

**EXPLORING THE STRUGGLE OF IAN LIGHTFOOT TO
OVERCOME INFERIORITY FEELINGS IN THE MOVIE
ONWARD (2020): AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY STUDY**

A FINAL PROJECT

Presented as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement

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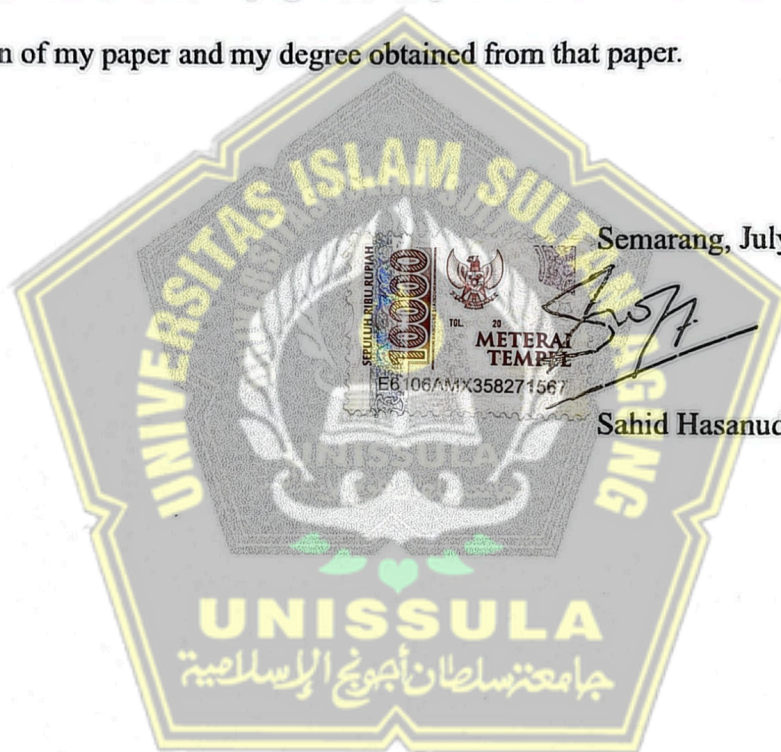
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STATEMENT OF WORK'S ORIGINALITY

Hereby, I honestly declare that the undergraduate thesis I wrote does not contain the works or part of the works of other people, except those which were cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should. If my statement is not valid in the future, I absolutely agree to accept an academic sanction in the form of revocation of my paper and my degree obtained from that paper.



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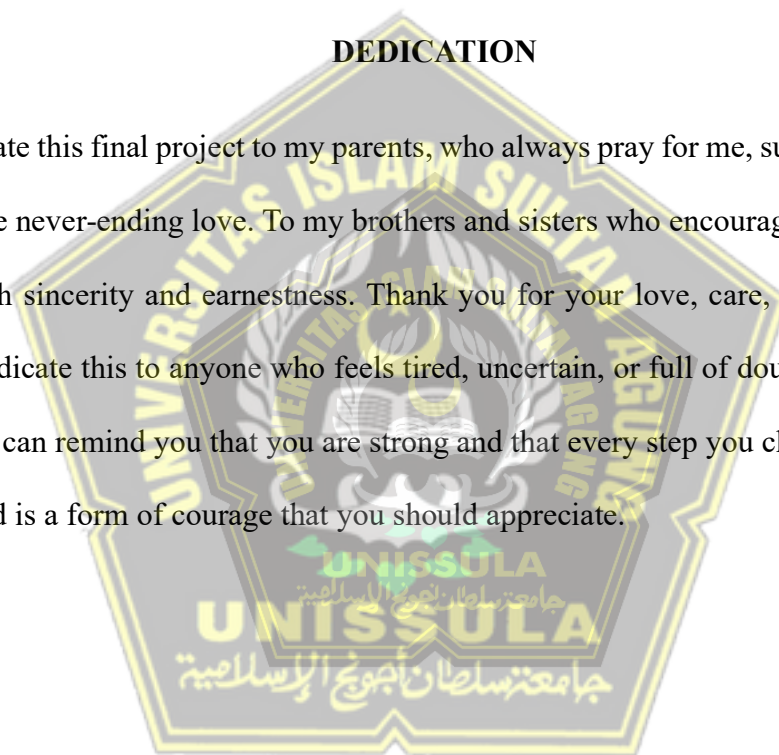
MOTTO AND DEDICATION

MOTTO

Even if you're afraid, keep going. Make your choice with confidence and believe
you can do it.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this final project to my parents, who always pray for me, support me, and give me never-ending love. To my brothers and sisters who encourage me and help me with sincerity and earnestness. Thank you for your love, care, and support. I also dedicate this to anyone who feels tired, uncertain, or full of doubt. I hope this project can remind you that you are strong and that every step you choose to move forward is a form of courage that you should appreciate.



ABSTRACT

Ayub, Sahid Hasanudin. 30802100042. Exploring the Struggle of Ian Lightfoot to Overcome Inferiority Feelings in the movie *Onward* (2020): An Individual Psychology study. Final Project of Language, Literature, and Culture Faculty. English Literature Program. Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang. Advisor: Diyah Fitri Wulandari, S.S., M.Hum.

The movie *Onward* presents more than just a fantasy adventure. Behind the story of magic and the search for a father, the inner struggle of a teenager named Ian Lightfoot, who felt he was not capable enough, became the main focus. This study explored Ian Lightfoot's feelings of inferiority and the forms of compensation he showed based on Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology theory. Using a qualitative method, data were collected from scenes, dialogues, monologues, narrations, and Ian Lightfoot's journey throughout the movie.

In analyzing the data, five essential principles of Adler's individual psychology were identified: fictional finalism, the style of life, the creative self, striving for superiority, and social interest. This study also explains the forms of Ian Lightfoot's compensation toward his feelings of inferiority as they unfold throughout the movie, including stubbornness, rebellious attitude, disrespect, courage, challenging attitude, self-confidence, and collaboration.

The findings revealed that Ian Lightfoot applied all five principles in facing his inferiority. Meanwhile, the form of compensation that Ian Lightfoot showed at first tended to be unhealthy, marked by stubbornness, rebellious attitude, and disrespect toward others. Gradually, Ian Lightfoot began to show healthier compensations such as courage, challenging attitude, growing self-confidence, and a willingness to collaborate. This process demonstrated that feelings of inferiority could become a foundation for positive psychological growth when approached with awareness and the use of one's potential.

Keywords : Movie *Onward*, Ian Lightfoot, inferiority feelings, compensation, Adler's individual psychology.

INTISARI

Ayub, Sahid Hasanudin. 30802100042. Mengeksplorasi Perjuangan Ian Lightfoot Mengatasi Perasaan Rendah Diri dalam Film *Onward* (2020): Sebuah Studi Psikologi Individu. Tugas Akhir Fakultas Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya. Program Studi Sastra Inggris. Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang. Pembimbing: Diyah Fitri Wulandari, S.S., M.Hum.

Film *Onward* tidak hanya menyajikan petualangan fantasi. Di balik kisah tentang sihir dan pencarian sosok ayah, pergumulan batin seorang remaja bernama Ian Lightfoot yang merasa dirinya tidak cukup mampu menjadi fokus utama. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi perasaan inferioritas Ian Lightfoot dan bentuk kompensasi yang ditunjukkannya berdasarkan teori Psikologi Individual Alfred Adler. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari adegan, dialog, monolog, narasi, dan perjalanan Ian Lightfoot sepanjang film.

Dalam analisis data, diidentifikasi lima prinsip penting psikologi individu Adler: finalisme fiksi, gaya hidup, jati diri kreatif, keinginan untuk menjadi superior, dan minat sosial. Studi ini juga menjelaskan bentuk kompensasi Ian Lightfoot terhadap perasaan inferioritasnya yang terungkap sepanjang film, termasuk sikap keras kepala, sikap memberontak, rasa tidak hormat, keberanian, sikap menantang, rasa percaya diri, dan kolaborasi.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ian Lightfoot menerapkan kelima prinsip tersebut dalam menghadapi inferioritasnya. Sementara itu, bentuk kompensasi yang ditunjukkan Ian Lightfoot pada awalnya cenderung tidak sehat, ditandai dengan sikap keras kepala, sikap memberontak, dan rasa tidak hormat terhadap orang lain. Lambat laun, Ian Lightfoot mulai menunjukkan kompensasi yang lebih sehat seperti keberanian, sikap menantang, rasa percaya diri yang tumbuh, dan kemauan untuk berkolaborasi. Proses ini menunjukkan bahwa perasaan inferioritas dapat menjadi landasan bagi pertumbuhan psikologis yang positif jika disikapi dengan kesadaran dan penggunaan potensi diri.

Kata kunci: Film *Onward*, Ian Lightfoot, perasaan rendah diri, kompensasi, psikologi individu Adler.

