Who is Moll Flanders?

I argue that Moll’s identity is an opposition of how women were portrayed in society during Eighteenth-Century England. The character struggles to progress through the novel because her constant inability to support herself and her desires to marry for money and class rather than love.

Moll as a Gentlewoman

MOLL’S actions of stealing and always staying on the move allows the reader to respect her character and have an understanding of the life she would like to live; one that is perfect with no struggles for money or happiness. A life much different than any life she has ever known.

WILLIAM J. KRIER argues that Moll indeed “has control of her destiny, she can act directly in her own behalf, but to do so exclusively would be to insult and often to exploit the good faith of others” (410).

Moll as a Cruel Manipulator

EVERY person Moll meets and encounters along her life’s journey positively and negatively impacts the progression of her true identity, but never stops her from being a “gentlewoman” on the move and living a life of a felon just like her mother.

MOLL’S confusion of her own identity is much more societal problems that personal problems; she attempts to manipulate others in order to achieve a perfect life she is not sure exists.

JOHN LOCKE admits that we also assent to many things only on the basis of their “probability,” and for such knowledge we depend upon the good offices of another person who, by virtue of his greater acquaintance with the subject, is a “Man of credit” (O’Brien 603).