwarno (2022: 352) added that traumatic events could include those where individuals are threatened with death, sexual violence, or have witnessed unpleasant events involving people they love. Therefore, when someone is mentally

unprepared to experience or witness a horrific event, their brain perceives it as a threat and responds to the traumatic event by initiating survival mechanisms. Unconscious changes in brain mechanisms alter a person's mental health. These changes can manifest as alterations in thinking patterns, emotional responses, and behavior (Ardesis, 2022:43).

Moreover, PTSD can significantly impact an individual's life, often leading to profound changes in self-perception and personal growth. As a result, PTSD can trigger a deep and transformative journey when viewed as a catalyst for self-discovery. Those who can acknowledge their trauma, work to overcome PTSD, find clear life goals, and take steps towards a better life, have turned trauma into a catalyst for their self-discovery journey. Additionally, this process helps them integrate traumatic experiences into their lives more acceptingly, ultimately leading to positive changes in their lives, even better than before. This aligns with Rudy et al.'s (2022:141) statement that personal struggles can contribute to a better understanding of oneself. This emphasizes the importance of self-discovery in gaining a deeper understanding of oneself, especially amidst life's struggles.

The themes of PTSD and self-discovery are vividly portrayed in Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage*, a contemporary young adult work published in 2022. The story unfolds in the small desert town of Juniper, California, focusing on the lives of two Pakistani-American young adults. Noor, the female protagonist, and the focus of this research, was born in Pakistan but immigrated to the United States as a child following the tragic loss of her entire family in an earthquake. Throughout the narrative, Noor exhibits PTSD

arising from her traumatic past. These experiences continue to haunt her, particularly due to the presence of her guardian, Chachu, her uncle, who lives with her, affecting her daily life and relationships in Juniper.

In parallel to her struggle with PTSD, Noor faces cultural tensions while living in Juniper, which further complicates her journey of self-discovery. As a young Pakistani woman who is a minority in Juniper, Noor experiences unique challenges. According to Noreen (2024), Pakistan is a melting pot of cultures, so ethnic and linguistic diversity is not uncommon. However, deep family values emphasize loyalty and interdependence, potentially affecting Noor's identity. As a Muslim-majority country, its culture and social norms are influenced by Islam, which poses a challenge for minorities in the West, especially in America. In addition, Pakistan's rich tradition of music and poetry can serve as a significant outlet for Noor's emotions and her path to self-discovery. The novel's exploration of self-discovery at the intersection of PTSD and cultural tensions provides valuable insights into the complexities of trauma, resilience, and personal growth.

While self-discovery and PTSD have been extensively explored in contemporary young adult fiction, existing research often treats these themes in isolation. Previous studies have addressed the issue of PTSD, such as Surayya and Purwarno's research (2022) on the novel *Girl in Pieces* by Kathleen Glasgow and Putri's analysis (2022) on the novel *The Way I Used to Be* by Amber Smith, both of which share the same genre as *All My Rage*, contemporary young adult fiction. Additionally, research on self-discovery has been conducted by Maindoka (2022) on the novel *The Midnight Library* by

Matt Haig, and research by Rudy et al. (2022) on the film *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Additionally, a further study conducted by Arain (2024) successfully revealed the complexities of trauma and the transformative potential of self-discovery in the novel *The Silent Patient*. However, there is a need for more research into the intersection of these themes within a single narrative, particularly in young adult literature. Additionally, as each young adult's development is shaped by their unique backgrounds and environments, cultural themes in literary research offer broader insights in the future.

This research aims to contribute to the field of contemporary young adult literature by offering a comprehensive analysis of the dual themes of PTSD and self-discovery as they are portrayed in Sabaa Tahir's *All My Rage*. This novel intricately weaves together the experiences of PTSD and the journey of self-discovery in the life of a female Pakistani-American protagonist, a minority surrounded by cultural tensions, presents a unique opportunity to fill this gap. This research aims to achieve a nuanced understanding of how these intertwined themes shape the protagonist's identity and resilience. Utilizing a psychoanalytic approach provides a powerful framework for understanding characters, narratives, and the underlying psychological dynamics at play. The application of psychoanalytic concepts to literary analysis allows for a deeper exploration of themes such as trauma and the unconscious motivations of characters. This study explores how the protagonist's traumatic past and her subsequent journey toward self-discovery are not just parallel narratives but deeply interconnected processes that influence each other. This research also addresses the cultural and social dimensions, providing insights beyond

individual psychological analysis. This aligns with research by Marlina et al. (2024:143) discussing the identity crisis in both literature and society, as it opens pathways for further expression of how minority individuals navigate the pressures of systemic inequality. It emphasizes the importance of understanding trauma and identity through cultural and social lenses, and the concrete contributions to discussions about minority identities in different areas of research. This integrated approach to examining self-discovery and PTSD within the context of a multicultural young adult novel offers a novel perspective that enriches the discourse on trauma, resilience, and identity in literature.

This area of research is particularly relevant in the modern era, as it must evolve to address the shifting needs of each new generation. By delving into the self-discovery themes in literary research, researchers can gain valuable knowledge about the challenges faced by today's youth, since they experience rapid and constant changes in this globalization and modernization era. This understanding can help educators, parents, and mental health professionals provide more effective support to young individuals as they navigate the complexities of young adults. Moreover, Young Adult literature reflects real-life situations, making it a vital medium for promoting understanding and connection.

