

**THE INTERSECTION OF PSYCHODYNAMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL
PHENOMENA IN *A SPACE FOR THE UNBOUND*: RAYA'S CHARACTER
ANALYSIS**

Submitted to English Letters Study Program of Universitas Ma Chung in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Undergraduate Degree of English Letters

THESIS



BY

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LEMBAR PENGESAHAN DOSEN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI

**DIAJUKAN UNTUK MEMENUHI TUGAS DAN SYARAT UNTUK
MENCAPAI GELAR SARJANA SASTRA BAHASA INGGRIS**

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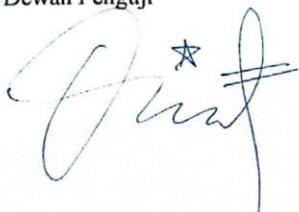
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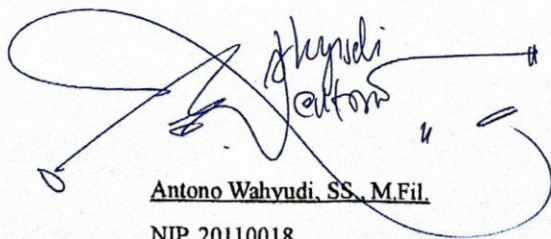
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“Dengan ini saya menyatakan bahwa Laporan Skripsi dengan judul *The Intersection of Psychodynamic and Sociocultural Phenomena in A Space for the Unbound: Raya's Character Analysis* ini beserta seluruh isinya adalah benar-benar karya saya sendiri, dan saya tidak melakukan penjiplakan dan pengutipan dengan cara-cara yang tidak sesuai dengan etika keilmuan yang berlaku dalam masyarakat keilmuan. Atas pernyataan ini, saya siap menanggung resiko / sanksi yang dijatuhkan kepada saya apabila kemudian ditemukan adanya pelanggaran terhadap etika keilmuan dalam karya saya ini, atau ada klaim dari pihak lain terhadap keaslian karya saya ini.”

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Yang membuat pernyataan



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ABSTRACT

The Intersection of Psychodynamic and Sociocultural Phenomena in *A Space for the Unbound*: Raya's Character Analysis

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This research utilizes a story-based video game titled *A Space for the Unbound*, which was released in 2023. The video game, produced by Mojiken Studio, encompasses themes of fiction, social environment, and mental health. Focusing in character development progress that made the author of this research questioned the psychology and social aspects in the video game. This study focuses on analyzing the sociocultural and psychodynamic aspects of the character Raya, who serves as the antagonist in the game. Based on this foundation, the author put two problem statements, consisting of the treatment Raya received from her environment and whether Raya's traits align with the norms and cultural values of society. To answer these questions, the author used two main theories such as, the sociocultural theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky and the psychodynamic theory by Sigmund Freud. The analysis is not solely based on these theories, but also involves examining elements of embedded storytelling, including dialogue, picture angle, color usage, and background music. Throughout the study, the author applied a qualitative descriptive method focused on evidence presented in the video game. In the end, this research is able to discover the curiosity that the author questioned. It was found that Raya receives negative treatment from her parents, teachers, and friends, as evidenced by specific scenes. Through more detailed research it was also found that Raya's behavior does not align with the prevailing norms and values of society.

Keywords: *psychodynamic, socio-cultural, story-based video game, stereotype, trauma*

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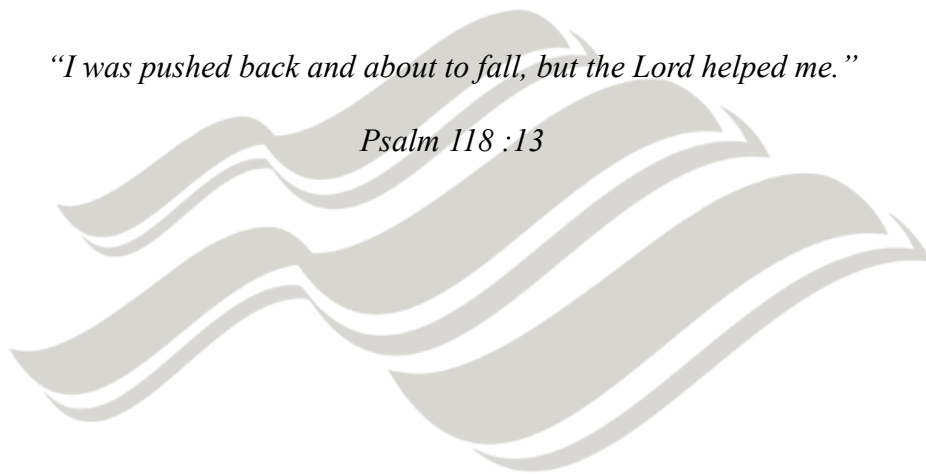
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“I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me.”

Psalms 118 :13



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TABLE OF CONTENT

LEMBAR PENGESAHAN DOSEN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI	i
LEMBAR PENGESAHAN DOSEN PENGUJI	ii
LEMBAR PERSETUJUAN DAN PENGESAHAN.....	iii
PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN KARYA.....	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of The Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	4
1.3 Objective of the Study	5
1.4 Scope and Limitations	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6 Definition of Key Terms	6
CHAPTER II	9
REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES.....	9
2.1 Literary Theory	9
2.1.1 Characters.....	9
2.1.2 Characterization	11

2.1.3 Concept of Story-based Video Game	12
2.1.4 Embedded Storytelling.....	13
2.1.5 NPC Character Development	15
2.2 Theory of Psychodynamic	16
2.2.1 Object Relations Theory.....	17
2.2.2 Self-psychology.....	17
2.3 Sociocultural Theory.....	18
2.3.1 Cultural Anthropology.....	19
2.3.2 Social Constructionism	20
2.4 Critical Theory	21
2.4.1 Theory of Trauma.....	21
2.4.2 Theory of Stereotype.....	22
2.5 Earlier studies	24
CHAPTER III.....	26
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	26
3.1 Studied Material.....	26
3.2 Study Design.....	28
3.3 Data Gathering.....	28
3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	29
CHAPTER IV.....	30
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	30
4.1 Society Behavior to Raya.....	30

4.1.1 Parents Behavior	31
4.1.2 Societies Behavior	36
4.2 Raya's Internal Struggles & Coping Mechanism	40
4.2.1 Internal Struggles	40
A. Emotional & Vulnerable	41
B. Loneliness & Isolation	45
4.2.2 Coping Mechanism	48
A. Control The Environment	49
B. Split Personality	53
C. Withdraw	56
4.3 Cultural Norms & Values	58
4.3.1 Open Communication	59
4.3.2 Empathy	60
CHAPTER V	63
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS	63
5.1 Conclusion	63
5.2 Suggestions	66
5.2.1 For General Readers	66
5.2.2 For Future Researchers	66
5.2.3 For English Study Program	67
REFERENCES	68

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4. 1 Description of Raya's Father Behavior.....	31
Table 4. 2 Further Description of Raya's Father Behavior.....	33
Table 4. 3 Description of Raya's Mother Behavior	34
Table 4. 4 Description of Bullies Behavior around Nirmala	36
Table 4. 5 Description of Raya's Teacher Behavior	38
Table 4. 6 Description of Emotional & Vulnerable Struggles	41
Table 4. 7 Description of Emotional Struggles.....	43
Table 4. 8 Description of Raya Loneliness.....	46
Table 4. 9 Description of Raya Being Isolated by The Bullies	47
Table 4. 10 Scene Description of Raya's Power to Control	49
Table 4. 11 Scene Description of Raya's Power to Vanish Erik	50
Table 4. 12 Scene Description Explaining Raya's Power & Spreading Fear	51
Table 4. 13 Scene Description of Raya Splitted Her Personality	53
Table 4. 14 Scene Description of Raya Withdrawal to The Reality	56
Table 4. 15 Scene Description of Direct Open Communication as Ideal Norm....	59
Table 4. 16 Scene Description of Empathy as Ideal Norm.....	60

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The massive development of technology in this century has led to many new things being created using technology. One of the developments that can be seen is in the field of literature. Various things have been done to attract public interest in literature, one of which is through video games. In this time, video games are not only used as a tool for entertainment. It is also a platform for the field of literature to keep evolving in the future. This is evidenced by the number of story-based video games released on a massive scale. Just like movies, video games also have a wide variety of genres such as action, adventure, romance, comedy and many more. By utilizing literature and certain mechanics, video games have become one of the most popular alternatives to modern literature.

