

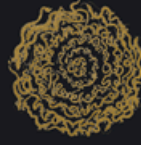
# 'Lucia': A Delicate Dance Between Dream and Reality

Author: Chethana Srivatsa



Posters for 'Lucia'

Source: Pinterest and IMP World



'Lucia' (2013) is an Indian psychological thriller directed by Pawan Kumar. It depicts the story of a man who takes a new pill for his insomnia, which lands him in a lucid dream state. The Kannada-language film premiered at the London Indian Film Festival and won the Audience Choice Award. It won prestigious awards at the State and Filmfare award ceremonies and was nominated for multiple awards at the South Indian International Movie Awards. It was the recipient of the GCC Puraskar Award for Best Critically Acclaimed Feature Film. The film was also among the initial shortlist for India's submission for the Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. Poornachandra Tejaswi won the Karnataka State Film Award for Best Music Director for the movie. This was an especially remarkable feat, as it was the first movie he had composed for. The film also won Best Background Score at the Karnataka International Music Awards.

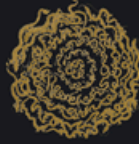


**Director Pawan Kumar and Music Director Poornachandra Tejaswi**

Source: YouTube and Filmibeat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgIL2H-OdcA>

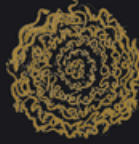
**Trailer for the Film**



### **The Different Personalities of the Same Characters in the Two Storylines**

Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot

The movie begins with a police investigation into the case of Nikhil, a man who has been in a comatose state for three months. The audience is then taken into the story of Nikhil through two parallel storylines. Most characters look the same and have the same names in both lines, but their professions and relationships vary. Nikhil is an usher in a single-screen theater in one storyline and a popular actor in the other. His father figure, Shankaranna (played by popular actor Achyuth Kumar), is the operator of the theater in one and Nikhil's manager in the other. The female lead, Shwetha, is a pizza store employee in one and a model and aspiring actor in the other. The major difference between these two storylines is that one set is shown in black-and-white and the other in color. This is an interesting feature to observe in the movie, especially near the end (no spoilers!).



**Sruthi Hariharan plays the Female Lead, Shwetha**

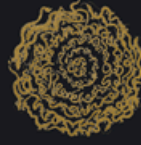
Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot

Another notable difference is Nikhil's personality in the two storylines. As 'Nikki' the usher, he is more shy, wide-eyed, and rooted in his native traditions. As 'All-in-One Star' Nikhil the actor, he is more suave, confident, and charming (although the people close to actor Nikhil still call him Nikki). Nikki has to chase after the girl of his dreams, while the girl chases after him as Nikhil. The chasm between Nikki and Nikhil gets bridged more and more as Nikhil connects to child-like joys and Nikki finds confidence to accept himself the way he is. Actor Sathish Ninasam does a quite convincing job in this role.



**Stills from the Relationship between Nikhil and Shwetha in the Two Storylines**

Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot

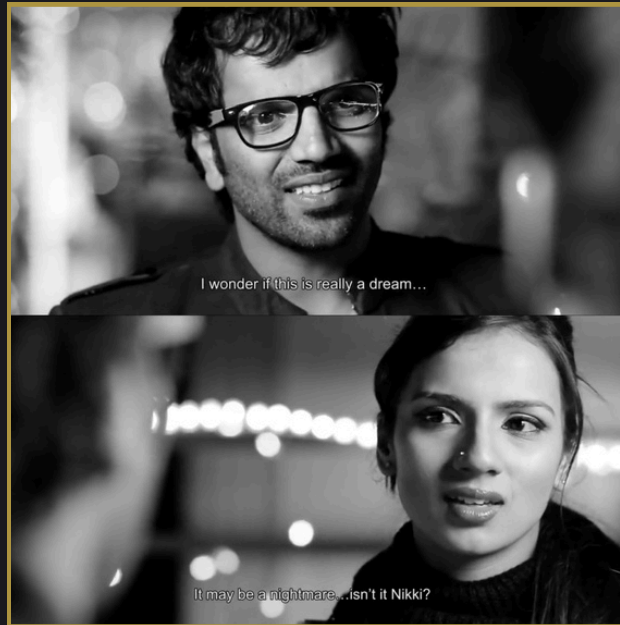
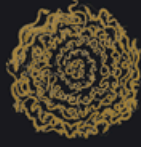


The film also deals with the themes of substance use and addiction. The two parallel storylines (or dream-and-reality juxtaposition) only start after Nikhil is given the *Lucia* pill. This is an addictive pill that the filmmaker imbues with the power to enable the taker to enter a state of lucid dreaming. It also causes hallucinations later on in the movie. Nikhil is desperate for a cure for his insomnia, so he takes the pill irrespective of the (somewhat weak) warning he receives.



