

Individual in society

Society



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Comparative essay The elective 'the individual in society' explores the conflict between autonomy and the social conventions that inscribe human behaviour. All societies require conformity, and fear of rejection can allow an individual to compromise their values in order to be accepted. The social constraints of any society can only be understood within their context and both *Persuasion* and *Muriel's wedding* explore the superficial paradigms of marriage, friendship and social class.

The restrictive Georgian society in *Persuasion* where patriarchal institutions position women as objects of economic exchange serves to limit their individuality, whilst *Muriel's wedding* offers insight into the social codes that confine the individual both emotionally and physically. When comparing both texts, the fickle nature of romance is incoherent outside of its contextual parameters. This essay also highlights the distinctive difference between the individual's attributes compared to other characters. In *Persuasion* by Jane Austen emotional and physical boundaries are placed by society restricting individuals such as Anne.

Superficial values including class, status, marriage and appearance are held with high importance for many characters such as for Sir Walter Elliot. This is shown through 'vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character. Vanity of person and of situation'. The repetition 'Vanity' is used to exemplify Sir Walter's pride and stupidity of 'person' meaning appearance and beauty and 'situation' meaning status. By her use of irony in his comment Anne gives a subtle moral judgement on Sir Walter, and all who possess his qualities of vanity and stupidity.

In Muriel's Wedding by PJ Hogans also depicts the importance of superficial values such as reputation among the characters. This is shown when Muriel's friend Nicole uses satire " We don't want you hanging around us anymore". The use of satire adds humour to criticize Muriel's friend exaggerated stupidity. Muriel's friends continuously worry about the physical appearance as shown in: " We've told you a thousand times how to do your hair but you never listen. You never wear the right clothes. " Cheryl uses 1st person and 2nd person to signify the difference between them and Muriel, highlighting her isolation from the rest of the group.

This adds peer pressure for Muriel to conform to be accepted by the popular group. In Muriel's wedding the characters only find pleasure through false appearances of marriage they believe it symbolise to them that they are successful because they found someone with high status and appearance. Irony and satire is used to ridicule Sophie Lee's foolishness that even though her husband cheated on her she continues to appreciate him because of his appearance and status as shown in " You've got to find people in your own level. Like i found chook.

He's on my level. Marrying him was the happiest day of my life. I love him so much. That bastard! I'll show him. I'll go on this holiday and sleep with a thousand men. " Muriel is influenced by her and societies expectations of marriage. This is shown when David asks " what kind of person marries someone they don't love? " The use of rhetorical question makes the audience consider that Muriel only married because she is obsessed with the appearance of marriage. Marriage in this film equates to acceptance from society because it reflects success.

This limits her individuality until the final scenes her true sense of worth comes back after her mother dies that she finally realises that she has not been truthful she repeats the use of first person “ i” to signify the continues lies she has told “ i can’t marry to you, David. I have to stop lying now. I’ve told so many lies. I don’t love you”. In the end she accepts her individuality and is confident within herself and says “ goodbye” to different locations of Porpoise Spit to symbolise that she is free from all the emotional restrictions that Porpoise Spit had placed on her.

Unlike Muriel, Rhonda is confident with herself and does not attempt to fit in. She is different from the girls physically and emotionally. The Sophie Lee characters wear similar bright coloured clothes the flamboyant colours of their costume may reflect that they are seeking attention and the similarity in design and colours between the girls’ dresses, hair styles, personality show they are attempting to belong in a group and shows no individuality. Whereas in contrasts to Rhonda’s dark black cropped hair is in difference to Sophie lee, her friends and Muriel.

Her character also depicts that she is an individual as she is outspoken and honest. This is shown when she says “ Nicole’s having an affair with Chook. Muriel saw them fucking in the laundry room on your wedding day. Stick your drink up your ass, Tania! I'd rather swallow razor blades than have a drink with you. Oh, by the way... I'm not alone. I'm with Muriel. ” Her confidence is portrayed through the use of coarse, upfront language and that she tells the truth.

The symbol “ razor blades” also portrays this confidence that she is so self-assured that she looks at them as beneath her she exaggerates her opinion

of them through this symbol. In conclusion there are many pressures within each society in Muriel's wedding and Persuasion which confine the individuals Anne and Muriel. There are many factors considered that show Muriel and Anne as individual. Anne does not derive the same pleasure as others in her Georgian society from superficial values such as status, wealth and appearance.

In an often satirical portrait of the men and, women Austen subtly and ironically points out faults in the system, raising questions about the values of English society and the power structure of the country. Similarly Muriel is also an individual as she does not belong but attempts to conform within the late 20th century suburbia social codes. At the final scenes of the movie she realises that she has told many lies and accepts her individuality. Muriel is an outcast and an individual in the initial scenes of the film. She attempts to conform within the group.

This is portrayed when the group rejects her because she is so different from them but Muriel says " Listen, i know I'm not normal, but i'm tryin to change. " This depicts her desperation to be in the group and low self-esteem, as she even considers herself as worthless using the description " not normal". Patriarchal society in which men held the economic and social power. In restrictive Georgian society women attempt to gain a livelihood through a successful marriage which constraints Anne to marry her true love Wentworth as he does not have status nor wealth.