In a story-based video game, a narrative is a very important element in its development, especially in design and developing the game's world building. The theory of this element is called Narratology. According to Ryan (2001) the theory of narrative focuses on the components and framework of storytelling. It can be used with a variety of media, including movies, video games, and books. Furthermore, Ryan explain that narratology is the study of how characters are created, how the game's narrative is put together, how the player's decisions and actions affect the course of the tale, and how it affects the world building in the context of story-based video games. To be able to understand video game character,

the developer needs to think about several aspects that need to be developed and one of them is character development. In video games, character development has several aspects. For instance, player agency and immersion. Based on the theory proposed by Murray (1997), the term "player agency" describes the player's capacity to shape the story and results of the game. This can be accomplished by decisions made, deeds committed, or conversations with other characters. Meanwhile, "immersion" is the psychological condition of being engrossed in the gaming environment. This entails feeling present, involved, and connected to the persona.

Narration is not the only one that holds the key aspect of story-based video game, but the socio-cultural aspect also has an important impact on its development. Based on the Cultural Capital Theory proposed by Bourdieu (1986), the theory explained that people have a type of capital that is not just economic but also cultural. This cultural capital affects a person's social standing and prospects. It is gained through education, socialization, and family history. It is this background that makes the socio-cultural aspects were put in story-based video games and provide its own color, making the game attractive to players.

In this research, I will use a video game called *A Space for the Unbound*. This game is a classic-style game that uses 2-dimensional pixel graphics with very simple mechanics. The game was developed for seven years by Mojiken Studio and released by Toge Production. Although it has a very simple style, the story has a very heavy, complex and meaningful impression on the players. The video game

has been released on January 19, 2023, on various platforms such as *Steam*, *Nintendo Switch*, *Playstation 4 and 5* and many more. Also, this video game managed to get a prestigious nomination namely, The Game Awards with the Games for Impact Award category in the same year.

A Space for the Unbound is not just a video game for relaxing or wasting some time. But this video game is a platform for the artists behind the game to express their heart and feelings to the people. If people only read the synopsis of this game, they would think that this is just a game with a romance story. However, the core story of the game is much more than that. Combining elements of romance, psychology and culture, the game has a very complex story.

The story takes place in Kota Loka in the 90s, and Nirmala, who suffered from childhood trauma, splits her personality into two separate people, which are Nirmala and Raya. As a result of her situation, she was left in critical condition and hospitalized for some time. However, during her coma, her subconscious world continued to function. The situation in Raya's subconscious world is inversely proportional to the real world. She has a boyfriend named Atma who in reality passed away tragically and in her subconscious world, will later become the main character that will be controlled by the player from the beginning of the game to the end. Realizing the strangeness in Raya's subconscious world, Atma as an imaginary character is committed to saving Raya's critical life through her artificial world.

With the problems in this complicated story, I have a strong desire to dissect the elements that can make complicated things such as psychology, trauma and

conflict experienced by Raya into something that makes players sympathize with her. Therefore, I will focus on analyzing Raya's character focusing on the Psychodynamic and Socio-cultural elements that refer to the problems I found. In this video game, there are several parts that discuss the psychological problems of the Raya character. Therefore, through this research I would like to find out how the social roles and communities around Raya shape her identity psychodynamically and socioculturally. Then diving further into Psychodynamics, I also want to analyze how Raya's Psychodynamic factors can reflect the sociocultural aspects of her world. Lastly, during my time playing this video game, I was able to find various problems that Raya experienced throughout the game. Therefore, I would like to analyze the problems experienced by Raya and how her protection mechanisms can be aligned with the norms and culture of the game.

By conducting this research, I as the author hope that the results provided can help other researchers who examine the same field. It is also hoped that research on modern literature such as video games will be developed more and more and can compete with other works of literature such as films, dramas, short stories, and many more.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to the background above, there are 3 questions that will be focused on:

1. What roles do Raya's family and community play in shaping her identity?

2. To what extent do Raya's internal struggles and coping mechanisms align with the prevailing cultural norms and values in the game?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In accordance with the background written above, this research is expected to be able to provide answers about how both aspects of psychodynamic and sociocultural connect to each other in Raya personality. To solve this problem, I will conduct in-depth research on Raya's psychological condition and her environment which shape her identity. By solving this problem, I hope that I can provide the answer which shows how psychological and environmental issues affect a character personality.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

In this research, it is important to limit the scope to ensure that the whole discussion is in line with the main topic. Therefore, in this research, I will be focusing only on Raya as the Antagonist. I will also use supporting study materials and literature to analyze the characters according to characterization, psychological, and social situation.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In writing this research, my goal is not just to obtain a score for the exam. According to the background that has been written, this research aims to be able to

provide reasons for the importance of exploring characters in two ways, both in Psychodynamic and Sociocultural aspects. Which focuses on both psychological and environmental situations.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this section, I will elaborate on the definitions of some key terms as follows:

1. Video games:

According to Granic, Lobel & Engels (2014) statement, Video games are computer programs that players interact with through a user interface to get visual feedback on a two- or three-dimensional screen. These programs frequently have gameplay elements including goals, challenges, and score systems.

2. Psychodynamic:

Psychodynamic theory emphasizes the influence of unconscious processes and early life experiences on behavior and personality. It suggests that human behavior is largely motivated by inner forces, conflicts, and drives, often stemming from childhood (Shedler, 2010).

3. Sociocultural:

Sociocultural refers to the ways in which social and cultural factors influence individual behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. It emphasizes

the importance of social interactions, cultural norms, and societal structures in shaping psychological processes (Hammack, 2018).

4. Character:

According to Barbour (1992), A character is an entity in a story that fulfills particular roles, goals, and attributes within the framework of the plot. These characters, who all contribute to the general narrative framework, might assume varying degrees of significance, ranging from primary protagonists to supporting or minor characters.

5. Characterization:

According to Barbour (1992), the way these people are portrayed and developed throughout the story is called characterization. It encompasses both direct approaches, in which the author or narrator expressly states a character's traits, and indirect approaches, in which a character's personality is deduced from their deeds, conversations, or relationships with other characters. Readers can interact with and understand characters in a variety of ways thanks to this characterization process, which occasionally even leads to interpretations that go beyond the author's initial intentions.

6. Personality:

The American Psychological Association (2018) defines personality as the persistent arrangement of traits, interests, motivations, values, self-

concept, abilities, and emotional patterns that make up a person's own way of adjusting to life.

7. Story-based Video Game:

Interactive digital experiences where the player actively participates in a narrative that develops as a result of their choices and actions.



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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

2.1 Literary Theory

This section contains theories that help me understand the elements of a story-based video game before going deeper into the analysis. Some theories about characters and characterization from story-based video games will be discussed in this section.

2.1.1 Characters

A character, according to Barbour (1992), is an entity in a tale that performs specific functions, objectives, and qualities inside the plot's structure. These individuals, who all play a part in the overall plot structure, may take on many roles, from main protagonists to supporting or minor characters. There are several types of characters which are known as protagonist, antagonist, and supporting character (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018).

1. Protagonists

According to a study by Bergstrand & Jasper (2018), the notion of protagonist characters highlights their crucial function in narrative frameworks, frequently acting as the plot's primary motivation and personifying the story's essential ideas. According to protagonist theory, these individuals are not only crucial to the plot but also influence how the audience perceives the story by helping them relate more deeply to its ethical or philosophical themes.

2. Antagonists

Antagonists were traditionally portrayed as one-dimensional bad forces. On the other hand, multifaceted antagonists who are portrayed with nuanced motivations and moral ambiguity are becoming more prevalent in modern character theories. Audiences can now examine and occasionally sympathize with the antagonist's point of view, reflecting a more complex worldview. Bergstrand and Jasper (2018) assert that adversaries are frequently portrayed as having more than just opposing forces because of their intricate, multidimensional motivations that either support or contradict social standards.

3. Supporting Character

Supporting characters are crucial in forming the protagonist's journey and adding complexity to the story, according to the theory of supporting characters, which is frequently studied in relation to narrative and character development. Supporting characters can be used to offer emotional support, pose problems, or aid in the protagonist's development, among other purposes. They can enhance the narrative by adding intricate relationships and subplots that support the main storyline arc (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018).

However, in story-based video games. The theory of character is adapted to involve player involvement, which means it is not only designed as a fictional character but also as an interactive component. According to

Schröter and Thon (2014), there are three primary ways that people experience characters in video games such as narrative, simulation, and communication. Character contributions to the plot are shaped by narrative mode; their function in the game's setting and mechanics is governed by simulation mode; and players' interactions with these characters as social representations are influenced by communication mode.