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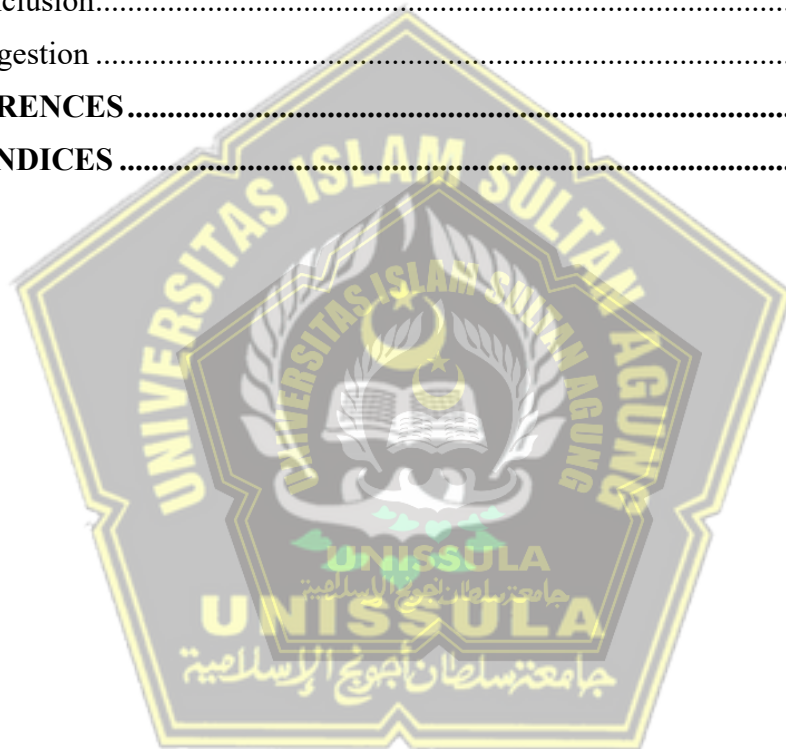
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature is a storytelling art that emphasizes the beauty of language. Literary works exist as duplicates that reflect human life itself. Human life becomes the material of literary psychology research, and humans are characters who experience various psychological aspects, including conflicts in life, as well as what humans do, such as saying, acting, expressing, and thinking in society. This is in line with Arjun Dubey's statement that literature is a reflection of society (Arjun Dubey 84-85). Various events that occur in society are reflected in various types of literature such as prose, songs, fictional stories, plays, movies, and others, we know about at a glance. It depicts what and how a society lives and usually reflects the events that occur in society. However, gaining a deeper understanding of humans and their complexities, as shown in the literature, is not easy. Where we know God creates humans in this world with extraordinary emotions, reason, and thought. This also makes humans the most perfect of all creatures in the world. In addition, God also created humans with nations and various tribes, ethnicities, and forms of regional character, where each human being lives, and the social conditions of each human being affect each stage of life, starting from their desires, emotions, and efforts in living life.

The feelings of every human being arise when humans try to survive, and other people and their environment always influence humans as social creatures to

go through every stage of life and fulfill their needs through compensatory efforts for the inferiority they experience to survive through difficult times. In line with what Adler said about inferiority in individual psychology, he said that every individual is born with a weak and low body. Feelings of inferiority arise from the shortcomings possessed by each individual which shows their tendency to seek perfection (Feist, Jess & Feist 70). And basically, every individual has their own goals and ways to achieve them. In this world, humans are born with different physical characteristics and abilities (Adler 116–122). On the other hand, feelings of inferiority are often triggered by the differences that exist among individuals, especially when they are amplified by social media in the modern era. Posts about other people's achievements, wealth, or abilities can make individuals, especially teenagers, feel inadequate. Daily exposure to beauty trends, fashion, and luxury goods often reinforces these feelings. This sense of inadequacy and vulnerability often drives people to strive for achievement and excellence (Rahmi et al.33). However, we are born with the ability to strive, and this effort comes from feelings of inferiority and a desire to overcome challenges. The result depends on each individual's determination and actions (Normaningtyas and Wulandari 287–289).

Individual psychology also appears in literary works through characters created by researchers who can be considered or reflected as humans in real life. One of the movies that can be analyzed using Alfred Adler's work on individual psychology theory is *Onward*. It is a 2020 animated cartoon movie from the United States, an urban fantasy adventure movie created or produced by Pixar Animation Studios and later released by Walt Disney Pictures. Set in a suburban fantasy world,

Onward (2020) tells the story of two teenage elf brothers named Ian Lightfoot and his brother, Barley Lightfoot. They embark on a magical adventure to find the Phoenix Gem, which is said to bring their late father back to life, albeit only temporarily. As with other adventures, Ian Lightfoot and Barley have to go through difficult times that make Ian Lightfoot's sense of inferiority appear such as when Ian Lightfoot is in driving class, remembering his father, and when he is just learning magic, then Ian Lightfoot's sense of inferiority appears again when he wants to cross a deep chasm and so on. On the way, Ian Lightfoot, with feelings of inferiority, which, when feelings of inferiority arise, affect Ian Lightfoot in overcoming various obstacles. Ultimately, Barley consistently encourages Ian Lightfoot to overcome his feelings of inferiority, illustrating how support and social connections play a vital role in confronting self-doubt and uncovering one's true potential. This movie highlights the significance of interpersonal relationships in helping individuals navigate emotional challenges and develop self-confidence. Furthermore, *Onward* (2020) offers a profound portrayal of how the struggle with inferiority can lead to meaningful personal transformation, making it a valuable lens for understanding a person's journey of self-growth and overcoming feelings of inferiority.

In the movie *Onward* (2020), Ian Lightfoot's journey shows how he transforms his feelings of inferiority into motivation to improve his situation. The movie effectively illustrates the steps Ian Lightfoot takes, both directly and indirectly, to achieve his goals. Interestingly, previous studies have analyzed *Onward* using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. For example, Rika

Novilia focuses on how Ian Lightfoot fulfilled all five levels in Maslow's hierarchy and eventually reached self-actualization (Novilia 81-83). In contrast, others have applied Adler's theory to different films. For example, Igo Putra Eka Firmansyah focuses only on the compensation of the main character (Firmansyah 43-44). Meanwhile, Siti Naillul Izzah highlights feelings of inferiority caused by both physical deficiency and family situation (Izzah et al. 434). Therefore, in analyzing Ian Lightfoot's developmental challenges in the movie *Onward*, the researcher aims to apply Adler's individual psychology theory to uncover its essential principles and explore how Ian Lightfoot compensates for his feelings of inferiority. By focusing on Ian Lightfoot as the main character in *Onward* (2020), the study seeks to highlight the concept of inferiority and examine whether his compensatory actions are positive or negative.

B. Problem Formulations

To explore Ian Lightfoot's inferiority in the movie *Onward* (2020) with the theory of individual psychology, this final project identifies problem formulation as follows:

1. How are Adler's essential principles of individual psychology used to analyze Ian Lightfoot's feelings of inferiority in the movie *Onward* (2020)?
2. How does Ian Lightfoot's compensation toward his feelings of inferiority unfold in the movie *Onward* (2020)?

C. Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study lies in its focus on analyzing Ian Lightfoot's inferiority using the essential principles of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology.

One of Adler's principles, birth order, is not included in the analysis due to the lack of clear evidence related to Ian's position in the family as depicted in the movie. This study also examines Ian's form of compensation during the stage of feeling inferior, particularly those that lead to positive outcomes..

D. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem formulation above, this study sets several objectives that will be used as a focus to answer the problems that have been identified. The objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

1. To analyze the essential principles of individual psychology from Alfred Adler's theory reflected by Ian Lightfoot in the inferiority stage as the main character in the movie *Onward* (2020).
2. To explain the unfolding process of Ian Lightfoot's compensation for his inferiority as reflected in the movie *Onward* (2020).

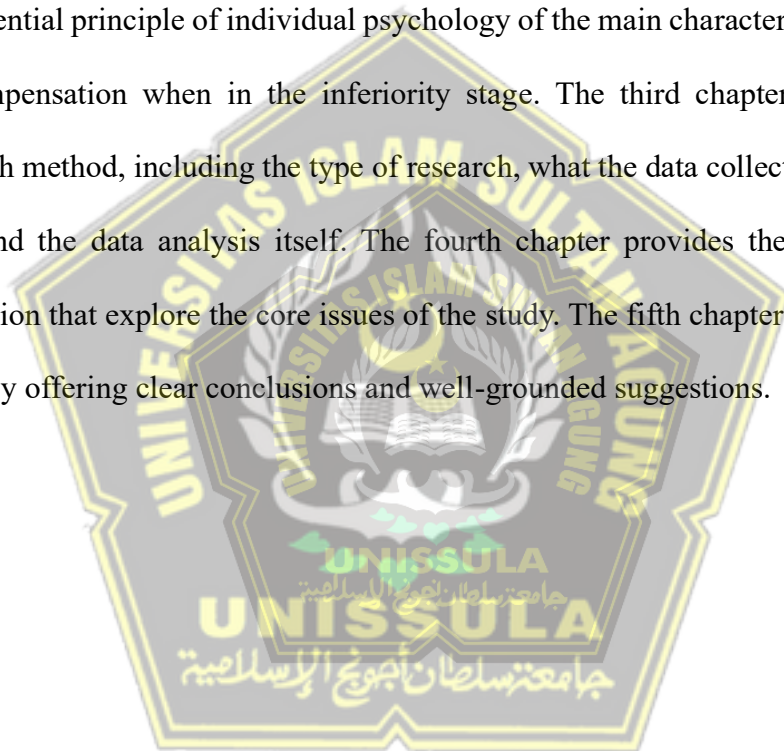
E. Significances of the Study

The results of this study are intended to be useful in the following ways:

1. This study aims to assist individuals in gaining a deeper understanding of Adler's theory of individual psychology, particularly in navigating the stages of inferiority and finding ways to overcome it.
2. This study can also serve as a reference for English Literature students at Sultan Agung Islamic University, Faculty of Language, Literature, and Culture, examining literary works that deal with individual psychology.

F. Organization of the Study

This final project is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presents information related to the background of the study, problem formulation, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and overall study overview. The second chapter details the literature references, including the synopsis of the movie “*Onward* (2020)” and “Alfred Adler's Theory of Individual Psychology” regarding the essential principle of individual psychology of the main character and his forms of compensation when in the inferiority stage. The third chapter explains the research method, including the type of research, what the data collection process is like, and the data analysis itself. The fourth chapter provides the findings and discussion that explore the core issues of the study. The fifth chapter concludes the study by offering clear conclusions and well-grounded suggestions.



CHAPTER II

REVIEWS OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Synopsis of *Onward* (2020) Movie

Onward is a 2020 animated movie from Pixar, distributed by Disney, that tells a touching and adventurous story of brotherhood. The movie was nominated for Best Animated Feature at the Academy Awards and Best Motion Picture – Animated at the Golden Globe Awards. The story takes place in a world that was once full of magic, but over time, magic was forgotten. Ian Lightfoot, a shy teenager, lives with his older brother Barley and their mother Laurel. On his sixteenth birthday, Ian receives a gift left by his late father: a magic staff, a letter, and a spell to bring their father back for one day. When they attempt the spell, only the lower half of their father returns. Determined to complete the spell, Ian and Barley set off on a journey to find the Phoenix Gem.