1.2 Focus of the Problem

This research focuses on the self-discovery journey of Noor, a Pakistani-American teenager, amidst the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that she experiences due to traumatic events. Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage* (2022) serves a valuable framework for understanding how PTSD influences Noor's identity transformation. It is crucial to identify the signs and manifestations of PTSD, such as intrusion, avoidance, and hyperarousal, and their effects on her self-awareness, self-acceptance, and eventual self-actualization. Utilizing Freud's drive theory, particularly the conflict between *Eros* (the life drive) and *Thanatos* (the death drive), this journey highlights the challenges Noor faces and her efforts to reconcile her experiences while seeking her true self. Additionally, this research will analyze the cultural tensions that Noor encounters as a Pakistani-American in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex cultural environment's impact on her self-discovery journey. The interplay between personal trauma and cultural tensions creates a context that deepens Noor's experience. By exploring these two elements, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of how trauma and cultural background interact, shaping how Noor seeks understanding and identity in a world that is often unwelcoming.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are the main foundation that provides direction and meaning to this research. Formulating relevant questions pave the way to understanding and analyzing the core issues that need to be addressed. Here are the research questions as guidance for this research.

1. How does the conflict portray Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage* (2022)?
2. How is the self-discovery journey accomplished at the intersection of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and cultural tensions in Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage* (2022)?

1.4 Purpose of the Research

1. To explore the portrayal of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) based on the conflict in Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage* (2022).
2. To investigate the accomplishment of self-discovery journey in Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage* (2022) by uncovering how the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and cultural tensions contribute to the self-discovery journey.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

Sabaa Tahir's novel *All My Rage* (2022) reflects the main character's achievement of self-discovery at the intersection of PTSD and cultural tensions. This research explores a Pakistani American's journey of self-discovery amidst her struggles with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and cultural tensions. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, it examines how PTSD and cultural tensions intertwine with Noor's self-discovery, analyzing key literary elements such as setting, character development, and conflict.

The main character's PTSD stems from the trauma of surviving an earthquake in Pakistan at the age of six, which claimed her entire family. This trauma was compounded by the neglect and mistreatment she experienced from her guardian, uncle Riaz (*Chachu*). As she approaches the end of high school, her PTSD worsens, characterized by intrusion, avoidance, and hyperarousal, both from where she lives, Juniper, and her past. Yet, at the same time, this suffering had become a catalyst for self-discovery. This manifests in the form of self-awareness by recognizing how past trauma and *Chachu's* control limit her life, which drives her determination to pursue higher education. It also manifests in the form of self-acceptance by accepting her pain and limitations while envisioning a brighter future for herself. Finally, she achieves self-actualization by securing a place at UCLA, marking her liberation from *Chachu's* grip and the start of a new, self-determined chapter. Further, while cultural tensions are not the main focus,

they provide an important context for the main character's struggles. As a Pakistani-American, she faces the complexity of balancing between traditional expectations and the challenges of living in a predominantly American environment. This tension heightens her struggle with PTSD but also underscores her resilience in reconciling her dual identity.

Noor's journey ultimately reflects Freud's drive theory, which suggests that human beings are inherently designed to overcome obstacles in life. The internal conflict between *Eros* (the drive for life, growth, and fulfillment) and *Thanatos* (the drive toward destruction and despair) plays a crucial role in her self-discovery. While trauma and adversity threaten to consume her, her instinct to survive and move forward ultimately prevails. This highlights the resilience embedded in human nature. It is the capacity to transform suffering into strength and personal growth.

The journey of these main characters is a reflection of the real-world challenges faced by individuals dealing with PTSD and navigating cultural duality. In contemporary society, many individuals from immigrant or minority backgrounds experience the intersection of trauma and cultural tensions, which can complicate their path to self-discovery and personal growth. Noor's story, as the main character highlights the resilience required to overcome these challenges, providing a lens through which readers can understand the profound psychological and emotional impact of unpleasant experiences. In addition, the book also emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive environment, both within the family and society, to help individuals achieve self-awareness, self-acceptance, and ultimately, self-actualization. The novel not only highlights the profound

impact of adverse experiences but also celebrates the human capacity for renewal and transformation.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher offers several suggestions for future research. This study specifically focuses on the main character's journey of self-discovery, examining her experiences with PTSD and cultural tensions. However, there are many other interesting aspects of the novel that could be explored using different critical theories and research approaches. The researcher encourages future scholars to investigate these unexplored elements, as doing so could enhance understanding of the novel and inspire further analysis in related fields.

If future researchers choose to analyze *All My Rage* using the same theoretical framework, they can expand upon this study by examining all of the characters in greater detail for a more comprehensive interpretation. Additionally, future researchers should consider any limitations identified in this analysis, as recognizing these shortcomings can lead to improvements in future studies.

One limitation of this research is its primary focus on psychological approaches, specifically Freud's drive theory, in analyzing PTSD and Noor's journey of self-discovery. Therefore, future research could consider other perspectives, such as postcolonial approaches, which could examine how Noor's diaspora identity and her experience as a Pakistani-American immigrant influence her trauma and quest for identity. Additionally, feminist approaches could be used to explore how gender plays a role in the social pressures Noor experiences, particularly in facing patriarchal expectations within her family. A literary

sociology approach could also be an alternative to connect the narratives in the novel with the social realities faced by immigrant communities in the United States.

Furthermore, the issues raised in this novel not only broaden the perspective on the lives of immigrant communities in America, but are also relevant to immigrants and minority groups in various countries around the world who face similar challenges in maintaining their identities amid social and cultural pressures. The researcher aims for this study to serve as a valuable resource for future research on self-discovery and PTSD, enriching the discourse surrounding these significant themes in literature, especially within Young Adult literature. Continued exploration can deepen the understanding of how these themes interact, benefiting scholars and readers alike.

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