2.1.2 Characterization

Characterization, according to Barbour (1992), is the way these characters are presented and grow over the narrative. It includes both direct ways, where a character's characteristics are stated explicitly by the author or narrator, and indirect approaches, where a character's personality is inferred from their actions, dialogue, or interactions with other characters. This characterization process allows readers to engage with and comprehend characters in a multitude of ways, sometimes even generating interpretations beyond the author's original purpose. Since characters in video games can serve as playable avatars, narrative entities, or social representations, particularly in multiplayer settings, the theory of characterization in video games also takes the player's viewpoint into account. Because of this relationship, player interaction and game design both contribute to the creation of video game characters. For instance, a character's identity is influenced via interactive conversation, voice acting, and visual design (Schröter & Thon, 2014).

2.1.3 Concept of Story-based Video Game

Story-based video games are characterized as interactive digital experiences where the player actively participates in a narrative that develops as a result of their choices and actions. These games often place a heavy emphasis on player freedom, allowing the player to influence the outcome of the game and the storyline through branching storylines. Through the dynamic interplay between player decisions and pre-planned storylines, the narrative structure allows players to create unique experiences (Turley, 2018). This genre is defined by its emphasis on narrative, which is essential to the player experience because it is not just an overlay but rather is incorporated into the game mechanics. These games frequently use a variety of narrative strategies, including character development, conversation, and environmental storytelling, to produce an emotionally and intellectually captivating experience.

According to journal articles by Koenitz (2018) and Naul & Liu (2020), the idea of ludonarrative-the interaction between gameplay mechanics and game narrative-is crucial for story-based video games. When players overcome obstacles that affect the plot, these interactions can enhance emotional connection and immersion. For example, player decisions drastically change the plot of role-playing games (RPGs) that combine interactive and storytelling aspects, such as the Mass Effect series or The Witcher. Players' sense of presence in story-based games allows them to be fully immersed, which increases emotional engagement and encourages them to progress.

These games stand out for their narrative agency, which gives players the power to influence the plot and create personalized and unique narrative routes. This agency fits well with the cognitive engagement theory of narrative, which states that the player's ability to plan and make decisions is critical to their enjoyment of the narrative. Story-based video games differ from traditional media because of the way they combine gameplay and narrative, allowing players to actively influence the plot and outcome rather than just being passive consumers.

2.1.4 Embedded Storytelling

According to Jenkins (2004) In story-based video games, the term “embedded storytelling” describes how narrative components are seamlessly incorporated into gameplay, interactions and game environments so that players can learn the storyline without the need for cutscenes or explicit narration. By exploring, observing and interacting with the game environment, players can discover narrative information and engage more with the game world. Since the player is “living” the story rather than just watching or reading it, this fosters a sense of immersion. Character conversations, in-game artifacts, background music and environmental features are examples of embedded storytelling components that serve as background clues, motivation or lore. The details of embedded storytelling will be explained below.

1. Environmental Storytelling

Environmental storytelling conveys plot details through game world design and visual clues. These can include props, architectural elements and objects

that allude to a location's past. In a fantasy game, for example, a ruined castle could have battle damage or abandoned weaponry, indicating a previous battle. These specifics motivate players to infer and create their own narrative (Jenkins, 2004; Fernández-Vara, 2011).

2. Lore and Artifacts

Narrative details can be found through artifacts, journals and letters scattered in the game. By finding and analyzing these items, players can learn more about the game's past, character motivations or story points. Lore and collectibles are used to create the worlds of video games like *Bioshock* and *The Elder Scrolls*, which allow players to explore and discover optional story levels (Tavinor, 2009; Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2011).

3. Non-Player Character (NPC) Dialogue and Behavior

NPCs contribute to the story through interactions or behaviors that reflect the game world. NPCs can provide clues about past events, the current state of the world, or the player's goals through conversation. NPC actions and reactions also contribute to storytelling by showing the social dynamics of the world, as seen in games like *The Witcher* series, where NPCs react to player choices and environmental changes (Zagal, 2010).

4. Music and Sound Design

Music and sound are effective components for an integrated narrative. They reflect shifts in setting or plot, evoke feelings, and set the tone. Past or future events can be hinted at through subtle audio cues such as whispers,

menacing tones, or thematic music when interacting with certain objects or characters (Collins, 2013). The story and emotional impact of games such as *Dark Souls* is enhanced using music to set the mood in key areas.

5. Game Mechanics and Player Action

The game mechanics and the actions players can take both have the ability to express narrative themes. For instance, game features that make players repeat actions, make tough decisions, or traverse challenging settings might represent concepts like survival, moral ambiguity, or tenacity. In the well-known example of *Papers, Please*, the mechanics of border control are interwoven with the topic of moral and bureaucratic struggle, which enhances the player's comprehension of the narrative (Bogost, 2007).

By giving players, the impression that they are co-creators of the story, embedded storytelling creates a personalized experience that is highly effective. Henry Jenkins' notion of "narrative architecture," which holds that gaming environments are built with layered storytelling aspects that players can discover in a non-linear fashion, is consistent with this approach. Jenkins (2004) argues that this approach creates a varied experience that is dependent on player choice and discovery.

2.1.5 NPC Character Development

The creation of non-player characters (NPCs) for story-based video games is centered on giving them characteristics and actions that improve player involvement and immersion. In addition to performing their functional

responsibilities, NPCs are designed to react in a way that is socially and psychologically realistic. To let players view NPCs as distinct and realistic beings rather than just mechanical objects, this frequently entails creating models that enable meaningful interactions between NPCs based on their "personality" or "emotional" characteristics.

Developers concentrate on character attributes that contribute to the creation of a "believable" environment, such as relationship dynamics, emotion-driven activities, and compatibility with the game's setting, to produce compelling NPCs. NPCs become crucial to the story and gameplay when AI is used that can adjust to shifting conditions and player actions, increasing player immersion overall (Belle et al., 2022).

2.2 Theory of Psychodynamic

In a journal article written by Merydith (1999) stated that Psychodynamic theory, rooted in the research of Sigmund Freud, holds that unconscious tensions and drives—often stemming from early life experiences—have a significant impact on human behavior and mental processes. The structural model of the mind, which includes the id (instinctual drives), ego (rational arbiter), and superego (internalized moral norms), is central to this theory. Behavior and personality are shaped by the interaction between these elements. The ego uses defense mechanisms such as projection and repression to handle conflicts between the id and superego. In its

evolution there are several theory branches of Psychodynamic theory such as Object Relations Theory and Self-psychology to support the theory itself.

2.2.1 Object Relations Theory

Early relationships in life affect the way we interact with others throughout our life. According to Goldstein (2010), a subfield of psychodynamic theory called "Object Relations Theory" examines how early relationships, especially those with main caregivers—influence how people conceptualize themselves and other people (objects). A person's interactions and relationships throughout their life are influenced by these internalized images. There are several points of view in its utilization. For instance, prominent psychodynamic theorists Donald Winnicott (Abram, 2007) and Melanie Klein (Segal, 2018) offer two distinct viewpoints on object relations theory. According to Klein, early childhood "separation" occurs when babies perceive their caregivers as "good" or "bad" things, creating mental images that affect subsequent interactions. On the other side, Winnicott popularized the ideas of "good mother" and "true self," arguing that when children grow up in a nurturing environment, they will acquire a stable sense of who they are, which will facilitate the development of healthy relationships.

2.2.2 Self-psychology

According to Mitchell & Black (2016), the psychodynamic viewpoint is broadened by self-psychology, which was created by Heinz Kohut in the 1970s and emphasizes the self as the primary component of human psychology, especially regarding self-esteem and self-cohesion. This school of psychodynamic theory

departs from Freud's focus on drives and conflicts by highlighting the significance of relationships and empathy in developing a strong sense of self. According to Kohut, having a healthy self-result from having sympathetic, encouraging relationships with caregivers, or "self-objects." These connections are essential to meeting self-object needs, such as twinship (feeling like others), idealization (seeking solace and security from those in positions of power), and mirroring (affirming oneself).

Self-psychology studies also look at how unmet needs for self-objects early in life can lead to problems such as low self-esteem or narcissistic personality traits later in life. As a result, Kohut's method has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of personality development and therapeutic interventions by viewing narcissism as a possible adaptive reaction to early deficits in empathy, rather than simply as a maladaptive trait.

2.3 Sociocultural Theory

In this study, aspects of character psychology are closely tied to socio-cultural elements, especially when looking at the background of video games that reflect the situation in Indonesia in the 90s. According to Siagian, et al (2019), the country at the time encouraged development and modernity, often comparing ancient customs as outdated. Authoritarian parenting approaches were common and obedience and conformity were highly valued as a result of this top-down approach.

This approach prioritizes control and discipline, often at the expense of psychological knowledge and honest emotional expression.