They continue their journey in Barley's beloved van, Guinevere. Their first destination is the Manticore's tavern, which Barley remembers as a place full of quests and adventure. However, Ian is surprised to find that it has become a busy family restaurant. After Barley reminds the Manticore of who he used to be, he becomes frustrated and accidentally sets fire to the restaurant. As the flames spread, Ian quickly rescues the half of their father's body and gets them out safely. Fortunately, Barley manages to grab a map that points them to the Phoenix Gem. Meanwhile, Laurel, who discovers that her sons have gone on a quest, begins to

search for them. Along the way, she encounters the Manticore again. From her, Laurel learns that the Phoenix Gem is protected by a dangerous curse. The two then team up to stop the curse and help Ian and Barley.

Throughout their journey, Ian gradually learns to use magic and begins to grow more confident. They face many obstacles, including a gang of tiny biker fairies, police pursuit, and even crossing an invisible chasm using only belief and magic. During these trials, Ian and Barley argue but eventually reconcile and continue their journey with a renewed sense of trust. Ian comes to realize that all the things he wished to do with his father had actually been experienced with Barley, who had always been by his side.

After finally retrieving the Phoenix Gem, a curse is unleashed, forming a giant dragon made from debris around their school. Their mother and the Manticore arrive just in time to help fight the creature. Together, they collaborate to battle the dragon, Laurel and the Manticore hold it off, Barley makes way for the final spell, and Ian uses all the magic he has learned to protect them. In a moment of deep understanding, Ian decides to let Barley have the opportunity to say goodbye to their father. Although Ian never gets to meet him face to face, he gains something even more meaningful: a deeper appreciation for his brother.

In the end, life begins to change for everyone. The Manticore returns to her adventurous roots, the fairies rediscover their ability to fly, and magic begins to find its way back into the world. Ian shares his journey with confidence in a school presentation. As a gift, he gives Barley a new van to replace the destroyed

Guinevere. Barley happily names it Guinevere the Second, and the two brothers drive off together.

B. Related Literature

B.1. Individual Psychology

Individual psychology, derived from the Latin words "individuum," meaning "indivisible," and "psychologia," meaning "study of the soul", is a concept developed by Alfred Adler to emphasize the importance of understanding the individual as a whole and unique being. In Adler's view, individual psychology is the branch of psychology that studies how individuals struggle to overcome feelings of inferiority and how they strive for superiority or perfection (Watts, 125). The individual remains in a zone, perhaps also influenced by his self-esteem or social fears. Adler also believed that every individual has a basic drive. That drive is what drives individuals to achieve their own goals and make their lives relevant. The individual responds with a wide variety of circumstances or challenges on his or her part (Adler 11-12).

Building on this understanding, Adler emphasized that people's behavior is influenced by their life goals and the need to establish relationships with others. For example, a child who feels inferior due to poor academic performance may strive to excel in other areas such as sports or art. Through these efforts, the child seeks to prove their worth to themselves and others, showing that they have meaningful abilities and potential (Tarzian et al. 6-8). Adler's individual psychology theory contains some important principles to determine whether each individual's feelings of inferiority are directed

negatively or positively. Each of these principles will be further elaborated in the following sub-chapters, beginning with the concept of inferiority feelings.

B.1.1. Inferiority Feelings

Inferiority feelings are one of the key concepts developed by Alfred Adler in his theory of individual psychology. According to Adler, feelings of inferiority are feelings of inadequacy or lack of self-worth experienced by every individual at some point in their lives. These feelings often emerge from childhood when individuals begin to compare themselves to others or when they face challenges that seem difficult to overcome. Adler argued that these feelings, although seemingly negative, can actually be powerful drivers for personal growth and development if addressed positively (Adler 75-77).

Other than that, according to Manaster and Corsini, feelings of inferiority are the basic motivation that drives humans to develop and achieve perfection. Adler believed that every individual is born with a feeling of imperfection, which means that this feeling of inferiority is universal and is caused by physical deficiencies or abilities compared to others (Manaster, Guy J. Corsini 15). And several principles of individual psychology that influence the stage of inferiority feelings include fictional finalism, style of life, their striving for superiority and creative self-principles, and most importantly, the principle of social interest.

1. Fictional Finalism

The first principle is Fictional Finalism. In our daily lives, we often set big goals or dreams that motivate us to keep moving forward, even though they may not be entirely realistic. Alfred Adler referred to this concept as fictional finalism. In general, fictional finalism is a goal or ideal created by individuals, which gives direction and meaning to their lives even though it may not be based entirely on reality. This concept highlights how humans form an idealized vision of the future, which serves as motivation for their current actions and behaviors.

According to Adler, every individual has a fictional finalism to which they aspire, such as being successful, loved, or respected. Although these goals may not be fully attainable or may not even be real, they play an important role in directing one's behavior and decisions (Dr. Nidhi Malik 5). For example, a person may have a goal to become a great and respected leader, even though they do not yet have all the qualities or situations in place. However, this belief can drive them to work hard, learn, and develop the skills necessary to get closer to that goal.

Therefore, fictional finalism is an important concept in Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory that explains how a person's future goals and ideals influence behavior and decisions about their styles of life and creative self. This concept emphasizes that individuals are not only influenced by their past but also by their view of the future (Manaster, Guy J. Corsini 14).

2. The Styles of Life

The second principle is The Styles of Life, according to Alfred Adler, which refers to a unique and distinctive pattern that describes how a person adapts to their environment, faces life's challenges, and achieves their goals. This concept emphasizes that each individual has a specific way of interpreting their experiences, developing attitudes towards life, and setting the goals they pursue (Tarzian et al. 6-8). And the styles of life can be seen from an individual's personality, where there are four personality types. Alfred Adler identified four basic personality types: the ruling type tends to be aggressive and dominant, using their energy to overcome obstacles with the potential to harm themselves. The second type is the learning type, which is sensitive and tends to depend on others, prone to anxiety, and obsession. The third is the avoiding type, who has low energy and tends to withdraw, possibly even experiencing psychosis. The fourth is the socially useful type, who is socially healthy with adequate interests, and able to provide support without being too self-focused (Schultz and Schultz 115).

3. The Creative Self

The third principle is The Creative Self. In Alfred Adler's theory of individual psychology, the concept of the creative self is one of the most important and innovative aspects. The creative self refers to an individual's unique ability to shape and direct their lives according to their personal goals and aspirations. Therefore, everyone has an innate capacity to creatively

interpret and respond to their life experiences, allowing them to actively shape their identity and life path.

According to Adler, creative self-concept is an individual's ability to create meaning and purpose in their lives and choose their own ways to achieve them. Individuals with high creative styles of life tend to be flexible, adaptive, and open to new experiences. They are not bound by social norms or expectations and are brave enough to take risks and pursue their dreams. Adler emphasized that every individual has creative potential that enables them to overcome obstacles, set goals, and find meaning in their own lives (Ismagilova and Khamenehei 213–223).

4. Striving for Superiority

The fourth principle is Striving for Superiority. In life, we feel a strong urge to be better or superior to our current situation. Alfred Adler called this drive the striving for superiority. According to Adler, striving for superiority is a continuous effort by each individual to achieve excellence and perfection in various aspects of their life. This drive is not just about being better than others, but also about overcoming personal weaknesses and reaching your maximum potential as a human being (McCord et al. 101-102).

Striving for superiority manifests in different ways, and each person has his or her concrete way of striving for perfection or superiority. For example, some neurotic people strive for selfish or self-centered goals such as self-esteem, power, and self-glorification. Whereas mentally healthy

people have social interests that benefit the wider community and integrate and advance the social context (Carlson and Maniaci 129).

5. Social Interest

The fifth principle is Social Interest. One of the main concepts in Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory is social interest. In everyday life, we often feel the need to connect and contribute to the community around us. Social interest is an individual's sense of connectedness and solidarity with others and society. This includes a desire to work together, help others, and contribute to the well-being of the community (Duane P. Schultz & Sydney Ellen Schultz 139).

According to Adler, every human being has the principle of social interest from birth. This principle grows when individuals interact with others. Individuals with high social interests are more concerned with the common good than personal gain. This reflects the foundation for the individual's own happiness and mental health (Adler XII). From this social interest, we know how instinct is used to overcome feelings of inferiority because social interest influences the form of individual compensation.

B.2. Compensation

In our life journey, we often face weaknesses or shortcomings that make us feel dissatisfied with ourselves. The mechanism we use to overcome this feeling is compensation (Adler 128-129). In general, compensation is an individual's effort to balance or overcome weaknesses or shortcomings by developing other strengths or abilities.

According to Adler, compensation focuses on the positive and the negative but is fundamentally about self-improvement to overcome feelings of imperfection and reach potential. It encourages us to develop abilities, discover strengths, and build confidence. Healthy compensation brings happiness and fulfillment. However, unhealthy ones can lead to negative behaviors. Self-awareness is key to redirecting compensation towards a better life (Adler 128-129).

B.2.1. The Forms of Compensation

Based on the definition of compensation in section B.2, Ian Lightfoot in the movie *Onward* (2020) demonstrates seven distinct forms of compensation, which are as follows:

1. Stubbornness

In everyday life, we often encounter people who are reluctant to change their opinions or decisions, even when faced with new evidence. This trait is known as stubbornness, a complex trait that can have both positive and negative impacts, depending on the situation. According to Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries defines stubbornness is a defense mechanism individuals use to protect themselves from vulnerability by refusing to change their opinions or accept the viewpoints of others (Kets de Vries 10-14). In this situation, rigidity becomes a mechanism for feeling safe and maintaining personal integrity.