**The Film deals with the Theme of Substance Use**

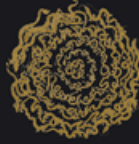
Source: IMP World



**The Movie is a Delicate Dance between Dream and Reality (or Nightmare)**

Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot

The film began as a (non-*Lucia*-induced) dream of director Pawan Kumar. After his debut feature, '*Lifeu Ishtene*' (2011), had a positive reception from audiences, Kumar announced on the internet that his next project was titled '*Lucia*'. He had met many producers and was struggling to find the best way to fund the project. In his frustration, he wrote a blog post about the experience, which received an overwhelmingly positive response. This led to him pitching Project Lucia, a crowd-funding initiative to support the film. All it took was Pawan Kumar sharing the initiative on his Facebook page and blog, and the project was ready to go. As shared in the movie credits, the film received contributions from 1300 people amounting to over 114,000 USD. '*Lucia*' thus made history as the first Kannada crowdfunded film, paving the way for upcoming filmmakers to explore more unconventional ways of movie-funding. It was a success at the box office, grossing over three times the amount it received from crowd-funding.



## PROJECT LUCIA

THIS IS THE FIRST CROWD FUNDED KANNADA FILM

1300+ PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED  
OVER 70 LAKHS INR (114,000 USD)  
TOWARDS THE MAKING OF THIS FILM



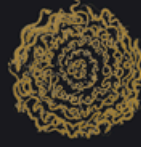
**'Lucia' is the first crowd-funded Kannada film**

Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot



**Influences for the Film include Christopher Nolan, David Lynch, and Alejandro Amenábar**

Source: Wikimedia Commons



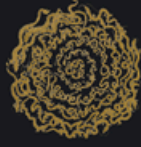
Pawan Kumar has shared in interviews that he was inspired by legends like Christopher Nolan, David Lynch, and Alejandro Amenábar during the making of the film. The color scheme to differentiate between dream and real scenes bears similarities to *'Memento'* and *'Open Your Eyes'*. There are also shots where scenes from *'Following'* and *'Requiem for a Dream'* are playing on television screens in the background. The term *Lucia* is itself a nod to the Beatles' song *'Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds'*. Kumar also includes references to the philosophers Kanakadasa and Zhuangzi. A quote from the Chinese 4th-century BC philosopher Zhuangzi is mentioned at the beginning of the movie. *'Nee Mayeyolago'*, a popular writing of Indian 16th century Haridasa and philosopher Kanakadasa, is a repeated refrain in the movie. This writing asks questions like, "Are you in the illusion, or is the illusion in you? Are you in the body, or is the body in you?" The poem is also included in the movie's song *'Nee Toreda Galigeyali'*, which further emphasizes the juxtaposition of dream/illusion and reality.



**'Lucia has Philosophical References to Kanakadasa and Zhuangzi**

Source: Wikimedia Commons

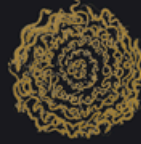
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXpLbmqxM6U>



**Stills from the Song 'Nee Toreda Galigeyali', featuring references to Kanakadasa's 'Nee Mayeyolago'**

Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot

The film has had a significant cultural impact. It has been praised as "an entertaining new Kannada film that pushes the envelope even as it pays homage to the old way of doing things" (Rangan, 2013). It has become a beloved cult classic and was even re-released in theaters for its tenth anniversary. It was remade in Tamil as '*Enakkul Oruvan*' (2015).