Sociocultural theory highlights how learning and cognitive development are intricately linked to social environments, especially when it comes to social interaction. One of the main proponents of this idea, Lev Vygotsky, maintained that people develop their cognitive abilities and comprehension through interactions with more experienced people in their surroundings. Through these encounters, people can internalize language, cultural norms, and problem-solving techniques, thereby forming their cognitive capacities within their group (Danish & Gresalfi, 2018). To support this theory, I also added other theories that are in the same line to sociocultural theory such as Cultural Anthropology and Social Constructionism.

2.3.1 Cultural Anthropology

Cultural anthropology focuses on comprehending human cultures and behaviors within their own cultural and social contexts, particularly when it is connected to sociocultural theory. This viewpoint is consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which underlines how social interactions, and the cultural environment are intricately linked to cognitive development. Cultural anthropologists typically study how language, family systems, and community customs influence people's social and cognitive learning. For example, traditional performances and storytelling are considered not only cultural relics but also means of passing on knowledge within a community (Phan, 2012).

In addition, cultural anthropology emphasizes the idea that social engagement promotes the development of brain function. Learning within a family or community network, for example, reinforces cultural values and beliefs, which in turn influence one's worldview and cognitive growth. Using this sociocultural framework, anthropological research examines how these behaviors impact individual identity and group cohesiveness in social systems.

2.3.2 Social Constructionism

Social constructionism, which examines how social processes shape reality and knowledge, is closely related to sociocultural theory. The importance of social contact and cultural settings in influencing cognitive understanding and development is emphasized by both theories. Vygotsky's idea in sociocultural theory that cognitive functions develop through social engagement resonates with social constructionism, which theorizes that knowledge and meaning are produced through language, symbols and shared practices in society (Danish & Gresalfi, 2018).

Both theories consider knowledge to be the result of group effort, meaning that people absorb social norms and values by continuously engaging in social interaction. Furthermore, social constructionism emphasizes how common interpretations shape our understanding of ideas such as identity, power and norms. Sociocultural theory further develops this process by examining the ways in which these constructions influence learning and development across cultural contexts (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Phan, 2012).

2.4 Critical Theory

Critical theories are used to support the analysis of literary work. For this study I used the theory of trauma and stereotypes that correlate to socio-cultural phenomena to have a deeper understanding of a character that shapes the personality of Raya.

2.4.1 Theory of Trauma

The concepts of this theory serve to understand the psychological to emotional impact of distressing or overwhelming experiences that go beyond the capabilities of the individual who faces them. Trauma, according to Herman (2015), is an experience that obliterates a person's sense of meaning, connection and control, leaving them feeling disconnected and powerless. Herman highlights the wider social and cultural consequences by making a distinction between single incident trauma like an accident or assault and complex trauma like ongoing abuse or systemic oppression.

In relation to the title of my research, the theory of trauma will be discussed in a form that correlates with social-cultural phenomena in *A Space for the Unbound*. The following theories of trauma emphasize how culture, societal structures, and historical factors shape the experience, interpretation, and healing process of trauma. According to these theories, trauma is not only a psychological phenomenon that affects individuals but is also deeply ingrained in cultural, social, and systemic contexts.

1. Sociocultural PTSD Framework

According to Maercker & Hecker (2016) The Sociocultural PTSD Framework posits that social structures, cultural norms, and community contexts are important factors in how people experience and recover from trauma. For example, how people deal with trauma is influenced by cultural views on mental health, resource availability, and social stigma. The concept recognizes the interaction between broader sociocultural factors and personal experiences.

2. Historical Trauma Theory

The intergenerational trauma that oppressed or marginalized populations endure because of discrimination, colonization, or enslavement is the main subject of historical trauma theory. According to Brave Heart (1998), historical trauma is the result of systemic oppression and cultural losses that cause emotional and psychological damage over many generations.

2.4.2 Theory of Stereotype

The term stereotype is a psychological and social process that underlies the creation, maintenance and consequences of generalized ideas about certain groups. Stereotypes, which are often based on exaggeration and oversimplification, are cognitive structures that incorporate information, opinions and expectations about social groupings. According to Allport (1954) stereotypes are described as “exaggerated beliefs associated with a category,” emphasizing their function as

mental shortcuts that simplify complicated social contexts. Stereotypes often produce false impressions and foster prejudice in social interactions, even though they serve the purpose of solving problems quickly.

In relation to the title of my research, stereotypes are closely related to socio-cultural issues that happen in the video game and shaped Raya personality. The theory below provides support for how stereotypes are related to socio-cultural aspects and defines how this theory shaped Raya personality.

1. Stereotype Content Model (SCM)

According to Fiske et al. (2018), the Stereotype Content Model highlights that socio-cultural factor, such as competition and perceived status, shape the warmth and competence dimensions of stereotypes. Groups perceived as high-status but competitive are stereotyped as competent but cold, whereas groups perceived as low status are often stereotyped as warm but less competent.

2. Social Identity Theory

Tajfel and Turner (2003) stated that Social Identity Theory posits that stereotypes arise from people's need to place themselves and others into social groupings to enhance their self-esteem. These groupings produce outgroup stereotypes and ingroup biases because they are shaped by cultural norms and values.

2.5 Earlier studies

In solving a problem that has been described in the first chapter, it is necessary to use reliable and accurate sources of study. In the topic and problems, I proposed in this research, there are not many sources that discuss character analysis of the video game *A Space for the Unbound*. However, there are studies on other subjects that can assist in answering the questions.

A study on another video game offers an insight into the role of an NPC character in a story-based video game. This study can be found in the article titled “Video Game Characters. Theory and Analysis” written by Schröter and Thon (2014). In this journal article, the authors used some specific characters to analyze such as Martin Walker from the video game *Spec Ops: The Line*, the customization protagonist character of *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, and *Star Wars: The Old Republic*. The content in this journal discusses the construction of video game characters who not only act as fictional entities but also as part of the game with specific roles. It delves deeper into how some of the video games mentioned utilize characters to deepen the story, enhance interactivity, and support social dynamics within the scope of video game world building. In addition, the journal article also highlights the psychodynamic elements that influence the deepening and development of a game character. I will use this journal to help me understand how NPC characters are used as an important part of video games as well as how elements of psychodynamics are applied to video game character development.

I will use the second journal article entitled “The Cultural Impact of Video Games: A Systematic Review of the Literature” written by Cerezo-Pizarro et al., (2023). In this journal article, the authors focus on analysing various cultural aspects of video games, such as how video games represent cultural diversity, promote social values, and influence players' understanding of different cultural identities. The journal article also highlights the socio-cultural elements of video games implemented through story narratives and further explores social norms and ethics. In my research, I will use this journal article to help me explore the socio-cultural elements of the video game *A Space for the Unbound*.

Based on these two journal articles, it can be seen that my thesis is very different. The first journal articles discuss the character construction of several video games and the psychodynamic aspects of video game characters. While the second journal articles focus on analyzing the socio-cultural aspects of video games, which can be concluded that the two journal articles used focus on different topics. In contrast to these two, this thesis focuses on discussing the development of NPC character in *A Space for the Unbound*, namely Raya by using psychodynamic and socio-cultural perspectives, which can be concluded that this topic is a new topic that has never been researched before.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Studied Material

The studied material that I used in this research is a story-based video game entitled *A Space for the Unbound*. This video game with a total gameplay of 9-10 hours was developed by Mojiken Studio and published by Toge Production. Released on January 19, 2023, and has been present on several platforms such as Steam, Nintendo Switch, Playstation 4 & 5 and many more. This video game with visual novel, adventure, and psychology genres managed to get various positive reviews on platforms and media reviews such as, 4,5/5 on *Playstation Store*, 10/10 on *Steam*, 85% from *Metacritic*, 5/5 from *Gameshub* and many more. It even managed to get a nomination at the prestigious event, *The Game Awards* with the *Games for Impact Awards* nomination. Below is the poster of the video game.



A Space for the Unbound is a story-based video game about psychology and trauma with fantasy and magical elements. Set in the city of Loka in the 90s, it tells the story of a girl named Nirmala who grew up with traumatic experiences and ostracization from her peers. Nirmala, who was often abused by her father and ostracized by her friends, eventually developed a mental illness that made her have two personalities, Raya and Nirmala. Because Nirmala's personality was considered to bring bad luck, she abandoned her original personality and replaced it with Raya's personality, which was considered as a better personality. However, the situation worsened her physical condition to the point that she had to go into a coma.

In the sub-conscious during the coma, Raya's personality takes over her consciousness creating a world that is 180 degrees opposite to the real world. Even Raya old friend, Atma, who passed away many years ago, appear as Raya imaginary boyfriend. However, Atma felt something strange about the world until he finally realized that he was just a character who is called back in the unconscious mind of a girl named Nirmala who was in a coma. Various strange events occur in Nirmala's subconscious which result in threatening her safety. Realizing this dangerous situation, he is determined to save Nirmala who is in the real world through her subconscious controlled by Raya. In this video game, the player must play as Atma to rescue Nirmala.

