

PORTRAYAL OF PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS IN SINHALA CINEMA

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Introduction

Sri Lankan film discusses mental illnesses as narrative in covert or overt terms. This has an impact upon the spectator in terms of psycho education and attitude maintenance within the Sri Lankan society. Depending on the films different spaces are provided to the roles which portray the mentally ill. Film directors should carefully identify psychiatric disorders of his/her characters and appropriate cinematic techniques in order to portray those disorders.

Objectives

- To identify the psychiatric patients and their disorders in the films
- To analyze cinematic techniques that are used to portrait psychiatric disorders in the films

Materials and methods

Five films which are known to depict roles with the mentally ill were selected for the study. A psychiatrist and two academics from the Department of Fine Arts watched the films together and analyzed the content. The Psychiatrist observed the criteria presented by the film to predict a ICD10 diagnostic category, while the other two concentrated on the extent of the use of cinematic techniques.

Results

Table 1.

Film	Disorder and Character	Diagnostic category
<i>Pawuru Walalu</i>	Alcohol Dependence (<i>Victor</i>)	ICDF10.2
	Maternal Psychosis (<i>Violet</i>)	ICD F 53
<i>Purahanda Kaluwara</i>	Adjustment Disorder (<i>Wannihami</i>)	ICD F 43
<i>Ganga Addara</i>	Dissociative Disorder Motor (<i>Nirmala</i>)	ICD F 44.4
<i>Maha Gedara</i>	Depression (<i>Mother</i>)	ICD F 32
<i>Malata Noena Bambaru</i>	Alcohol Dependence (<i>Palitha</i>)	ICDF10.2
	Alcohol Dependence (<i>Sani</i>)	ICDF10.2
	Depression with Psychotic Feature (<i>Sani</i>)	ICD F 32.3



Table 2.

Film	Character	Cinematic used
<i>Pawuru Walal</i>	<i>Victor</i> <i>Violet</i>	Symbols, Dialogues, Acting Cinematic incidence, Setting, Acting
<i>Purahanda Kaluwara</i>	<i>Wannihami</i>	Acting, Cinematic incidence, Dialogue
<i>Ganga Addara</i>	<i>Nirmala</i>	Narrative, Acting, Setting, Editing, Cinematography, Music, Dialogue, Cinematic incidence
<i>Maha Gedara</i>	<i>Mother</i> <i>Palitha</i>	Cinematic incidence, Cinematography, Acting, Music, Costume & Make up Cinematic incidence, Dialogue, Acting, Costume & Make up
<i>Malata Noena Bambaru</i>	<i>Sani (ICDF10.2)</i> <i>Sani (ICD F32.3)</i>	Acting Cinematography, Editing, Cinematic incidence

Discussion

There are features which suggest that the above mentioned disorders one depicted in the films. Features are presented hidden within the artistic realm of the film. The issue of homosexuality, which is not a mental illness, is also discussed in the film *Malata Noena Bambaru* implying it as an illness. Alcohol dependency and depression are not emphasised within the film as illnesses as no cinematic space is invested for treatment. On the other hand, dissociation and psychosis are engaged in the disease model when the behaviour could not be contained at home or the traditional ways of management fails.

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