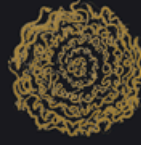


The film is often considered one of the pioneers of a new wave of Kannada cinema, alongside films like *'Ulidavaru Kandanth'*, *'RangiTaranga'*, and *'Kavaludaari'*. *'Lucia'* is particularly notable for kick-starting a new trend in cinema at a time when the industry was saturated with commercial action movies, mafia movies, and romantic comedies. Although these more mainstream movies are still aplenty, the success of *'Lucia'* has inspired many filmmakers to dip their toes into more uncharted and unconventional themes and approaches to cinema. *'Lucia'* thus remains a memorable watch that is both entertaining and gives food for thought.



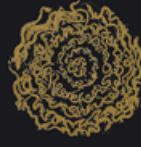
**The Film has Interesting Framing Choices and Wide Shots**

Source: Audience Films, Film Screenshot

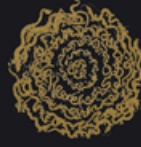


## References:

- A Sharadhaa. "Lucia to Premiere at LIFF." *The New Indian Express*, 2 July 2013, <http://newindianexpress.com/entertainment/kannada/Lucia-to-premiere-at-LIFF/2013/07/02/article1662455.ece>.
- Ganesh, Ambarish. "Lucia | Kannada Movie Review- Tribute to the Single-Screen Appeal." *Indian Nerve*, 9 Sept. 2013, <https://indiannerve.com/lucia-kannada-movie-review-tribute-to-the-single-screen-appeal-65356-10991>.
- Gooptu, Biswarup, and Sangeetha Kandavel. "Crowd-funding Show Gains Pace With Kannada Movie Lucia, Over 100 People Invest Through Facebook and Blog." *The Economic Times*, 13 Apr. 2013, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/crowd-funding-show-gains-pace-with-kannada-movie-lucia-over-100-people-invest-through-facebook-blog/articleshow/19521049.cms?from=mdr>.
- *Indian Film Festival 2013 – London*. 6 Oct. 2014, <http://www.britishsouthindians.co.uk/indian-film-festival-2013-london>.
- Khajane, Muralidhara. "Chasing New Frontiers." *The Hindu*, 2 June 2016, [www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-fridayreview/chasing-new-frontiers/article5121242.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-fridayreview/chasing-new-frontiers/article5121242.ece).



- Kodur, Swaroop. “Lucia’ Has Particularly Taught Me to Rely on My Natural Instincts as a Filmmaker - Pawan Kumar.” *The Times of India*, 21 July 2021, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/kannada/movies/news/lucia-has-particularly-taught-me-to-rely-on-my-natural-instincts-as-a-filmmaker-pawan-kumar/articleshow/84590892.cms>.
- “Movie Review: Lucia - a Pill Worth a Debate.” *The Express Tribune*, 26 Sept. 2013, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/609642/movie-review-lucia-a-pill-worth-a-debate>.
- Rangan, Baradwaj. “Stranger Than Fiction.” *The Hindu*, 7 Oct. 2013, [www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/stranger-than-fiction/article5208712.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/stranger-than-fiction/article5208712.ece).
- Tinkku, Harish. “Review of Pawan Kumar’s Lucia.” *BehindWoods.com*, [www.behindwoods.com/tamil-movies-cinema-fans-column/review-for-public-funded-kannada-movie-lucia-lucia-pawan-kumar.html](http://www.behindwoods.com/tamil-movies-cinema-fans-column/review-for-public-funded-kannada-movie-lucia-lucia-pawan-kumar.html).



## Image Citations:

- <https://images.app.goo.gl/NxLpay5GhLwqjyNQ8>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/FScx53Jfvrymm76y8>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/bQmR8Wjuj58nze817>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/UQ2Vd2VyYbeVpRmQ7>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/VeS4N4QnyMmLMGGr7>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/Y2aSqwLSSvEBsM7U9>
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christopher\\_Nolan,\\_London,\\_2013.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christopher_Nolan,_London,_2013.jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:David\\_Lynch\\_\(cropped\\_edit\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:David_Lynch_(cropped_edit).jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amenabar\\_\(22022306905\)\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amenabar_(22022306905)_(cropped).jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kanakadasa\\_art.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kanakadasa_art.jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%E7%8E%84%E9%96%80%E5%8D%81%E5%AD%90%E5%9C%96\\_%E8%8E%8A%E5%AD%90.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%E7%8E%84%E9%96%80%E5%8D%81%E5%AD%90%E5%9C%96_%E8%8E%8A%E5%AD%90.jpg)