For example, imagine a student named Alex. Alex always does math problems using a certain method that he learned from childhood. One

day, his teacher introduced a new method that was more efficient and easier to understand. However, Alex refuses to try it. He was comfortable with his old method and was afraid that this new method would confuse him. For Alex, sticking to old methods gives him a sense of security and control over his learning outcomes.

2. Rebellious Attitude

When we hear the word "rebellious attitude," many of us immediately think of the turbulent and challenging teenage years. A rebellious attitude often arises as a reaction to authority or rules that are perceived to limit individual freedom. Psychologists have various views on the causes and effects of this attitude. Take, for instance, Dr. Laurence Steinberg, an expert in developmental psychology, who argues that rebellious attitudes are a normal part of the adolescent developmental process. In his book *Adolescence*, Steinberg explains that these attitudes often emerge as a way for adolescents to explore the boundaries of their freedom and form a unique identity (Steinberg, Laurence D 45).

For example, adolescents may begin to challenge household rules by refusing to follow curriculum, dressing independently, or questioning family expectations. These actions are not simply acts of rebellion, but rather expressions of a growing desire for independence and self-determination. Through such behavior, they are exploring the boundaries of their freedom.

3. Disrespect

When talking about social interactions, one issue that often arises and tends to be avoided is disrespect, because disrespect is behavior that shows a lack of respect or appreciation for other people. This can take the form of harsh words, dismissive attitudes, or dismissive actions.

According to Donahue, disrespect is defined as words or actions that signal someone is not regarded as valuable, important, or worthy of appreciation. It includes behaviors or statements that belittle, insult, or disregard a person's worth and existence. Beyond harming relationships, disrespect can also lead to conflict and negatively impact emotional well-being (Donahue 9). For this reason, it is crucial to show respect for others and refrain from actions that may offend or degrade them.

In some cases, common situations that reflect disrespect appear in the daily interactions among teenagers, especially in group or social environments. A teenager may frequently interrupt others during conversations, speak over their classmates without allowing them to share their thoughts, or dominate discussions with little regard for others' input. Disrespect may also emerge through behaviors like speaking negatively about peers behind their backs, spreading unkind comments, or mocking someone's opinion after a disagreement. In addition, some teenagers respond to opposing views with sarcasm, eye-rolling, or even direct insults. While these actions might be excused as jokes or expressions of honesty, they often result in others feeling unimportant and unappreciated. Over

time, such behavior not only disrupts healthy communication and cooperation but also creates an unhealthy environment around them where mutual respect begins to fade and meaningful connections become difficult to maintain.

4. Courage

In every hero story or inspirational story, courage is always at the core of the narrative. Courage is the ability to face fear, difficulty, or danger with calm and determination. However, courage is not just about great heroic deeds; it also includes small moments of everyday life. For example, a single mother works hard to support her children and remains positive despite facing many challenges, and another example is a teenager who dares to talk about their mental health problems to seek help, despite feeling embarrassed or afraid of being judged.

According to Dr. Brené Brown, a renowned researcher on courage and vulnerability, courage is about opening up and being vulnerable. In his book *Daring Greatly*, Brown explains that courage is not about not feeling afraid, but rather about continuing to act even though you feel afraid (Brené Brown 98). Another example of courage is a student who dares to ask questions in class even though he is afraid of being ridiculed by his friends, which shows an extraordinary form of courage.

5. Challenging Attitude

Imagine dealing with someone who is always questioning the status quo or looking for new ways to solve problems. This attitude is known

as a challenging attitude, namely the tendency not to take anything for granted and always look for new challenges. This attitude can be very productive, encouraging innovation and positive change, but it can also lead to conflict if not managed well. For example, consider the story of Marie Curie, a scientist who encountered many challenges throughout her career. In an era when women had very limited access to formal scientific education and professional recognition, she continued to pursue her passion for research with strong determination. Curie worked in modest laboratory conditions, often lacking adequate equipment and support, yet she remained focused on her scientific goals. She questioned the assumptions of her time and explored areas that were still unknown to others. Her hard work led to the discovery of two new elements, polonium and radium, which played a significant role in advancing modern science. Curie's journey reflects a challenging attitude, as she refused to be held back by social expectations and chose instead to move forward with commitment, curiosity, and an unshakable belief in the importance of her work.

Dr. Carol Dweck, a psychologist famous for her mindset theory, argues that a challenging attitude is often related to what she calls a “growth mindset.” In her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Dweck explains that people with a growth mindset see challenges as opportunities to learn and grow (Dweck 7-8). They are not afraid of failure because they believe that effort and persistence will bring them closer to success. For

example, a student who always looks for math problems that are more difficult than the ones given in class shows a challenging attitude.

6. Self-confidence

Self-confidence is one of the most valuable and sought-after qualities in a person. Self-confidence is not only about daring to appear in public but also about believing in one's own abilities and judgment. Confidence allows one to face challenges calmly and make good decisions. For example, in the academic world, a student who constantly succeeds in math exams begins to build confidence in his mathematical abilities. This success encourages him to take on bigger challenges and face new exams or tasks with confidence and poise. Another example of self-confidence involves a student who willingly steps up to lead a group project without being asked by the teacher or peers. Rather than waiting for instructions, the student takes initiative by outlining what needs to be done and setting clear goals for the team. Throughout the project, the student makes thoughtful decisions and stays composed even when unexpected problems arise. Instead of second-guessing every move or seeking constant approval, the student relies on personal judgment and trusts in their own abilities. This behavior reflects how self-confidence empowers individuals to take responsibility and move forward with conviction, even in uncertain situations.

According to Dr. Nathaniel Branden, a psychologist and author of the book *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*, self-confidence is closely related

to self-esteem. Branden explains that individuals who have high self-confidence tend to have a positive view of themselves and their abilities. They are not afraid to face challenges or take risks because they are confident in their ability to overcome obstacles (Branden 28).

7. Collaboration

In our daily lives, we often feel that collaboration makes things easier. Imagine an entire community coming together to help each other in difficult times. Collaboration is not just cooperation; it is the collective power that comes from everyone's support and contribution. Collaboration makes it easier to solve complex problems and tackle big challenges.

For instance, a group of students might be assigned a comprehensive project about environmental sustainability, which requires them to collect data, analyze information, and present practical solutions. Through collaboration, they are able to organize the work more effectively. One member gathers materials from trusted sources, another focuses on structuring the report, while the others handle visuals and prepare the presentation. As the project progresses, they discuss ideas, share findings, and help each other refine their parts. This joint effort not only helps them meet deadlines more easily, but also leads to deeper insights and stronger results. The process shows how collaboration makes it easier to deal with complex tasks by combining different perspectives and distributing responsibilities more efficiently.

In line with this, Stephen M. Fiore highlights the importance of effective collaboration, shared perspectives, and complementary roles in addressing everyday problems. Collaboration often involves direct communication between team members and requires strong negotiation and communication skills (Fiore et al. 7).



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Types of Research

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method. This qualitative approach focuses on collecting non-numerical data through observation to reveal the phenomenon's content, meaning, structure, and discourse. Qualitative research is an approach to understanding social phenomena by exploring the meanings individuals give to their social context, through descriptive data collection (Patton, Michael Quinn 14). Therefore, in qualitative analysis, the results were presented clearly and informatively. They included theories, in-depth text narratives, comments, and direct quotes to provide concrete examples. The conclusion of the findings summarizes the main points of the observations in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

B. Data Organizing

B.1 Data Collecting Method

This section details the data collection steps and the type of data used. There are four important stages in this process, namely: 1) watching the movie; 2) reading the movie script; 3) identifying relevant data, and 4) classifying the data. Each stage will be explained one by one in the following sections:

B.1.1 Watching the Movie

As a starting point in the data collection process, repeatedly watching the movie *Onward* (2020) is very important. This activity aims to deepen the narrative and better understand the story. In this way, the researcher can identify the main characters, analyze the themes, and explore the conflicts and storylines in greater depth. As a result, the elements needed for the final project can be better organized.

B.1.2 Reading the Movie Script

Following watching the movie stage, the next step is to explore the movie script in more detail. By reading the *Onward* (2020) movie script several times, the researcher could find important elements that may have been missed while watching. The purpose of this process was to gain a more thorough understanding of the themes and context of the story, as well as to gather information from scenes that were relevant to the research and ensure that the beginning and end of conversations appeared in the movie to be noted, thus adding to the accuracy of this analysis. In this way, watching and analyzing the script became a crucial step, allowing the researcher to produce a more in-depth analysis and present a more objective view.

B.1.3 Identifying the Data

After watching and reading the movie script several times, the data identification process was carried out to find the specific elements to be analyzed. This includes noting important dialogues, monologues that reveal the protagonist's character, prologues that give context to the story, and narrations that support the main theme. In addition, the researcher observed

the minutes and seconds of the beginning and end of conversations in the movie. Then every important element mentioned above was coded, noted, and highlighted, ensuring that every aspect relevant to the research topic, such as conflict, symbolism, and character dynamics, was not missed in the analysis. Furthermore, the researcher also compares the findings with theories and previous studies to better understand the uniqueness of the object and to identify areas that previous studies have not yet explored.

B.1.4 Classifying the Data

Entering the fourth stage involves the data classification process. At this stage, all the data that has been identified is systematically arranged based on the problem formulation and then included in the appendix. The purpose of this classification is to facilitate analysis, answer the problem formulation, and provide a strong foundation for writing Chapter IV. The appendix will include the data number, excerpt from the movie script, type of data, page or time, references, and analytical comments. The excerpt column contains key elements from the movie *Onward* (2020), such as transcripts of conversations that are relevant to the research topic, and details of the beginning and ending time of the conversation in the movie are also included in this column. The data type section explains the format, whether it is dialogues, monologues, or narrations. The principal column lists the types of essential principles of individual psychology used to analyze Ian Lightfoot's feelings of inferiority in the movie *Onward* (2020). Meanwhile, the references section presents theories relevant to the topic to

support the analysis. Finally, the commentary column brings together the researcher's arguments, theories, and data, creating a more in-depth and structured explanation.

