# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the background of the study, the research questions, the purpose of the study, any related previous studies, and the writing organization.

## 1.1.    Background of the Study

*Aftersun* directed by Charlotte Wells and released in 2022, serves as an emotional backdrop for exploring the meaningful impact of mental health, particularly depression, on family dynamics and the coming-of-age journey. The story revolves around the childhood memories of Sophie, an 11-year-old girl, during a vacation with her father, Calum, on the Turkish coast. However, beneath the surface of their peaceful vacation lies a hidden struggle. Calum grapples silently with the weight of depression and the challenges of life outside of fatherhood. Calum's battle with depression ultimately prevents him from being there for his daughter as she grows up, as he succumbs to the insidious grip of this mental health condition.

Depression is a common mental health disorder that affect both the mental and physical health. The main symptoms of depression are a lack of interest in usual life activities, insomnia, inability to enjoy life, and even suicidal thoughts. Depression is nowadays a common chronic disease in most societies worldwide that can impair normal functioning, cause depressive thoughts, and adversely affect the quality of life.

One of the most-worrying aspects is that adolescents with severe depression are 30 times more likely to commit suicide (Stringaris, 2017:1).

Apriliana and Tandyonomanu (2023) analyzed the film using Peirce's semiotic theory, focusing on signs and visual elements like crying, solitude, and hesitation to interpret Calum's depression. While their study reveals valuable insights into emotional expression, it does not examine the verbal or linguistic components. There has been limited academic attention given to the verbal aspects of this character.

This research seeks to address this gap by conducting a thorough expressive speech act analysis, focusing on Calum's utterances throughout the film. The analysis examines how Calum uses expressive speech acts to reveal his emotional and psychological condition, even in the absence of explicit dialogue about mental illness. Therefore, by looking at the way Calum verbally expresses his internal state, we can gain a deeper understanding of his psychological struggle and how depression is subtly communicated through everyday language in cinematic dialogue.

## 1.2.  Research Problems

This study exclusively focuses on the character Calum within the movie *Aftersun* and does not extend its analysis to other characters in the film. Calum's portrayal of depression will be the central subject of investigation. Including analysis of how depression is depicted and manifested through Calum's character. In obedience with the background study, the research questions are arranged below:

1. What expressive speech acts are used by Calum and manifested depression?

2. What are the depression symptoms reflected in Calum's expressive speech acts?

## 1.3. Objectives of the Study

According to the research question, this study aims to:

1. Describe the specific types of expressive speech acts used by Calum in the film *Aftersun*.

2. Explain how Calum's expressive speech acts reflect symptoms of depression, providing insight into how his internal struggles are manifested through verbal expression.

## 1.4. Previous Studies

I have identified ten relevant studies that contribute meaningful context for this research. These studies are grouped into two main categories: those that focus on *Aftersun* as the central subject of analysis, and those that utilize expressive speech act theory in examining other literary or cinematic narratives. These sets of studies serve as valuable references for the present research.

The first two studies specifically examined *Aftersun* as the primary subject of their analysis. One of the previous studies focusing on *Aftersun* was conducted by Apriliana and Tandyonomanu (2023), who examined the representation of depression in the film through a semiotic analysis based on Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic structure. Using signs, symbols, and visual elements, such as Calum's crying, hesitation, solitude, and insomnia. The study explored how the film implicitly

communicated mental health struggles. The research found that *Aftersun* challenges traditional gender stereotypes by portraying Calum's vulnerability as a father and as a man, thus disrupting the stigma around masculinity and emotional suppression.

Ningsih, Amelia, and Pasang (2024) studied *Aftersun* in their work *Framing Analysis: A Depiction of Identity Crisis in Charlotte Wells' Aftersun Film*. They used Robert Entman's framing analysis to examine Calum's identity crisis. The research is a qualitative descriptive type, and it revealed three major factors, emotional alienation, self-doubt, and psychological pressure. The challenge that Calum faces is brought about by the high demands of fatherhood, the pressure to portray a stable emotional expression and the lack of a true emotional support. The hesitant scenes, scenes of his silence, and distress are ways in which the film depicts mental vulnerability and loss of connection.

At the same time, Dyer and Mecija (2025) also focused on *Aftersun* in the context of queer temporality and affect theory. They examined the topic of construction of the adult identity through childhood memories and desires as lasting in the present day adult identity especially in the context of queer experience and grievance. Through interpreting how the film has used music and movement, with an emphasis on the rave scene, where the song played is "Under Pressure", the researchers pointed out how music can be used as a means of emotional release between Sophie and her father Calum. The paper came up with the conclusion that The Aftersun resists linear accounts

of time and growth presenting a queer vision of memory, parent-child relations, and the emotional enduring impression of childhood.

Lastly, the previous studies analyzing *Aftersun* was carried out Ruiz (2025) who discussed the manner in which the film presents the masculinity and fatherhood through the frames of masculinities theory. When dwelling upon the character of Calum, as a researcher, one must emphasize the treatment of manhood by the given movie since it demonstrates a complex portrait of masculinity, which combines emotional intimacy, tenderness, and parenthood, which corresponds to the notions of new and caring masculinities. During the events highlighted in the study, Calum displays some stereotypically masculine traits, such as being a protector, but the real highlight of the paper is the way depressive symptoms play out as the result of the emotional repression of hegemonic masculinity. Ultimately, the study argues that *Aftersun* expands the cinematic narrative around what it means to be a father and a man by challenging dominant stereotypes and spotlighting men's mental health struggles.

