

The Conflict Between True Identity and Social Conditioning Through Cinematic Expression in *Tamasha* (2015)

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Abstract

This research paper explores the theme of identity conflict in the 2015 Hindi film *Tamasha*, directed by Imtiaz Ali. The film presents a layered narrative that examines how social conditioning shapes individuals into predefined roles, often suppressing their authentic selves. Through its unique storytelling structure, visual symbolism, and character arcs, *Tamasha* critiques the rigid expectations of modern society while advocating for self-discovery and emotional authenticity. This paper analyses the psychological, cinematic, and narrative elements that highlight the struggle between true identity and socially constructed personas.

1. Introduction

In contemporary society, individuals are often expected to conform to socially acceptable norms, which can lead to the suppression of their true identities. Cinema has long served as a medium to reflect and critique such societal pressures allways. *Tamasha* (2015) stands out as a significant work in Indian cinema that explores this conflict in a deeply introspective and artistic manner. The film follows the journey of Ved Vardhan Sahni (Ranbir Kapoor), a man caught between his imaginative, storytelling self and the rigid corporate identity imposed upon him. This paper aims to examine how *Tamasha* uses cinematic techniques, narrative structure, and character development to portray the tension between authenticity and social conditioning.

2. Literature Review

The concept of identity formation has been widely discussed in psychological and sociological studies. Scholars such as Erik Erikson have emphasized the importance of identity in personal development, while Erving Goffman's theory of self-presentation explains how individuals perform roles based on societal expectations. In the context of cinema, identity conflict is a recurring theme. Films often depict characters struggling to reconcile their inner desires with external pressures. However, *Tamasha* distinguishes itself by blending traditional storytelling with modern psychological insights, creating a narrative that resonates with contemporary audiences and sometimes it's important also.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in theories of identity and social conditioning. Social conditioning refers to the process by which individuals learn and internalize societal norms and expectations. this conditioning shapes behavior, beliefs, and self-perception Over time. The film also reflects elements of existentialism, particularly the idea that individuals must create their own meaning in life rather than conforming to predefined roles. Ved's journey can be seen as an existential struggle to reclaim his authentic self hard to believe.

4. Narrative Structure and Storytelling

One of the most distinctive aspects of *Tamasha* is its non-linear narrative structure. The film alternates between Ved's life in Corsica, where he is free enjoying life and expressive, and his life in India, where he conforms to societal expectations. The Corsica sequences represent a space of liberation, where Ved (Ranbir Kapoor) and Tara (Deepika Padukone) adopt fictional identities and engage in storytelling because Ved doesn't want to spend time in Corsica he wants to enjoy. This setting symbolizes a world free from judgment, allowing Ved to express his true self. In contrast, his life in India is depicted as monotonous and restrictive, highlighting the impact of social conditioning. The use of storytelling within the film serves as a metaphor for identity. Ved's passion for stories reflects his desire to live authentically, while his corporate life represents the suppression of that desire.

5. Character Analysis: Ved Vardhan Sahni

Ved's character embodies the central conflict of the film. As a child, he is deeply fascinated by stories and mythology, he loves to hear stories which shape his imaginative worldview. However, societal pressures gradually force him into a conventional career path. As an adult, Ved experiences a sense of disconnection and dissatisfaction. His inability to reconcile his true self with his social identity leads to emotional distress. This internal conflict is portrayed through his erratic behavior and eventual breakdown. Ved's journey is one of self-realization. Through his relationship with Tara, he begins to confront the artificiality of his constructed identity and seeks to rediscover his authentic self he found himself.

6. Cinematic Techniques and Symbolism

Tamasha employs a range of cinematic techniques to reinforce its themes. The contrast between vibrant, colorful visuals in Corsica and muted tones in India reflects Ved's emotional state. Music plays a crucial role in expressing the character's inner turmoil. Songs such as "Agar Tum Saath Ho" and "Matargashti" serve as emotional anchors, conveying the highs and lows of Ved's journey. Symbolism is also evident in the recurring motif of storytelling. The character of the storyteller in Ved's childhood represents the enduring power of imagination and the importance of staying connected to one's true self.

7. Social Conditioning and Its Impact

The film critiques the rigid structures of modern society, particularly the emphasis on stable careers and social status. Ved's corporate job symbolizes the monotony and lack of creativity that often accompany such expectations. Social conditioning is depicted as a force that discourages individuality and promotes conformity. Ved's transformation into a "robotic" individual highlights the psychological cost of suppressing one's true identity. The film suggests that breaking free from these constraints requires courage and self-awareness. Ved's eventual decision to embrace his passion for storytelling represents a rejection of societal norms in favour of personal fulfilment then he knows how to be happy.

8. Role of Tara in Identity Realization

Tara (Deepika Padukone) serves as a catalyst in Ved's journey of self-discovery. Unlike Ved, she initially conforms to societal expectations but gradually recognizes the importance of authenticity. Her confrontation with Ved forces him to acknowledge the disparity between his true self and his constructed identity. Tara's role highlights the significance of relationships in shaping and challenging one's sense of self Tara helps a lot indirectly.

9. Discussion

Tamasha presents a nuanced exploration of identity conflict, emphasizing the tension between individuality and conformity. The film's innovative narrative and cinematic style enhance its thematic depth, making it a compelling study of modern identity. The portrayal of Ved's psychological struggle resonates with audiences who experience similar conflicts in their own lives. By addressing these issues, the film encourages viewers to question societal norms and prioritize self expression because life is very short do whatever you want to do.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, *Tamasha* (2015) effectively portrays the conflict between true identity and social conditioning through its narrative, characters, and cinematic techniques. The film serves as a critique of societal expectations while advocating for authenticity and self-discovery. Ved's journey underscores the importance of staying connected to one's inner self, even in the face of external pressures. Ultimately, *Tamasha* reminds us that true fulfillment comes from embracing who we are, rather than conforming to who society expects us to be.



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