B.2 Types of the Data

The data types are divided into two main categories: primary data and secondary data. Each category has an important function and contribution in supporting a deeper understanding of the topic under study:

1. Primary Data

As a crucial source of information, primary data includes important elements directly taken from the object of study. In this context, primary data is taken from the movie and its script, including dialogues, monologues, and narrations related to Ian Lightfoot as the main character in the movie *Onward* (2020). The movie, which runs for 1 hour and 42 minutes, is directed by Dan Scanlon and is based on a 128-page script written by Jason Headley, Keith Bunin, and Dan Scanlon. Each element of the movie provides valuable insights that enrich the analysis and understanding of the themes and characters.

2. Secondary Data

As one of the important aspects of this study, secondary data also enriches and complements the primary data collected. The researcher can delve deeper into the topic under study by utilizing diverse sources, such as e-journals, e-books, theses, and relevant articles. This approach enables the researcher to collect factual information and grasp the broader context,

leading to stronger, more persuasive arguments. Therefore, integrating secondary data into this analysis is essential for establishing a solid foundation, answering the research questions, and contributing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

C. Analyzing the Data

Analyzing the data is a very important aspect of this study. After collecting and classifying primary and secondary data, the researcher will investigate the meanings and relationships in both data types. By relying on relevant references and movie scripts, the researcher attempts to find patterns, trends, or themes that emerge in the movie *Onward* (2020). Furthermore, the findings of the in-depth analysis will be outlined in Chapter IV, which is the core of this study. Appendices are also included to provide additional information and detailed data that can enrich understanding and support research results.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the answers to the two research questions stated in Chapter I. It explores Adler's essential principles of individual psychology that influence Ian Lightfoot's feelings of inferiority and explains how Ian Lightfoot's forms of compensation for these feelings unfold in the movie *Onward* (2020).

A. Ian Lightfoot's Inferiority Feeling Seen Through Adler's Essential Principles of Individual Psychology in *Onward* (2020)

In the movie *Onward*, Ian Lightfoot experiences feelings of inferiority that are not caused by physical limitations, but by his belief that he lacks the skills needed to succeed like his late father. Therefore, in discussing feelings of inferiority, one of the key figures who extensively studied this concept is Alfred Adler, a psychologist who emphasized that every individual inevitably experiences feelings of inadequacy or perceives themselves as not good enough in certain aspects of life. These feelings may arise when someone feels not intelligent enough, not strong enough, not talented enough, or not worthy enough compared to others.

As explained by Adler in his book entitled *Understanding Human Nature*, these feelings emerge from childhood, for instance, when children perceive themselves as weak compared to adults. As individuals grow older, such feelings can manifest in various situations, such as lacking confidence in academics, careers, social relationships, or personal achievements, and Adler viewed inferiority

feelings not merely as a weakness but as an integral part of human development (Adler 70-71). Individual psychology's main ideas, like fictional finalism, style of life, striving for superiority, the creative self-principle, and most importantly, social interest, have a big impact on how people react to these feelings.

1. Fictional Finalism

In the process of achieving future goals, feelings of inferiority often arise when someone feels unable to achieve what they want or feels left behind by others. To relieve these feelings, a belief in a goal that they want to achieve arises, even though it may not necessarily come true. In this case, belief in the imagined future becomes the main driver that moves someone out of their feelings of inferiority. Changes in feelings of inferiority can be seen, such as when someone has a desire to be successful, rich, an expert in a field, or match the achievements of others. Hope for the future image fosters a spirit of change, not because reality has changed, but because the goal is believed to lead out of feelings of helplessness. This pattern shows how fictional finalism works.

Based on Adler's book *Individual Psychology*, a fictional finalism fundamentally refers to the activity of *fingere*, which encompasses the processes of building, shaping, giving form, organizing, representing, artistically creating, conceptualizing, thinking, imagining, assuming, planning, designing, and inventing. This activity reflects the human capacity to formulate a vision or subjective image of the future, which serves as a guide for their behavior and actions in the present (Adler 78). The following narration and dialogue showcase the fictional finalism possessed by Ian Lightfoot:

He thinks to himself for a moment and then adds a final item:

BE LIKE DAD

The bell rings, and he heads into the imposing building
(*Onward* 08:37-08:44).

In this situation, Ian Lightfoot's feeling of inferiority makes him feel directionless, but through various activities, he creates a list of goals, with "**being like Dad**" as the primary goal. He hopes that at sixteen, he will achieve his dreams and develop greater self-confidence, even though his goals may seem out of reach for someone as introverted as he is. However, changes in his mindset and behavior, as he dreams of these goals, motivate him to continue improving, driven by his desire to be more like his father.

The next scene from *Onward* (2020) provides additional proof of Ian Lightfoot's fictional finalism, as shown below:

We see close-ups of the pictures on the bulletin board as **Ian begins to talk over the tape, forming a conversation.**

DAD

Hello? Hello?

IAN

It's me, Ian.

DAD

Oh, is that right?

IAN

Yeah. Did you have a good day?

DAD

Well, I'm trying to.

IAN

Yeah, me too. Although, I could clearly use some help.

DAD

(laugh)

IAN

I sure do wish I could spend a day with you sometime.

DAD

I know

(Onward 14:14-14:33).

Through the process of overcoming his feelings of inferiority, Ian Lightfoot turns on the tape recorder as a symbol of communication with his father. This action gives rise to Ian Lightfoot's fictional finalism, where he dreams of having a long and meaningful conversation with his father one day. At the same time, using the tape recorder relieves Ian Lightfoot from his nostalgia, helping him become more open with his emotions. It also serves as a means to pursue his personal search for meaning and purpose in life. This is in line with what Adler said when he used the term "analogical thinking" to describe the concept of fictional finalism because in this thinking process, we use images or models that are not always realistic to guide our actions or goals. In other words, we utilize assumptions

or ideals that are not completely based on reality but are useful as tools that make it easier for us to face challenges (Adler 79).

2. The Style of Life

The style of life is identified as belonging to the fourth type, which is referred to as the socially useful type. Adler, in the book *Individual Psychology*, explained that this style of life is formed from childhood based on early experiences, family relationships, and a person's interpretation of the world (Adler 30). Based on the concept of style of life, the following scene illustrates how Ian Lightfoot expresses his way of dealing with life:

GAXTON

You know, your dad was a great guy! So confident. When he came into a room, people noticed. (laughing at the memory) The man wore the ugliest purple socks, every single day.

IAN

(laugh) What? Why?

GAXTON

Hey, that's exactly what we asked. But he was just bold. I always wished I had a little bit of that in me.

IAN

Yeah. Wow. (beat)

I've never heard any of this about him before. What else do you remember--?.

GAXTON'S SON calls out, waving a bag of food.

(Onward 07:36-08:00).

This scene shows a change in Ian Lightfoot's lifestyle. It starts to happen when he learns that his father was known as a great man. He was confident, kind, and could make other people smile and laugh. From that moment, Ian Lightfoot feels motivated to be useful to others. Inspired by this, Ian Lightfoot, at the age of sixteen, aspires to push the limits of his abilities and become braver, and, from the figure of his father, Ian Lightfoot changes his interpretation of the previously sad world. Ian Lightfoot now wants to emulate his father by offering support to others without being too focused on himself.

Alongside the previous moment, the next scene also portrays a different form of Ian Lightfoot's developing style of life:

Ian looks at his hand, then panics.

IAN

Oh! Uh... You know what? I just remembered that my birthday is, uh... cancelled.

ALTHEA

What?

IAN

I mean, the party. It was never actually happening. It was just this huge misunderstanding, so I gotta go. Okay, Bye!

Ian races into Barley's van

(Onward 11:59-12:12).

In this situation, Ian Lightfoot felt panicked, and in his panic, he exhibited the third basic personality type: the avoiding type. This was evident when Ian Lightfoot hastily canceled his birthday party, which he had just invited his friends

to, and immediately ran to Barley's van. In line with Adler's theory, the style of life refers to a person's approach to living and achieving their goals. One of the four lifestyles he identified is the Avoiding Type, which describes people who tend to avoid challenges due to a fear of failure, hindering their growth and preventing them from reaching their full potential (Schultz and Schultz 133).

3. The Creative Self

The way a person makes decisions in life often shows their uniqueness. From there, it can be seen how he understands and directs life. Adler calls this ability the creative self. In his book *Understanding Life*, Adler emphasized that an individual's creative self-power plays a crucial role in shaping their “style of life”. He argued that the increasing significance of this creative power enables individuals to actively develop unique ways of living and viewing the world, distinguishing themselves through personal experiences, choices, and interpretations (Adler 14).

Several scenes in the *Onward* movie below show how Ian Lightfoot shows his creative self through the decisions and actions he chooses:

Ian's smile drops. Ian checks the writing on his hand.

IAN

That's not something anyone says.

Okay, don't say dudes. ...Gang?

"What's up, gang?"

He crosses out “dudes” and changes it to “gang.”

(Onward 10:27-10:35).

Ian Lightfoot invites his friends to his birthday party for the first time. Although he feels nervous, he uses his creativity by writing prompts on his hand to

help him organize and express his thoughts. This strategy allows him to communicate more confidently and reflects his desire to improve his social life by reaching out to others. His effort to connect is evident when he greets his friends with, “**What's up, gang?**”.

It doesn't stop there; the next scene also shows another form of creative self that Ian Lightfoot demonstrates:

There's nothing within sight. Ian looks at the staff.

IAN

Is there a magic way to get gas?

BARLEY

Oh! I like your thinking young mage.

(Onward 38:15-38:20).