3.2 Study Design

I will use descriptive qualitative methods on this research to help solve the topic of the problem posed. The purpose of descriptive qualitative research is to provide a clear and comprehensive picture by examining and describing certain aspects of a phenomenon. This method seeks to record the authentic viewpoints and experiences of participants without imposing theoretical frameworks or interpretations (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Usually, observations, interviews, and document reviews are used to gather data for descriptive qualitative studies. Analysis of the data focuses on finding recurrent themes or patterns without changing or modifying the content (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

The descriptive qualitative research design that I will use for data collection can be found in conversations, images, scenes, and coloring effects. In this research, I will limit the scope of Raya's personality and focus on several aspects of video games such as characterization, character development, psychodynamic aspects and socio-culture. Therefore, I will also explore this video game by exploring the aspects that I highlight. Some theories will also be used to help in analyzing this research.

3.3 Data Gathering

In this thesis, I will gather the data by focusing on the details in the video game. There are two types of data such as primary data and secondary data. The video game that I played myself took a role as the primary data includes the

dialogues, actions, interactions, settings, music, colors, etc. Meanwhile the secondary data will consist of theories that I gather, earlier studies, etc. In gathering data, there are steps that I need to execute.

1. Play the video games myself.
2. While playing the video game, I will pay attention to specific details such as, dialogues, colors, and appearance and taking screenshots of it. Not only that, but I will also take notes of music that appear in the video game and summarize a few events that happen in the video game.
3. After I gather the data, I will keep them in a form of table.

3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

To analyze and interpret data that I've found, there are few steps that I need to go through.

1. In analyzing the data, I will be using a few sources such as, journal articles, website, books, earlier studies, etc. to find related theories that will help me to interpret data in this thesis.
2. By using these sources, I will use the theories and connect them with the data that have been found and find the answers to the problems.
3. The last step, I will summarize the results and write down the conclusions that answer the questions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section I provide an analysis of Raya's characterization as an antagonist in the video game *A Space for the Unbound* and explores how psychodynamic and sociocultural aspects are interconnected through the role of the surrounding environment. By identifying Raya's personality and the role of the environment using various theories provided in the previous chapter, this chapter aims to detail the aspects that make up the character. Through detailed exploration of the research questions, I gained deeper knowledge on the development of Raya's personality and the psychodynamic and socio-cultural aspects that shape her character. To simplify the description of the data I've found, I've used a table with pictures and descriptions in it. The data that I attach below are screenshots of a full walkthrough video game content of *A Space for the Unbound* uploaded by Adventure Vault in YouTube with a total duration of 9 hours 41 minutes to help me to provide valid data.

4.1 Society Behavior to Raya

In finding the answer to the first question mentioned in the first chapter, I will focus on using sociocultural theories related to trauma and stereotypes. By using these theories, I will tell how the treatment of parents and the surrounding environment shape Raya's personality. Moreover, the background of the story takes

place in Indonesia in the 90s, where at that time knowledge about human psychology was still not accepted by the wider community.

Based on Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which asserts that a person develops by seeing and interacting with the environment all around. However, Raya's surroundings did not provide a good example and instead had a negative impact on Raya's psychological condition. This also causes a person's psychology is closely related to sociocultural aspects. The explanation below will provide a more complete description based on Raya's parents' point of view and the surrounding environment focused on Raya's friends.

4.1.1 Parents Behavior

Like all parents, Raya parents play a crucial role in the psychological development of their children. However, the father, who is mentally stressed by his career and loans, is unable to play his role properly. This can be seen in the following scene.

Table 4. 1 Description of Raya's Father Behavior

Scene	Dialogue	Arguments
Timestamp: 00:22:33	<i>Nirmala's Father: "OPEN THE FREAKING DOOR!"</i> <i>Nirmala's Father: "You're still doodling and writing"</i>	The story takes place when Atma sneaks into Nirmala's room to retrieve the things she left behind. He is almost caught by Nirmala's father

	<i>that stupid nonsense, aren't ya?"</i> <i>Nirmala's Father: "Have you got any idea how much money I had to borrow just to get you into a decent school?!"</i> <i>Nirmala's Father: "And this is how you repay me, you spoiled brat?"</i>	who is about to break down the door. The father, who is under great stress, is furious when he finds out that Nirmala is skipping school. He was about to forcefully break down the door of Nirmala's room while uttering inappropriate words. The dialog "You're still doodling and writing that stupid nonsense, aren't ya?" shows that he really doesn't like when Nirmala writes or draws. Because for him, it is very useless since he has poured so much money into Nirmala. It shows that her father wants more from Nirmala by showing a harsh response to forbid her. Through this scene, it can
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		also be seen that the stereotypes of parents at that time were known to only understand getting good grades without seeing the potential and talents owned by the child. This is the first evidence that the role of parents, especially the father, sets a bad example for Nirmala.
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Playing the role of a strict parent to Raya. It leaves him with no other choice by using violence in raising his only child. The scene below will give an example of a father who only understands violence in educating Raya.

Table 4. 2 Further Description of Raya's Father Behavior

Scene	Dialogue	Arguments
	<i>Raya's Mother: "She's not been herself recently. The doors locked, I can't--"</i>	Based on the scene above, it can be further seen that Raya's father only relies on violence in educating her.

Timestamp: 8:41:01	<i>Raya's Father: "This is because you've been coddling her too much!"</i> <i>Raya's Father: "You're spoiling her! She's turning into a lazy good-for-nothing!"</i> <i>Raya's Father: "I'll beat some sense into her. It's for her own good!"</i>	It is even written clearly in the dialog.
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Upon hearing this, the mother was unable to do anything, as the dialog was suddenly cut off. This also doesn't help Raya as the mother can only remain silent listening to her violent husband. The cut scene below will further explain the lack of role of the mother in the sociocultural aspect.

Table 4. 3 Description of Raya's Mother Behavior

Scene	Dialogue	Arguments
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Timestamp: 8:41:18

Nirmala's Father:

"Nirmala, Open this door, you little animal!"

Nirmala's Father: "You're humiliating me in front of the neighbors and the teacher!"

Nirmala's Mother: "My dear... If you scream like that, the neighbors will hear..."

Nirmala's Mother:

"Come, let's just go downstairs... I made you coffee."

As Atma delved into Raya's dark past, we could see that the father was quite dominating, playing a very strict role. He doesn't give the mother a chance to help Raya directly. The mother's role there is only to accompany the father to prevent excessive actions. As can be seen in the cut scene where the mother tries to calm the father down and persuade him with a cup of coffee. Without looking at Raya at all. This reflects the poor sociocultural aspect of the mother not really appearing directly to Raya.

4.1.2 Societies Behavior

Not only through parents, the external environment around Raya can also have a significant and poor impact in terms of socio-cultural concepts. Bullying, comparing with others, and being marginalized from her surroundings. Such things are experienced by Nirmala that she unintentionally creates a stronger character to anticipate this. The behavior of the surrounding environment can be seen through the scene below.

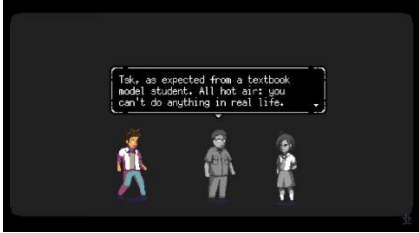
Table 4. 4 Description of Bullies Behavior around Nirmala

Scene	Dialogue	Arguments
 Timestamp: 00:07:07	<i>Bullies: "FREAK!"</i> <i>Bullies: "That is the stupidest thing I've ever read in my entire life."</i> <i>Bullies: "My one-year-old could write something better than this."</i> <i>Bullies: "Fantastical nonsense. A disgusting waste of time."</i>	Atma, who got the red magic book, tried to use the power for the first time. She uses the power on Nirmala and finds herself diving into the deepest feelings that Nirmala is experiencing. The place was very dark and there were many dark silhouettes that resembled the people

	<i>Bullies: "This is a waste of ink and paper."</i> <i>Bullies: "Delusional!"</i> <i>Bullies: "You should have focused on your grades, little girl!"</i>	who were bullying Nirmala. These things represent the statements of the people around her towards the things she likes. Through this scene, there is also a stereotype at that time that many people underestimated and even insulted someone's talent. This also reflects the bad sociocultural aspects of Nirmala's psychological development.
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Not only through peers, but the teachers who educate him at school also give a bad effect in terms of sociocultural aspects. Comparing her to people or groups that are much better than her. This gives a bad stereotypical effect to Raya who is eventually labeled as a useless child from others. The scene in reference can be seen below.

