

Essay Plan - Individual vs society

‘How does Shakespeare present the conflict between individual desires and societal expectations in Romeo and Juliet?’

Key words need to use constantly (link back to word from Q):

- Individual desires
- Societal expectations

Key:

- **Purple words** = my point for that paragraph
- **Orange words** = linking back to the question
- (make sure you have 1 point per paragraph constantly link back to, this can normally be another key theme but if not use a word/phrase, and then the word from the question)
- **Perfect paragraph:** **your point** + **word from question** (lots of times)

Overview of Plan:

- **Point 1:** Lord C sees Juliet's pursuit of **individual desires** to be an **assault** on the **societal expectations** within the **patriarchy**
- **Point 2:** Folly of youth – love so **transcendent** that pursuit of **individual desires** will overthrow **societal expectations**
- **Point 3:** If **individual desires** are pursued at the expense of **societal ones**, it will lead to your **tragic demise**

Point 1

Lord Capulet is a microcosm for the aristocracy (highest class in society) and patriarchy (male-dominated society) within Elizabethan society. Thus, Juliet's pursuit of her **individual desires** causes a conflict as she **assaults** the **societal expectations** within the **patriarchy** - she consequently assaults her father and his position of authority as the patriarch.

- **Evidence:** "hang, beg, starve, die", Act 3
- **Asyndetic listing (using commas in a list instead of and):** The asyndeton intensifies Lord Capulet's venomous anger towards Juliet's disobedience in pursuing her **individual desires** and not marrying Paris. This is an **assault on the patriarchy** and violates the societal expectations of her as a daughter.
- **Patriarchy (male-dominated society):** fathers held authority over their daughters and used their marriages to enhance their own social and financial standing. Juliet's refusal was an **assault on the patriarchy** and a gross revolt (action against) against the natural order of society and **societal expectation**.
- This highlights the conflict between adhering to **social expectations** and fulfilling one's **individualistic desires**. Lord Capulet, consumed by duty and **societal expectations**, clings to these conventions even if it means sacrificing his daughter's well-being.

Point 2

Shakespeare presents the eponymous (name in the title of the play) character of Romeo as a folly of youth (foolishness of the young) as he believes his **individual desires** and love for Juliet is **transcendent** (beyond human) – no **societal expectations** or physical boundaries can constrain it.

- **Evidence:** *“with love’s wings did [he] o’erperch these walls, for stony limits cannot hold love out”* act 2
- **Metaphor:** has a classical allusion to Cupid, the Roman God of love, often depicted with wings. This shows that for Romeo love is a **transcendent** (beyond human) force capable of defying **societal expectations** and physical boundaries.
- **Speaks in verse:** Romeo speaks in verse (iambic pentameter) and this characterises him to be romantic and decorative in his language showing his **individual desires** of love, and belief of its **transcendence**, to take precedence (priority) over **societal expectations**.
- In this scene, Shakespeare creates a haven (place of safety) of romantic hope, momentarily separate from the obstacles of **societal expectations** and limitations

Point 3

Through the character of Juliet, Shakespeare illustrates how the pursuit of **individual desires** and the disregard for **societal** and familial **expectations** will lead to an individual's **tragic demise**.

- **Evidence:** *"Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!" Act 5*
- **Oxymoron:** (two contrasting words placed side by side), illustrates Juliet's profound sorrow as she seeks comfort in death and her ability to finally pursue her **individual desire**, seeing it as an eternal reunion with Romeo.
- This act of self-sacrifice characterises her as a tragic heroine (starts off noble and has a fall). Her impulsiveness is her hamartia (fatal flaw) which led her to blindly follow her **individual desire**, leading to her **tragic demise**.
- **Diction on "brief":** Juliet's urgent desire to escape from a world where their forbidden love challenges **societal expectations** enforced by law, family, and religion. Even in their **tragic demise**, they can finally be together, free from these obstacles.