In this unfavorable situation, Ian Lightfoot exercises his ability to make free choices by coming up with the idea of using magic to refuel Barley's car. Barley responds positively to his brother's creative solution. In line with this scene, Adler's creative self-concept also emphasizes his belief that individuals have the freedom to make their own choices, and are not merely victims of innate forces, such as genetics or childhood events. He opposed the fatalistic view that a person's life is entirely determined by these factors (Duane P. Schultz & Sydney Ellen Schultz 151). This moment also reflects Ian Lightfoot's belief in his freedom to express ideas and make choices, without being hindered by feelings of inferiority caused by the past or genetic factors. With his creative personality, Ian Lightfoot begins to view challenges as opportunities for growth and interprets life in a manner that aligns with his true self.

The next scene provides additional evidence of how Ian Lightfoot's creative self operates in other situations that demand his creativity:

Ian sees the NORTH sign out the window rapidly approaching.

BARLEY

Just stay cool!

Ian gets an idea. He frantically reaches and turns on the AC. Strong air blasts from the vents, blowing the sprites out the windows.

The sprite that was fighting Barley is blown into the windshield of the car behind Guinevere.

Barley clings to the seatbelt, flapping in the wind.

BARLEY

Way to go, Guinevere!

He loses his grip and is suddenly blown out the window. But Ian manages to grab him at the last minute.

(Onward 47:07-47:22).

In this scene, Ian Lightfoot finds himself surrounded by Sprite bikers. Once he and Barley make it into Barley's van, Ian Lightfoot, although feeling a bit nervous about driving, recalls some skills from his driving class. He then comes up with a clever idea by turning the car's air conditioning on full blast, blowing the Sprites out of the window. Thanks to Ian Lightfoot's quick reflexes, he also manages to pull Barley back to safety just in time, preventing him from falling out of the window. This incident helps Ian Lightfoot grow and build a more meaningful life.

In line with Adler's explanation in his book *Understanding Human Nature*, the creative self is a person's ability to shape their way of thinking and acting when facing any situation. Even in environments or conditions that foster feelings of inferiority, the creative self enables individuals to shift their perspective, overcome these influences, and build a more authentic and meaningful life (Adler 148).

4. Striving for Superiority

Behind every effort to grow and improve, Adler believed there was one driving force: the striving for superiority. Moreover, Adler viewed striving for superiority as a never-ending journey that shapes one's mindset and soul, as explained in his book *Understanding Life*. According to him, life is a continuous effort to achieve an ideal goal, driven by the urge to be better (Adler 62). Based on Adler's definition, striving for superiority refers to the individual's effort to overcome feelings of inferiority and grow toward personal excellence. This idea is reflected in several scenes that show Ian Lightfoot's desire to prove himself and grow beyond his limitations:

IAN

(trying harder) Aloft Elevar!

Nothing.

BARLEY

No, like - Aloft Elevar!

IAN

(angry, louder) Aloft Elevar!

BARLEY

No, from your heart's fire!

IAN

ALOFT ELEVAR!

(Onward 26:48-26:56).

This scene not only shows Ian Lightfoot's efforts to pronounce the spell correctly, but also illustrates the emotional process he goes through when faced with failure and feelings of inadequacy. When the spell he tries doesn't work and Barley continues to give him unhelpful directions, Ian Lightfoot begins to feel irritated, and his voice becomes louder. This irritation shows the inner pressure he is experiencing, but it does not make him give up. Ian Lightfoot keeps trying again and again, and through his persistence, the urge to strive for superiority is visible, which drives him to overcome his shortcomings and become a better person. In this context, striving for superiority appears as an inner strength that keeps Ian Lightfoot going and growing, even when faced with situations that frustrate him.

The next scene further reveals how Ian Lightfoot's striving for superiority continues to develop:

Barley looks at the useless rope in his hands.

BARLEY

YEAH! I GOT IT!

IAN

I AM NOT AFRAID! (beat) Oh man, I could stay out here all day!

Ian playfully steps from side to side.

BARLEY

**OKAY, BUT KEEP MOVING! WE'VE GOTTA SEE
DAD, REMEMBER?!**

Ian approaches the other side of the chasm.

IAN

HEY DAD, THIS LAST STEP IS FOR YOU!

(Onward 1:01:23-1:01:39).

In the process of crossing the cliff, Ian Lightfoot felt inferior, but to bring his father back to life, Ian Lightfoot tried to strive for superiority by choosing another method by tying a rope to his body before crossing; in this way, Ian Lightfoot was able to overcome the obstacles he faced. and from here, Ian Lightfoot shows a healthy mentality. Adler explained that a person's main goal in striving for superiority is flexibility. While the goal itself may be fixed, the paths to achieving it can change. Mentally healthy individuals can adapt and find alternative ways to move forward when faced with obstacles. In contrast, neurotic individuals tend to be rigid, believing they must achieve their goals in only one specific way (McCord et al. 190).

5. Social Interest

In life, a person naturally forms relationships with others. Through social interactions, individuals learn to care, share, and support each other. These experiences help develop social interests, as well as a desire to contribute to the welfare of society. Referring to the viewpoint expressed by Adler, social interest is a sign of psychological health. People who care about others and work for the common good are psychologically healthier, while selfish people are less healthy (Feist and Feist 77).

Here are some scenes in the movie *Onward* that show how Ian Lightfoot develops his social interests through interactions with the people around him:

IAN

Uhhh, anyway... if you like parties, then I was gonna do a party.

SADALIA

What?

IAN

What I was trying to say, is if you're not doing anything tonight-but I'm sure you probably are doing something tonight--and you like cake like I like cake, I've got a cake... at my house.

The teens look at each other.

SADALIA

Are you inviting us to a party?

IAN

That's the one.

SADALIA

Oh, yeah! We don't have any plans.

The others all agree. Ian looks up, surprised

(*Onward* 10:43-11:04).

Ian Lightfoot demonstrated his positive social interest by inviting his friends to his sixteenth birthday party. This action not only demonstrated Ian

Lightfoot's desire to relate well to others but also reflected his efforts in building more meaningful social relationships.

As the story progresses, this character increasingly shows development in his concern for others. The following scenes provide evidence of his growing social interest:

**Ian turns to see Laurel through a crack in the debris.
Colt runs up alongside her.**

Suddenly there's a warm burst of light from atop the peak. Laurel and Colt look toward the light, stunned.

Ian climbs the rubble to find a gap through which he can see.

Barley is face to face with a glowing figure. The glowing subsides to reveal Dad. All of him.

Barley and Dad look uncomfortable at first; two strangers getting to know each other. Ian can only see Dad's back.

Ian slips from his position and loses sight of Barley and Dad. He turns to see the sun is disappearing.

He climbs back up and continues to watch.

Dad and Barley talk and laugh together.

Dad reaches out and gives his big son a hug.

The sun sets.

And Dad vanishes in Barley's arms.

(Onward 1:27:30-1:28:30).

Ian Lightfoot's social interest is evident when he shows empathy by willingly giving up something he could have and choosing to give his brother, Barley, a chance. Excitedly, Ian Lightfoot sees his father through a gap in the fully restored ruins and speaks to Barley. From this, we can also judge the extent of Ian Lightfoot's contribution to the well-being of others. In the book *Social Interest*, Adler explains that one can discern a person's social interest through their interactions with those around them. Their appearance, how they listen, speak, and act reflect the extent to which they contribute to social life. The greater the contribution, the higher the social interest (Adler 52).

In addition to the previous scene, there is other evidence of the social interest that Ian Lightfoot shows in this movie, which can be seen through the following scene:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Ian stands in front of a classroom giving a presentation. He holds the new staff he made from the splinter.

IAN

And I think with a little bit of magic in your life... you can do almost anything.

A student, YELDAEH, raises her hand.

YELDAEH

Is that how you put the school back together?

IAN

Uh, yes!

Another student, THEYUS, interrupts.

THEYUS

Is that also how you destroyed the school in the first place?

IAN

Uh... Also yes?

The bell RINGS. The students leave. Sadalia and her group of friends walk up to Ian.

(Onward 1:30:42-1:30:47).

In this scene, Ian Lightfoot is seen fully embracing his role in the wizarding world and choosing to share his experiences with his friends through presentations. His confidence has grown, and he now shows a genuine interest in connecting with others, a trait he developed through his adventures with Barley and the people he met, who helped him understand the importance of social bonds. This personal growth has allowed Ian Lightfoot to enjoy his life truly.

In addition, the following diagram is included to make the individual psychology principles experienced by Ian Lightfoot, as previously explained, easier to understand.

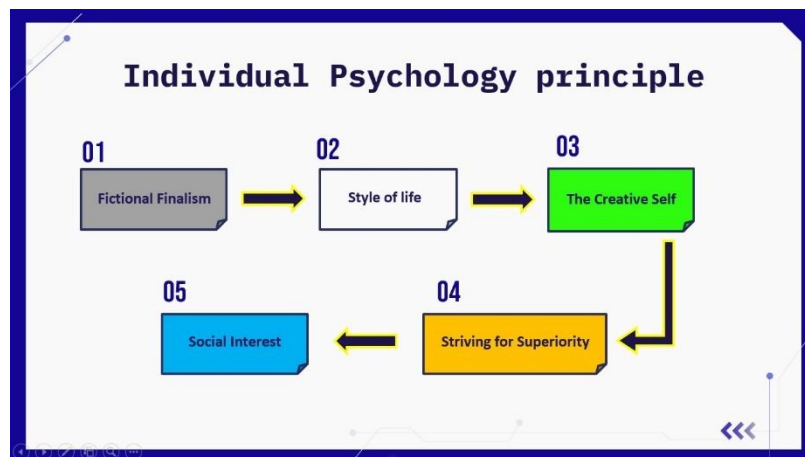


Figure 1. Individual Psychology principles used in this study

B. Ian Lightfoot's Compensation Process for His Inferiority as Reflected in *Onward* (2020)

After analyzing Ian Lightfoot's feelings of inferiority through the principles of Adler's individual psychology, which serve as a guide toward understanding his life goals, the next discussion will focus on the forms of compensation Ian Lightfoot engages in to overcome his shortcomings and pursue those goals:

1. Stubbornness

Individuals sometimes show stubbornness throughout life, both in daily activities and in important decisions that shape their future. This attitude is often part of the dynamics of human relationships, influencing how a person responds to challenges, changes, or advice from others. When stubbornness appears, sometimes it is a reflection of steadfastness. On the other hand, it often leads to complicated and conflicting situations.