Table 4. 5 Description of Raya's Teacher Behavior

Scene	Dialogue	Arguments
 Timestamp: 4:14:32	<i>Teacher: "Ahh, as expected! You still haven't done anything about it, have you?"</i> <i>Teacher: "You should solve it for yourself, stop coming to me for everything! You're the Committee President, act like one!"</i> <i>Raya: "...You shouldn't know that. You shouldn't say that! Not here, not whe- "</i> <i>Teacher: "You've say everyone's against you, but they're your own classmates. You should be the one who figures</i>	Atma, who was investigating Raya's past, saw Raya in a difficult situation during the festival preparations. The teacher, who found her not doing a good job, compared her to Lulu who was considered to be able to work with much more satisfactory results. In the scene, it can be seen that through the first dialog, Raya is already expected not to finish her work well. It shows that a Raya who does not have many friends and a perfect life

	<i>out a way to convince them!</i> <i>Teacher: "Tsk, as expected from a textbook model student. All hot air: you can't do anything in real life."</i> <i>Raya: "Stop, please... I can't hear it again..."</i> <i>Teacher: "Lulu did it effortlessly last year, the year before too!"</i> <i>Teacher: "She was a fantastic leader, and she never had a budget problem like this!"</i>	is already labeled as a kid who is incapable of doing anything. Eventually, the teacher compares her to Lulu, who managed to succeed in last year's festival without any obstacles. The scene illustrates the stereotypical identity that categorizes Lulu as a high category that is regarded by many people while Raya as a low category that is underestimated by many people.
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Based on these findings, to answer the first problem statement, it can be concluded that Raya was treated very poorly throughout her childhood by her surroundings. Starting from the father who behaved abusively all the time and the mother who was unable to act to help her directly. Even her surroundings treated

her like a strange delusional girl and her teachers regarded her as useless in doing her responsibilities. The trauma and stereotypes experienced by Raya are the result of her socio-cultural experiences.

4.2 Raya's Internal Struggles & Coping Mechanism

After finding the answer to the previous question, I will use the psychodynamic theory rooted in the theory proposed by Sigmund Freud to analyze Raya's internal struggles and coping mechanisms in dealing with her psychological problems. Once the analysis is complete, I will combine it with my findings that previously used socio-cultural theory. With that, I will answer the second question to find the relationship between norms and culture in line with the analysis using psychodynamic theory.

4.2.1 Internal Struggles

In exploring the character of Raya in the video game *A Space for the Unbound*, I explored the personality of a person named Nirmala who eventually formed a personality named Raya who was traumatized and marginalized by the society around her. When I played the video game and watched the gameplay of several other players through YouTube, I found that Raya had specific internal struggles such as emotional, vulnerable, lonely, and isolated. This chapter delves deeper into the findings that are directly related to what has been mentioned.

A. Emotional & Vulnerable

Throughout the story, emotional and vulnerable is the most dominant struggles that Raya has been through. It mostly portrayed through dialog, character expressions, and background music. As a child with deep trauma, such situations are often encountered through direct interaction and dialog. In the video game, there are many scenes that consistently show Raya being cornered by those around her. Not only that, but there are also several scenes where she is compared to others who are greater than her. It is things like this that make her vulnerable and often get emotional.

The first evidence that Raya has an emotional and fragile nature is shown at 3:16:02. In the scene, Raya has just gotten the fact that her beloved cat named Admiral was run over to death by her friend Erik. The scene and dialogue can be seen in the attachment below.

Table 4. 6 Description of Emotional & Vulnerable Struggles

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
Timestamp: 3:15:57 	<i>Atma: "Where's Admiral?!"</i> <i>Erik: "Get over it!"</i> <i>Erik: "Admiral is dead!"</i> <i>Erik: "DEAD!!!"</i> <i>Raya: "NOOOOOO!!!"</i>	Based on the scene, Raya was devastated by her loss. This is shown through Raya's stressed expression while holding

Timestamp: 3:16:02



her head. The writing in the dialog box uses capital letters on each letter, exaggerating the number of letters and punctuation marks to show Raya's condition that is down and emotionally triggered. The music used in the scene uses music that describes the tense situation between the three people. Erik who tried to cover up the death of Admiral was confronted by Atma and Raya for clarity. Until finally Erik admitted that he had killed Admiral with a defensive impression.

The second piece of evidence that shows an emotional and vulnerable personality is found in the situation where Madam Puspa compares Raya to others who are considered better than her. In that scene, Atma uses his ability to dig into Madam Puspa's memories to explore her relationship with Raya. Pieces of the scene can be seen through the following images.

Table 4. 7 Description of Emotional Struggles

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
 Timestamp: 5:13:53	<i>Madam Puspa: "You can't live like that, my dear. No wonder you can't convince other firework suppliers to get what you need, I bet Lucy could do it easily."</i>	When Atma was investigating about Raya past, he discovered the possibility that Madam Puspa had interacted with Raya. He finally uses his ability to enter other people's minds with his Magic Red Book. After entering Madam Puspa's mind, he saw Raya
 Timestamp: 5:14:07	<i>Raya: "...Please stop comparing me with Lulu."</i> <i>Madam Puspa: "Oh I know! It must be hard for you to be Committee"</i>	

	<i>President, right? How about you ask Lucy for help? She is always reliable on things like this.”</i> <i>Raya: “You think I’m not reliable?!”</i>	negotiating with Madam Puspa for fireworks for the festival. Madam Puspa, who seemed unsure of Raya, rejected her and compared her to Lulu, who was considered more reliable. At this, Raya's emotions build up and she uses her glitch power on Madam Puspa. Through this scene, Raya's emotional personality is further developed. It starts with Madam Puspa's words that she is unsure of Raya's abilities. This is a fairly common thing to express especially
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		since Raya rarely interacts with other people and the festival is quite a tough event for Raya. However, as a result of experiencing a lot of oppression, Raya became emotional and used her strength to punish Madam Puspa. It is this that causes her emotional personality to become more developed.
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B. Loneliness & Isolation

Another struggle that Raya's been through are loneliness and isolation, it is mostly depicted through embedded storytelling elements. Whether through dialog, background music or other visual elements. To understand Raya's lonely and isolated struggles, it is important to mention that Raya's personality is closely tied to Nirmala's personality as both personalities basically belong to the same body. Throughout the story, Nirmala is always portrayed as lonely. Her debt-ridden father

always scolds her for drawing too much and her mother is unable to defend her. Even at school, she was always considered a freak by her friends because of the tales she created. Some scenes that show her struggles can be seen through the evidence described below.

The first evidence of a lonely and isolated struggles is found in the part where Nirmala asks Atma about the most valuable treasure in his life. The scene can be seen at the following table.

Table 4. 8 Description of Raya Loneliness

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
 Timestamp: 6:44:36	<i>Nirmala: "What do you think the is your most precious treasure?"</i> <i>Atma: "Huh? Well..."</i> <i>Atma: "For a lot of people that's family"</i> <i>Atma: "Some people would answer friend too."</i> <i>Nirmala: "Ha. I have neither..."</i>	Nirmala, who was playing with Atma's collection of drink bottles, suddenly asked him about his most valuable treasure. Atma replied that for most people, family or friends are valuable treasures. Nirmala, who heard him replied that she didn't have either. Through the

	<i>Nirmala: “I don’t have any treasure to be proud of.”</i>	dialog, it explained that Nirmala is literally a very lonely person. She feels that she has nothing to be proud of. This is connected with Raya's character, who is indeed connected as another personality in one body.
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The second evidence that shows lonely and isolated struggles is found in the scene where Atma enters Raya's past through the memories of her friend Marin. In this scene, the reason why Raya or Nirmala is alone is explored more deeply. Pieces of the scene can be seen through the table below.

Table 4. 9 Description of Raya Being Isolated by The Bullies

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
Timestamp: 7:30:07	<i>Bullies: “Yo, Erik’s dating the weirdo!”</i> <i>Erik: “I-I’m not!”</i>	Atma enters a dimension that shows the past of Nirmala or Raya through Marin's memories. The place is very

	<i>Erik: "Ugh. Who would ever want to be with a girl like you?"</i> <i>Erik: "You freak!"</i>	dark and there is Raya sitting on the ground surrounded by Erik and other friends who bully her. Raya is colored all black, with only her silhouette outline visible, showing her oppressed and isolated position by her friends. The harsh dialogue spoken by Erik and his friends shows that Raya is just a weirdo girl who is isolated by the people around her.
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4.2.2 Coping Mechanism

Dealing with deep trauma and stereotypes from childhood, Raya has her own way of protecting herself. Based on psychodynamic theory rooted in the theory proposed by Sigmund Freud, unconscious actions often stem from early life experiences to impact human behavior and mentality. In the following section, I will analyze and discover Raya's coping mechanism that is formed from the socio-cultural aspect. While playing the game *A Space for the Unbound* and watching gameplay videos from other players through YouTube channels, I was able to find

three methods of coping mechanisms that Raya has. Among others, control the environment, split personality traits, and withdraw. These three will be explained further below.

