

## THE PORTRAYAL OF THE PSYCHIATRIC PATIENT (VIOLET) IN THE FILM *PAWURU WALALU*: A CASE STUDY

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### Introduction

Cinema is a powerful medium that shapes people's attitudes. It plays a great role in psycho education and attitude maintenance within a society. Therefore, film directors should carefully portray psychiatric patients in their films in order to convey the right impression about psychiatric patients. There are instances where psychiatric patients are portrayed in Sinhala films. *Pawuru Walalu* is one of them where Violet suffers from Maternal Psychosis.

### Objectives

The objective of this research is to examine how the director uses film language to develop the character of the psychiatric patient (Violet) in *Pawuru Walalu*.

### Materials and Methods

The film *Pawuru Walalu* was selected for the study, since its main character is a psychiatric patient named Violet. A study (Dias, S and others, 2008) shows that Violet is suffers from Maternal Psychosis (ICD F 53 according to the ICD10 diagnostic category). *Pawuru Walalu* – 85 mins, 35 mm color film – was directed by Prasanna Vithanage. Content analysis was the method used to examine the film. A psychiatrist and two academics from the department of Fine Arts watched the film together and analyzed the content.

### Results

In the process of developing the character of the psychiatric patient, Violet, the director mostly depends on the narrative. The conflict between the human feelings and the religion is the heart of the narrative. The story unfolds against a Catholic background. The characters of the film are Catholic. Most of the events, features, and customs that are portrayed in *Pawuru Walalu* belong to the catholic culture. Moreover, Music, Symbols, Dialogue; Acting, Setting, Editing, Cinematography, Costume & Make up – the elements of film language – are used to develop the character of Violet, the psychiatric patient.

### Discussion

The director in *Pawuru Walalu* has used an ideal scenario that is the conflict between human feeling and religion in creating a psychiatric patient. Film language is brilliantly used to develop the character, Violet. Setting is very important in *Pawuru Walalu*. Characters were placed in the 'Galle Fort' symbolizing them as trapped in a cage. Along with other elements, the setting of the film was crucial to develop the character of the psychiatric patient (Violet) in *Pawuru Walalu*.

## References

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