In this context, Adler states in his book *Individual Psychology* that stubbornness arises when someone tries to prove their superiority (Adler 370). After understanding the definition, the next step is to examine the evidence shown in the movie to better understand its application. The following evidence shows Ian Lightfoot's stubbornness in *Onward*:

IAN

Barley, this is for a game.

BARLEY

Based on real life!

IAN

But, how do we know this tavern is still there?

BARLEY

It's there. Look, my years of training have prepared me for this very moment. And I'm telling you.... this is the only way to find a Phoenix Gem.

(*Onward* 23:18-23:32).

The form of compensation here is seen when Ian Lightfoot covers up his inferiority feelings with a stubborn attitude. Moreover, Ian Lightfoot dares to assert that what Barley did was just a game and should not be taken seriously because it was not based on the real world. In Ian Lightfoot's view, Barley did not need to deny the fact. However, Barley responded by saying, "**Based on real life!**" After Barley said that, Ian Lightfoot still insisted that it was just a game. Ian Lightfoot remains

stubborn in his opinion, even when faced with a different point of view, which shows an unhealthy form of compensation driven by his need to prove superiority.

This is not the only moment that reveals such behavior. Ian Lightfoot's desire to dominate becomes even more evident when Barley shows him something on the map.

Barley highlights barely-perceptible road on the map.

BARLEY

And it's telling me we take an ancient trail called the Path of Peril.

IAN

But the expressway is faster.

BARLEY

Maybe not in the long run.

IAN

I know you want this to be like one of your adventure games, but all that matters is that we get to spend as much time as possible with Dad.

Dad breaks free from his seatbelt in back and wanders toward the front of the van, leaving his top half behind. He taps his foot against Barley's. Barley pats Dad's foot and sighs.

(Onward 33:46-34:32).

This scene tells the story of Ian Lightfoot and Barley, who stubbornly defend their opinions while debating which path to take. Here, Ian Lightfoot is seen

to be so strong in his opinion because he believes that logical thinking on the path he chooses is much faster than having to follow Barley's wishes, as instructed by the adventure game. As Adler explains, stubbornness arises from a person's drive to prove his or her superiority. They use stubbornness to assert their opinions and feel the need to be recognized by standing out. This is often done by demanding privileges or dominating those in the environment who are considered weaker as a way to prove their superiority (Adler 127).

2. Rebellious Attitude

In explaining rebellious attitudes, Adler points out in his book on *Individual Psychology* that they arise when someone feels blocked in life. This attitude is often related to the desire to be free from pressure or limitations, especially when the environment is perceived as unable to understand or support them (Adler 408). This perspective becomes more apparent when observing how Ian Lightfoot behaves throughout the movie, as the storyline gradually uncovers moments that reflect his rebellious attitude.

IAN

Oh, come on!

BARLEY

You know, Ian, in the days of old, a boy of sixteen would have his strength tested in the Swamps of Despair.

IAN

I'm not testing anything, just let me go!

LAUREL

Let him go.

Barley releases Ian.

(Onward 04:32-04:39).

One of the moments that reflects Ian Lightfoot's rebellious attitude appears when Barley teases him about the Swamps of Despair. At that point in the story, Ian Lightfoot is sixteen years old and begins to feel the need for independence, which drives him to rebel against Barley's perception of him as a child who still needs constant guidance.

Beyond the previously mentioned scene, there is another moment in the movie *Onward* that reflects Ian Lightfoot's rebellious attitude.

BARLEY

Well, Ian, you could definitely learn a lot from Quests of Yore. You want to play?

IAN

I don't.

Ian folds the last piece of toast and starts to take a bite-

BARLEY

You could be a crafty rogue, or... ooh, I know! You can be a wizard.

Barley puts the pewter wizard figure on Ian's shoulder.

BARLEY

(wizard voice)

I shall cast a spell on thee!!

IAN

Hey! Careful of Dad's sweatshirt.

(Onward 06:10-06:21).

The moment of conversation between Ian Lightfoot and Barley begins calmly, but then changes. Barley tries to tease Ian Lightfoot, maybe hoping for a light response. Instead, Ian Lightfoot replies firmly with, **“I don't,”** which makes Barley stop. When Barley steps closer, Ian Lightfoot quickly says, **"Hey! Careful of Dad's sweatshirt,"** showing how much he values it. This moment shows Ian Lightfoot's rebellious side, as he tries to stand up for himself and protect something that matters to him.

3. Disrespect

Disrespect often arises as a reaction to disagreement or a feeling that existing rules do not meet an individual's expectations or needs. Adler concluded that social inequality gives rise to feelings of disrespect. Men and women must fight for equality to gain respect. Systems without social equality tend to be unstable, unjust, and oppressive to individuals and groups (Thomas J. Sweeney 28).

In the movie *Onward*, there is a moment that clearly shows Ian Lightfoot's disrespect for Barley. When Ian Lightfoot feels upset and frustrated because the spell he tried didn't work, while Barley keeps talking about heart fire.

BARLEY

HEART'S FIRE!

Ian tosses the staff in frustration.

IAN

STOP SAYING HEARTS FIRE! This just clearly isn't working!

Ian sits defeated next to Dad.

BARLEY

Hey, it was a good start. Ian stares at the Visitation spell, then looks to Dad, disappointed in himself

(Onward 26:59-27:04).

While Ian Lightfoot worked hard to master the spell, Barley's constant shouting of "**HEART IS FIRE!**" saved breaking Ian Lightfoot's focus. Frustration began to mount as Ian Lightfoot struggled with repeated failures. Eventually, Ian Lightfoot couldn't hold it in any longer and snapped, shouting, "**STOP SAYING HEART IS FIRE!**" This outburst revealed a clear moment of disrespect toward Barley. Afterward, Ian Lightfoot seemed to regret his reaction, especially when he looked at his father and Barley.

In another key moment, Ian Lightfoot's disrespect toward Barley becomes more evident during a tense argument. As the situation escalates, Ian Lightfoot starts blaming Barley for everything that has gone wrong. Rather than recognizing his frustration or seeking understanding, Ian Lightfoot directs his anger at Barley, dismisses Barley's efforts, and emotionally pushes him away.

IAN

I don't know how any of this stuff works! All I know is that everything we've done tonight has gone wrong!

BARLEY

It's gone wrong because you won't listen to me!

Ian stops, stunned.

IAN

Are you kidding? Because everything we've done has been your idea-

BARLEY

But you didn't do it my way! You didn't let me handle the Manticore. You freaked out when I talked to the sprites. Because you don't think I have good ideas.

IAN

What! Of course I do!

BARLEY

Great, then I think we should take the Path of Peril!

IAN

And I also think that would be good... normally--

BARLEY

See!

IAN

But I told you, this isn't a game! All that matters today is Dad, and right now he's sitting in that van, and he's confused.

(Onward 52:55-53:25).

Disrespect from Ian Lightfoot surfaces as Barley continues to act like he always knew the way to the Phoenix Gem. At first, Ian Lightfoot trusts Barley's ideas, but he gets more and more frustrated when things don't go as planned. Barley often ignores what Ian Lightfoot says, which makes Ian Lightfoot feel like his thoughts don't matter. Even though Ian Lightfoot realizes that Barley isn't always wrong, he doesn't want to admit it because Barley has made many mistakes. These mistakes make Ian Lightfoot lose respect for him.

4. Courage

In the face of personal challenges, courage often becomes necessary, not only in overcoming personal obstacles, but also in how individuals act within social contexts. Adler explained that courage is a combination of two things: acting

actively to achieve goals and caring about others. Courageous people are those who not only move forward but also pay attention to the common good. Adler encouraged everyone to dare to act while maintaining a sense of togetherness (Mehrnaz Khoshgam et al. 70).

The following moments in the movie *Onward* provide clear evidence of Ian Lightfoot demonstrating courage:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - LATER

A GOBLIN TEACHER stands next to a student driver car.

DRIVING INSTRUCTOR

First road test, any volunteers?

A single hand raises from the back of a group of students. The crowd parts to reveal a nervous Ian.

INT. DRIVER'S ED CAR – DAY

Ian drives. The Driving Instructor sits in the passenger seat. Two other kids are in the backseat.

(Onward 09:36-09:40).

Ian Lightfoot's courage becomes evident when he volunteers for a driving course. Although he feels nervous, he chooses to take the initiative. His willingness to face the situation reflects a strong desire to grow and improve, as he aims to master driving not just for himself but also to support his larger goals. More than just a personal milestone, this moment shows Ian Lightfoot stepping out of his comfort zone to prove that he is capable of more than he once believed. By taking the lead, Ian Lightfoot demonstrates a growing sense of responsibility and the ability to inspire those around him.

Moving from the previous evidence, another scene in the movie provides further insight into Ian Lightfoot's courage and determination.

Ian realizes they've

lost Dad. He turns and sees Dad struggling to stand. The roof above suddenly buckles. The wooden beams CRASH down, headed right for Dad.

Without a thought, Ian lifts the staff and calls out.

IAN

ALOFT ELEVAR!

A blast of light from the staff freezes the wooden beam in mid-air, mere inches from Dad. Ian strains to hold the spell.

Barley rushes in and grabs Dad, pulling him to safety. Ian releases the spell and the beam CRASHES to the ground.

Barley, Ian, and Dad flee from the burning tavern.

(Onward 32:33-32:48).