A. Control The Environment

As a character who is oppressed, lonely, and alienated. Nirmala is also a character who has a very unstable psychological state. As a result of this condition, a new personality is created that is stronger and inversely proportional to her original personality. The personality is named Raya, which eventually becomes an undeniable character, and no one can resist it.

The way the character is conveyed can be seen in several scenes where Raya often commands others. Although there are some scenes that show from the perspective of someone other than Raya. The first evidence of Raya controlled the environment can be seen in the following further elaboration.

Table 4. 10 Scene Description of Raya's Power to Control

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
 Timestamp: 1:23:40	<i>Gang Leader: "Didn't I tell you to go awa-"</i> <i>Gang Leader: "Uh-oh! Miss Raya?"</i> <i>Raya: "Hello!"</i>	Based on the dialog, it can be seen that Atma is in a world ruled by Raya. Starting from the dialog that was cut off due to the Gang Leader who was surprised to see Raya behind

	<i>Gang Leader: "What are you doing here?"</i> <i>Raya: "Well, Atma and I are going to the cinema, and you're in our way."</i> <i>Gang Leader: "A- Alright! Let's move out, boys!"</i>	Atma, which shows a person's submission to Raya. In the dialog "Uh-oh, Miss Raya?" it can be seen that the use of the word "Miss" refers to respect for women who have a higher position. This shows that Raya has a high position above the thugs. Furthermore, the dialog "Well, Atma and I are going to the cinema and you're in our way." shows that Raya ordered them indirectly to leave immediately and, in the end, they quickly left the place.
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The second piece of evidence I present after this comes from the same scene as the evidence in emotional and vulnerable. Set when Erik admits that he killed the Admiral, Raya kills Erik. The scene can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. 11 Scene Description of Raya's Power to Vanish Erik

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
Timestamp: 3:38:12	<i>Erik: "I should've ridden more carefully, it's my fault that your cat-"</i> <i>Raya: "Shut up."</i> <i>Erik: "H-Huh?"</i>	Upon hearing Erik's confession, Raya's emotions were ignited, and she used her powers on Erik. Turning him into a gust of dust showed Raya's absolute power. In this moment, Raya is shown to be completely invincible and in control of her world.
Timestamp: 3:38:19		

Further evidence below shows the embedded storytelling element in the scene.

Table 4. 12 Scene Description Explaining Raya's Power & Spreading Fear

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
Timestamp: 3:38:32	<i>Atma: "R-Raya?"</i> <i>Atma: "What... What did you do? Where's Erik?"</i> <i>Raya: "He is dead."</i>	Through this scene, it can be seen that Raya's character development, which increasingly looks



Timestamp: 3:38:40

like a God, is further developed using more technical aspects. The part that highlights Atma is depicted using a high angle and the table around Atma is shown moving slowly around him. The surprised expression, the animated table, and the high angle that highlights one character, indicate that the character is in a position of trepidation and fear of the events he is experiencing. Atma is afraid of Raya as the ruler of the artificial world she has created.

In the part that highlights Raya, Raya is depicted using the middle angle, however, the

		transition from Atma's scene to Raya uses a transition from bottom to top. With Raya's position with her back to the player. This shows the position of Raya who feels innocent of what she has done and shows her God-like power.
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B. Split Personality

Atma, who is still searching for clues about Raya, entered a dimension that once again showed her past and her inner struggles. There, it can be seen that Raya is no longer strong enough to face the harsh reality and decides to separate her personality from Nirmala. Scenes that show more details can be seen as follows.

Table 4. 13 Scene Description of Raya Splitted Her Personality

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
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 Timestamp: 7:48:33	<i>Raya: “*sob* Please, just go!”</i> <i>Nirmala: “...”</i> <i>Nirmala: “Hey, don’t say that.”</i> <i>Nirmala: “It’s me, I’m you. Don’t push me away.”</i>	Receiving a lot of pressure from her parents and the surrounding environment that continuously pressured her made Raya overwhelm and split her personality between Raya and Nirmala.
 Timestamp: 7:48:45	<i>Nirmala: “I can’t live without you, nor you without me.”</i>	Raya is depicted with her hat off, hair loose and sitting weakly on the left side, representing her emotional state, which is broken and vulnerable.
 Timestamp: 7:48:59	<i>Nirmala: “We are stronger together. The only way we can get through this is as a team.”</i>	Meanwhile, Nirmala stands on the right side with her hat and hair neatly arranged, representing her optimistic and unyielding feelings.
 Timestamp: 7:49:23	<i>Nirmala: “Just like what Atma said, in the storm you’ll find...”</i> <i>Raya: “No.”</i> <i>Raya: “I want to be a normal girl. With good</i>	In the scene, Nirmala is trying to persuade Raya not to give up on her situation and get up to overcome her fears.

	<i>grades, and a family and friends that love me.”</i> <i>Raya: “Not a lonely, delusional freak who killed her only real friend.</i> <i>Raya: “You caused this storm.”</i> <i>Raya: “It happened because of your stupid idea to cross the river alone.”</i> <i>Raya: “It happened because you tried to involve him in writing your pointless story.”</i> <i>Raya: “Atma drowned because of you.”</i> <i>Raya: “I don’t need you.”</i>	Even the background used colors with warm tones to illustrate that there is still hope. However, Raya, who felt the opposite, rejected it outright and refused to hold her hand. In the last cut of the scene, it can be seen that the scene was taken using a high angle that shows the posture and the two characters. With this angle, Raya's posture looks higher than Nirmala which shows that Raya is determined to be stronger than before. Meanwhile, Nirmala, who looks lower, is unable to take any action because of Raya's dominating condition. Even the background around her turns dark, which shows the
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		dominance of Raya's strong desire.
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C. Withdrawal

Having an environment that did not support her in any matter, Raya became increasingly inferior to herself. In the face of this reality, Raya withdrew into another dimension of her own creation without being haunted by the shadows of others. The scene below will provide a more complete description.

Table 4. 14 Scene Description of Raya Withdrawal to The Reality

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
 Timestamp: 8:46:51	<i>Atma: "Raya I'm here."</i> <i>Raya: "You again."</i> <i>Raya: "..."</i> <i>Raya: "I'm tired..."</i> <i>Atma: "I can just sit here and listen. We don't have to do anything special."</i> <i>Atma: "Is there anything you want?"</i>	Despite living in a world that she herself had created, it was not able to make Raya's life change for the better. Instead, what happened in the world that she created was much worse than what she thought. It even gets

	<i>Raya: "To be alone..."</i> <i>Atma: "Besides that, 'cus I'm not going anywhere."</i> <i>Raya: "... I want everything to go away. I don't want to do this anymore. I just want to sleep forever.</i> <i>Atma: "I want to help you, Raya"</i> <i>Raya: "Why?"</i> <i>Atma: "Because I care about you."</i> <i>Raya: "It doesn't matter. Your concern doesn't matter."</i> <i>Raya: "Everything is fake. Even you."</i> <i>Raya: "You are nothing. But a memory."</i> <i>Atma: "I know."</i>	worse every time Raya gets rid of something that was not good for her. With the situation getting worse, she hid in a remote dimension that she created. The scene shows Atma who finally managed to find Raya's hiding place. There, Raya was seen lying on the bed facing the window and did not look Atma's face at all. Atma is symbolized literally as a memory to remind Raya's true self, while Raya's position, which is facing away from Atma, shows that Raya did not care and did not want to accept her true self. This shows her
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		withdrawal as a form of coping mechanism in dealing with her conflict.
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Based on these findings, it can be seen that the psychodynamic theory rooted through the theory proposed by Sigmund Freud is able to provide appropriate answers. Psychodynamic theory explains that early experiences that have occurred to a person have a significant impact on behavior and mental processes. Nirmala's life full of torment and bullying from her surroundings had a significant impact on her mental process, creating a new personality named Raya. Reflecting on what happened in Nirmala's life, Raya threw away her true identity and created a dimension full of chaos. Through this explanation, it can be seen that internal problems and coping mechanisms rooted in trauma and stigma owned by Raya are a product of the socio-cultural environment around her.

4.3 Cultural Norms & Values

In this section, I will continue to answer question number two. However, in this section I will focus on the cultural norms and values found in video games, which consist of open communication and empathy among the people. At the end of this section, I will combine the findings with the results found in the previous sub-chapter to form a complete answer to the second question.