For the next 6 studies, I concentrated on studies that focused on the utilization of expressive speech acts. Hidayat (2021) under the title "An Expressive Speech Act Analysis of Stephen Colbert's The Late Show." This research focused on identifying and classifying expressive speech acts used by Stephen Colbert during episodes of The Late Show. Applying Searle's speech act theory as the primary analytical framework, the study explored how Colbert's utterances reflected various psychological and emotional expressions such as agreement, appreciation, criticism, and sarcasm. The

findings revealed multiple types of expressive speech acts, with a dominance of praising and criticizing, illustrating Colbert's unique communicative style as both a comedian and political commentator. Hidayat came to the conclusion that expressive speech acts make a great contribution to the emotional coloring and rhetorical approaches of the role players in the televised media.

The analysis by Putra (2023) is one of the examples of research concentrating on expressive speech acts in a movie as it evaluated expressive speech acts in the movie *The Greatest Showman*, paying specific attention to the central character of this film Barnum. With the help of the qualitative descriptive research, the following types were determined namely thanking, congratulating, praising, and apologizing. Praising appeared in most data, more than 50 percent. This indicates that Barnum was a charismatic person who expressed admiration and appreciation of others, which is rather characteristic of an emotionally expressive person.

A study closely related to the present research was conducted by Selsibilla, Novitri, and Erni (2022) on the topic of expressive speech acts known as "Analyzing Expressive Speech Acts of the Main Character in the Joker Movie". This study was done to find and classify the expressive speech acts that the protagonist in Joker (2019) employs. Applying descriptive qualitative approach and theory of speech acts developed by Searle, justified with the help of Hymes and his model of SPEAKING, it was discovered that the main character made 27 expressive utterances in the course of the speech. This was categorized into 6, each of them being greeting, agreeing,

thanking, apologizing, wishing, and exclamation with greeting being the most dominant. Some of the arguments presented by the researchers included the fact that Arthur found it easier to greet people as a mode of socialization, and thus this portrays an aspect of his psychological health and need to socialize even though he is mentally unstable.

In an attempt to discuss expressive speech acts in the functioning of the film dialogue, Adelia and Suyudi (2022) conducted an analysis called "An Analysis of Expressive Speech Act in Enola Holmes Film". The study was based on targeting the identification of the expressive speech acts pronounced by the main character Enola Holmes employing the models created by Leech and Norrick. The authors conducted the descriptive qualitative analysis of 27 utterances of expressiveness taken directly in the film script. The identified kinds of expressive acts speech were formatted in the following way: thanking, congratulating, welcoming, condoling, deploring, praising, blaming, and accusing, whereas the one of apologizing was conspicuously missing. The paper used contextual examples of uttered text in each type and portrayed the reflection of Enola as influenced by her emotional feelings, socialization and reactions to certain events.

In a different study of the same year, Sofyan, Badrudin, Fitriani, and Mutaallim (2022) considered types and functions of illocutionary speech acts in the short film Tilik. They discovered acts of expressing gratitude, apology, and blame. Their pragmatic functions were also addressed, and they were divided into competitive,

convivial, collaborative, or conflictive. The researchers examined utterances in the film through adoption of a descriptive qualitative technique and Determining Element Sorting (PUP) technique. Based on the findings, the expressive speech acts were used to define the emotional interaction of the characters in the film as well as to affirm its moral and social message.

Lastly, Aritonang and Ambalegin (2023) conducted a study entitled "An Analysis of the Expressive Speech Acts in *Avatar: Way of the Water* Movie", published by Universitas Putera Batam. The research aimed to identify and classify expressive speech acts in the film using the framework of Searle and Vanderveken (1985). It examined 46 expressive acts in the dialogue, grouped into complaint, greet, apologize, compliment, protest, lament, thank, boast, deplore, and praise. Congratulating and condoling did not appear. The researchers used the pragmatic identity method and Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model to study the social context and purpose of each utterance. They found that complaint was the most common, followed by greeting and apologizing, showing emotional conflicts, social connections, and expressions of regret in the story.

Overall, the above-stated studies form a solid basis of the current research not only regarding its topic but also due to the structure of the analysis. The first group of studies that focused on *Aftersun* revealed the film's capacity to subtly depict psychological themes like depression and identity crisis, while the second group demonstrated how expressive speech acts serve as a powerful tool for analyzing

emotional expression in various media. Together, these works affirm the significance of investigating Calum's expressive speech acts in *Aftersun*.

## 1.5.    Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the analysis of expressive speech acts performed by the character Calum in the film *Aftersun*. The focus is specifically on utterances that reflect Calum's emotional and psychological state, as categorized under Searle (1979) classification of expressive illocutionary acts, such as apologizing, thanking, blaming, and lamenting. The study does not examine other types of speech acts, as the research is strictly confined to expressive due to their relevance in revealing internal emotional conditions. The analysis of depression symptoms reflected in these expressive speech acts is grounded solely in the framework provided by Beck and Alford (2009).

## 1.6.    Writing Organization

This study is written in five chapters through the following organization:

CHAPTER I:  INTRODUCTION

     This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, previous studies and writing organization.

CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHODS

     This section provides the literary review of the theory used to analyse the data gathered for this research.

CHAPTER III: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the results and the discussion of an analysis of depression through Calum's expressive speech acts

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter shows the conclusion based on the findings in this study.