Amid the chaos, Ian Lightfoot realized he was on the verge of losing his father. Seeing him trapped under the ruins of a building engulfed in flames caused by the Manticore, Ian Lightfoot acted without hesitation. Summoning his courage, he cast the spell “**ALOFT ELEVAR!**” This act demonstrated his bravery and ability to make quick and decisive choices during a crisis. This moment also

highlights Ian Lightfoot's compensation, as he shows both the courage to face challenges and a deep sense of concern for others. Adler in *Individual Psychology* defined courage as emerging from a strong sense of social concern. When someone feels connected and useful to others, they are more optimistic, brave enough to face challenges, and feel their life has meaning. This social sense is also the basis for understanding ethics and beauty better (Adler 155).

5. Challenging Attitude

The presence of a challenging attitude often drives individuals to take bold steps, especially when faced with situations that test their limits. A bold mindset to face challenges and seek change or improvement (Dweck 7-8). This concept is shown through several moments in the movie *Onward* that reveal Ian Lightfoot's challenging attitude, such as:

INT. LIGHTFOOT HOME - HALLWAY – NIGHT

Laurel sees a note taped to Ian's door: "Back soon with MINDBLOWING surprise!" along with a crude drawing of Laurel with a mushroom cloud blowing from the top of her head.

She opens the door.

INT. IAN'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Laurel GASPS. Ian's bedroom looks like a bomb went off.

She notices Ian's broken phone on the bed. Then walks over to the Quests of Yore cards Barley laid out earlier: The Phoenix Gem and the Manticore's Tavern.

(Onward 25:40-26:05).

Ian Lightfoot demonstrates a bold and ambitious attitude as he takes the lead in preparing for their visit to the Manticore's tavern. By writing the note, “**Back soon with MINDBLOWING surprise,**” Ian Lightfoot expresses his growing confidence and willingness to take initiative alongside Barley. This act reflects his eagerness to actively participate in their quest and contribute meaningfully, rather than relying solely on his brother. Motivated by the urgency of their one-day deadline, Ian Lightfoot pushes himself to move forward with determination and a sense of shared purpose.

6. Self-Confidence

In *Understanding Human Nature*, Adler explains that self-confidence is essential for individuals to overcome challenges, make decisive choices, and pursue their goals without hesitation (Adler 266). This is also reflected in the dialogue between Ian Lightfoot and Laurel, which highlights the growth of Ian Lightfoot's self-confidence.

LAUREL

I know you're a little scared to drive sweetie-pie, but--

IAN

I'm not scared, Mom.

(pointing offscreen)

(Onward 04:15-04:17).

Laurel, as Ian Lightfoot's mother, expresses her concern by asking if he is scared. In response, Ian Lightfoot firmly says, **"I'm not scared, Mom."** This simple yet powerful statement reflects the confidence that has started to grow within him. Instead of showing hesitation, Ian Lightfoot speaks with calm and clarity, proving that he believes in himself. His steady voice and composed expression reveal that, even under pressure, a strong sense of self-confidence is carried by him.

Furthermore, Ian Lightfoot's self-confidence is further shown in a conversation with his mother, where he confidently expresses his abilities and determination.

LAUREL

Wow, you must have been taught by some kind of sewing master.

IAN

Yeah, a very humble sewing master.

Ian finishes sewing. He holds out the thread and Laurel cuts it with the scissors. They've clearly done this a lot.

(Onward 15:08-15:14).

When Laurel compliments Ian Lightfoot's neat sewing, the compliment is accepted by Ian Lightfoot confidently, who responds with, **"Yes, a very humble sewing master."** Instead of ignoring the compliment, it is embraced by Ian Lightfoot with a lighthearted tone, showing that Ian Lightfoot is starting to recognize and appreciate his skills. This moment reflects a change in his thinking, as feelings of inferiority are set aside, and pride in his abilities begins to grow.

Through this recognition of his achievements, his increasing self-confidence is clearly shown.

7. Collaboration

Collaboration often begins within the family, where working together teaches individuals how to face challenges and support one another in everyday life. Adler explained that collaboration is formed from early experiences in the family, such as seeing relationships, dealing with conflict, and living side by side. This understanding shapes a lifestyle and is useful in counseling (Thomas J. Sweeney 267).

In the movie *Onward*, this idea is clearly illustrated through the collaboration shown between Barley and Ian Lightfoot, as mutual support is continuously given throughout their journey. Their teamwork is demonstrated in several important moments where problems are solved and progress is made together.

The sword is up to the hilt in the armor, but just barely piercing the red core.

Meanwhile, the gem lifts out of the staff and spins. Red, ominous light grows around it, the staff begins to shake.

IAN

No, no, no, no, no—

The red magic swells and is about to explode...

IAN

Barley!

Barley runs and braces his back against Ian's. There's an explosion. Then the gem floats over Dad and begins raining magic down upon him, slowly building the rest of him.

The boys watch with joy.

(Onward 1:24:18-1:24:49).

As the pressure mounts and the red magic begins to threaten to explode, Ian Lightfoot realizes that he cannot do it alone. This is where Ian Lightfoot's collaboration begins, as he feels pressured and finally seeks support from Barley. Barley steps in to help, as both brothers rely on each other. Barley supports Ian Lightfoot by pressing his back against Ian Lightfoot to resist the force of the red magic. Through their teamwork, they slowly bring their father back together, and they cherish the moment.

Besides the strong teamwork between Ian Lightfoot and Barley, another key collaboration is seen between Ian Lightfoot and Laurel. In a critical moment, Laurel's quick thinking and her ability to act in sync with Ian Lightfoot show how well they work together.

The Curse Crusher begins to fall, but Laurel JUST grabs it by the tip of its blade. She stands and calls out to Ian.

LAUREL

Ian!

She hurls the sword toward Ian with all her might.

IAN

Accelior!

Ian rushes the sword mid-air with the velocity spell and plunges it straight into the core of the curse. It billows into the air as a red cloud, then dissipates into nothing.

(Onward 1:26:39-1:26:49).

Ian Lightfoot's awareness of his surroundings, paired with Laurel's quick thinking, results in a precise and coordinated effort that leads to their success. By grabbing the sword just in time and combining it with Ian Lightfoot's swift use of magic, both characters contribute equally to overcoming the cursed dragon. This moment illustrates not just teamwork but a meaningful collaboration built on mutual trust and shared intention. Ian Lightfoot's actions reflect emotional growth, as he shows sensitivity to Laurel's presence and initiative, proving that he has moved beyond self-focus and is now more open to working in harmony with others.

Based on the discussion above, Ian Lightfoot in the movie *Onward* (2020) demonstrates the application of the five essential principles in individual psychology, namely fictional finalism, style of life, striving for superiority, creative self, and social interest. Although Ian Lightfoot initially exhibits unhealthy compensation through a rebellious attitude and disrespect, he ultimately succeeds in developing healthy compensation, reflected in his courage, confidence, and collaboration. Therefore, Ian Lightfoot's development reflects success in constructively applying the principles of individual psychology.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusion based on the analysis discussed in the previous chapter and offers suggestions for further research.

A. Conclusion

The story in *Onward* shows how extraordinary experiences could trigger major changes in a person. Ian Lightfoot, who was initially full of doubt and uncertainty, slowly develops into a more active figure and believes in his own abilities, especially in relation to his strong desire to meet his father again, even if only for a short time, which is the starting point of this change. This hope reflects fictional finalism, which is a life goal that is imagined and believed to provide direction and meaning. As a result of this belief, Ian Lightfoot began to dare to step out of his comfort zone. He was motivated to take real action. This then changed his style of life, from being passive to being more active, full of initiative.

Along with this change, the role of the creative self in Ian Lightfoot also becomes visible. This is where Ian does not just follow external guidance, but begins to make decisions based on his values and expectations. Guided by this creative self, there was also a striving for superiority in Ian Lightfoot, namely an effort to be better than his previous condition. From someone who initially felt unable, Ian Lightfoot slowly formed the belief that he could face various difficulties. He also increasingly shows his desire to find his identity, no longer just depending on others. In addition to the changes in himself, the development of Ian

Lightfoot's social relationships is also an important part of this process. He begins to show social interest, namely concern for the common welfare, not just focusing on himself. This is reflected in his increasingly open interactions with Barley, his classmates, and the people around him, including his mother, who always provides support. Awareness of the importance of relationships and cooperation is a sign that Ian Lightfoot is no longer walking alone but is starting to integrate with his social environment.

However, this process did not go without obstacles. Stubbornness and rebellious attitudes emerged, especially when Ian Lightfoot felt that Barley's methods were inappropriate or when he was reluctant to accept help. In addition, a form of disrespect was seen when Ian Lightfoot belittled his brother's efforts and advice. However, along with the growing awareness, Ian Lightfoot began to show a healthy challenging attitude. He learned to face challenges more wisely and was not easily trapped in negative emotions. From here emerged a stronger courage and confidence, until finally forming a harmonious collaboration with Barley and the people around him, including his mother.

Overall, these changes show a transformation from unhealthy compensation to healthier compensation. If previously Ian Lightfoot tended to close himself off and avoid reality, then at the end of the story, he was able to face it bravely and openly. The relationships he built became more meaningful and balanced. Thus, *Onward* not only presents an adventure story but also shows how someone goes through the process of overcoming feelings of inferiority, finding the meaning of life, and building more harmonious relationships with others, in line

with the main goal of Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory, namely helping individuals become healthier and more empowered individuals in their social lives.

B. Suggestion

Every movie has the potential to be analyzed from different psychological perspectives. Onward, which has been examined using Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory, still offers opportunities for further research. Future researchers might take an interest in other characters such as Laurel, Barley, or the Manticore, who also show interesting psychological sides, especially in how they deal with personal struggles and respond to various situations. It would be worth looking into what kinds of conditions lead them to compensate for their inferiority, and how support from family or friends helps them get through those moments. Future researchers may also consider applying Adler's concept of birth order to explore Barley's role as the eldest sibling and how it shapes his sense of responsibility and behavior. Another theoretical perspective that future researchers can use to analyze Onward is Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which offers a useful framework for examining how each moment in the journey of Ian Lightfoot contributes to the development of his beliefs in his abilities.

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