4.3.1 Open Communication

As a video game set in Indonesia during the '90s, it naturally adopts the culture and values of that era. The '90s era commonly were considered as an ideal time for community building and open direct communication before the development of technology and internet. This shows that at that time, people often socialized and interacted directly with at least their neighbors around their homes. This is one kind of element that put in this video game. It can be seen through the following table below.

Table 4. 15 Scene Description of Direct Open Communication as Ideal Norm

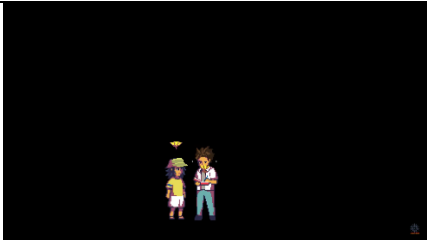
Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
 Timestamp: 17:24	<i>Nirmala's Mother: "I don't know yet. I want to talk to them about all of this, but I really don't know what to say."</i> <i>Neighbor: "Well, why don't we go to the meeting a little early, and we can talk about it on the way?"</i>	The situation tells the story of Nirmala, whose parents found out that she was skipping school and locking herself in her room. Her mother, feeling worried and confused about how to deal with the situation, told her neighbor about it. The neighbor responded

	<i>Nirmala's Mother: "Yes, yes, that's a good idea.</i> <i>Thank You!</i> <i>Neighbor: "Don't worry, you can share your problems with me. That's what neighbors are for, right?"</i>	positively and even invited the mother to talk further about the problem she was experiencing. This shows ideal cultural norms and values.
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4.3.2 Empathy

With the existence of open communication within society, feelings of empathy and concern for one another arise. This is also present in this video game, where Atma represents the symbol of empathy within society. This can be seen in the scene below.

Table 4. 16 Scene Description of Empathy as Ideal Norm

Scenes	Dialogues	Arguments
 Timestamp: 6:13		In the game, Atma has an ability called <i>Spacedive</i>, which aims to help people around her who have underlying problems

		hidden behind their feelings. By using this ability, Atma helps people around her by diving into their feelings and digging deeper into the problems they are experiencing. This is shown as one of the main elements in the video game. The presence of this element makes Atma, as the main character who can understand the feelings of those around him, a symbol of empathy in society at that time.
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Based on these findings, it can be seen that this video game has ideal cultural norms and values. The direct open communication between the mother and her neighbors, as well as Atma's ability to understand and solve the problems of those around him, symbolizes empathy or mutual concern. However, in answering the

second question, I found contradictory results between Raya's behavior and the ideal cultural norms and values.

Based on the answers in the previous subsection, it can be seen that Raya, who has several internal issues including emotional vulnerability, loneliness, and isolation, copes with them through mechanisms such as controlling the environment in her virtual world, splitting her personality, and withdrawing from reality. Meanwhile, in this sub-chapter, it is found that the setting used contains cultural norms and ideal values, where society communicates openly, and the community serves as a place for growth and mutual empathy. With that, it can be concluded that the second problem has conflicting results between Raya's behavior and the cultural norms and values that exist in video games.

In summary, after conducting an analysis and presenting my findings in this section, I was finally able to provide definite answers to the questions I had raised, aided by the theories I used as the basis for this research. This video game has a fairly ideal social background, considering that it adopts the era in Indonesia in the 90s, which had good social interaction. However, this is not the case for Nirmala, who faces unpleasant treatment from her surroundings, including her immediate family and friends. These actions lead to the creation of a dark character named Raya, who dominates throughout the video game. With Raya's appearance in the video game, the ideal setting becomes contradictory to the character portrayed by Raya.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In this study, I used a video game, which is a work of modern literature, to examine the socio-cultural and psychological aspects of characters. The video game used is titled *A Space for the Unbound*. A story-based video game centered on social life, mental health, and self-acceptance. To study this video game, I used the perspective of Raya as the antagonist and central problem. Through this, I identified two problem statements: the treatment Raya received from her environment and the misalignment between Raya's traits align with the norms and cultural values of society. To support the foundation of this research, I used two main theories, such as the social-cultural theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky, supported by trauma and stereotype theories to find the society behavior. Meanwhile, to support the research on Raya's psychodynamics, the author included the psychodynamic theory proposed by Sigmund Freud. In this research, I included several screenshots to facilitate data collection and analysis. The data I collected consisted of elements from story-based video games, including dialogue, image perspective, colors, and background music.

By analyzing the actions of the parents and the surrounding environment in treating Raya using the socio-cultural theoretical foundation proposed by Lev Vygotsky as well as trauma and stereotypes. This analysis targets to find the origin

of the causes of Raya's character formation. Through this exploration, there is a deeper knowledge of the causes of trauma and stereotypes that affect Raya's psychology.

To find these answers, I used two perspectives through the point of view of parental treatment and the point of view of the social environment which includes the bullies' friends and teachers. It was found that Raya's parents were unable to provide a good social environment, where the father always used violence in educating Raya while the mother was unable to provide direct protection and presence to Raya. The same applies to the external environment which includes bullies and teachers. The bully who always put mental pressure on Raya and isolated her from society while the teacher who always compared her to people who were better than her, categorized her as someone who was useless to anyone. Through these findings, it can be seen that the socio-cultural aspects surrounding Raya produce the products of trauma and stereotypes that come from her parents and also the external environment around her.

In analyzing the internal struggles and coping mechanisms experienced by Raya, the use of psychodynamic theory provides significant relevance in this study. The theory explains that early experiences have an impact on behavior and mental processes. Looking at the causes of Raya's treatment that have been found in the previous questions, I can find several internal struggles experienced by Raya including emotional, vulnerable, lonely, and isolated. Emotional and vulnerable struggles can be seen through scenes where Raya often feels cornered by the

environment around her. Making her mentally vulnerable and emotionally ignited to use her power on people. The struggle of loneliness and isolation can be seen through scenes that show her past as Nirmala who was always cornered by bullies to feel lonely. In fact, there are several scenes where Raya literally states that she has no one around her and feels lonely.

In the face of the harsh reality faced by Raya, some of the coping mechanisms include controlling the environment, separating personalities, and withdrawing. Living in a world of her own design allows Raya to control the environment she has built for herself. The real state of herself as Nirmala forced Raya to separate herself from her true identity and remove it. After having a life that she controls, things didn't go as planned and she ended up pulling herself into another dimension that she created.

After successfully analyzed Raya's internal struggles and coping mechanisms, it is also important to analyze the cultural norms and values present in the video game. In this analysis, it was found that open communication and empathy are some of the ideal cultural norms and values in line with the context at that time. This is supported by direct evidence where the mother, who was confused in dealing with Raya and communicating with her neighbors, received positive responses. Additionally, Atma, who possessed the *Spacedive* ability, could understand and resolve the issues being suppressed by those around her. Therefore, it became a symbol of empathy and care for one another within the video game.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that internal struggles and coping mechanisms possessed by Raya are not in line with the cultural norms and values that exist in video games. Cultural norms and community values have a fairly ideal context characterized by open communication and empathy. Meanwhile, Raya acts by controlling her own world to the point of withdrawing from reality.

5.2 Suggestions

The writer of this research would like to provide some suggestions to several parties which include:

5.2.1 For General Readers

This research provides valuable knowledge through Raya's character and the aspects that cause it. It provides a deep understanding of social life that includes aspects of the cause and effect. Readers can learn how the socio-cultural aspects around them are always related to the psychological aspects of a person and can affect behavior and mental processes in a person. So that they can consider all the words and actions that can change a person. Through the results of in-depth analysis, readers can also learn the elements in the video game that symbolize a situation or situation in it.

5.2.2 For Future Researchers

To expand this research, researchers can explore the social and psychological aspects in more depth. Future researchers can deepen research in the complexity of social life that produces trauma and stereotypes, especially when

bullying occurs. By conducting research on Raya's character, it is hoped that other researchers will conduct research on Nirmala's character and use the results of this study as a comparison. Moreover, the author of this study hopes that there are other researchers who can deepen the social and psychological topics contained in this video game and also the elements of the video game that symbolize a situation in it.

5.2.3 For English Study Program

In the English Study Program, students can explore Raya's characterization and social treatment in more detail. By analyzing Raya's character and psychology as well as her social treatment and impact, they can gain in-depth knowledge of the social system especially in the background of the 90s. Moreover, they can also analyze through video game elements and techniques that illustrate social systems, norms, culture, and views on psychology. Through in-depth research and critical discussion, students can uncover the social and psychological aspects that occur in this video game, especially set in the 90s.

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