Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes*:
A Comparative Study

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for the degree of M.A. in English Literature

Submitted by
Mahmood Mahmood

Supervised by
Dr. Abdulsalam Hamad

Assistant Professor

Declaration

This dissertation is a presentation of my original research, except where otherwise stated. Other resources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

The work was done under the guidance of Dr. Abdulsalam Hamad, at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Al-Baath University.
Dedication

To the soul of my mother

and

To my father, brothers and sisters

With Love.
Acknowledgments

I'd like to heartily thank my supervisor Dr. Abdulsalam Hamad, who supported me in every possible way to finish this work. Also, many thanks go to the luminaries of English Department who stood by me whenever I needed help along this wonderful journey. I’d like further to thank Dr. Glauco Ortolano who provided me with his interview with Paulo Coelho for *World Literature Today*.

I wish to extend my thanks to my family and friends who were always there to support me and lift my morale till the finishing touches of this dissertation.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the realm of subjectivity in Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* and Paulo Coelho’s *Eleven Minutes*. Since subjectivity is a broad term, I’d like to narrow the topic to encompass gender roles and boundaries and analyse social–constructionism versus self–constructionism in both novels. How do both heroines act and react in their worlds with the encumbrances and predicaments they encounter? How are they similar and dissimilar in terms of social constructionism and self–constructionism?

Hence, this thesis basically aims at comparing the subjectivities of the heroines and the societal forces that shape their characters. In the first chapter, the focal point is Moll Flanders as a socially constructed character. The critical background will depend on major critics of Defoe. Furthermore, gender relations are explored according to Jacque Lacan, Joan Riviere and Judith Butler. The second chapter concentrates on Maria as a self–constructed character, immune to societal forces in Coelho’s *Eleven Minutes*. Here, I base my analysis on approaching and contrasting notions of gender according to major critics in this vein like
Sigmund Freud and Jean Baudrillard. In the third chapter, a comparative study is conducted between the subjectivities of both heroines. The closing chapter sums up the main points. The authors’ approaches to their works are also shortly presented and appraised. Each writer presents his work in a different way.
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Introduction

Before plunging into the analytical practical study of this dissertation, a theoretical exploration of some terms is to be demonstrated. In his incisive polemic Subjectivity, Donald E. Hall succinctly attributes subjectivity to “a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity, at the same time allowing a myriad of limitations and often unknowable, unavoidable constraints on our ability to fully comprehend identity”.¹ In The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory, social constructionism is defined as “[a]n epistemological theory according to which material forces emanating from social and cultural institutions construct individual IDENTITY and SUBJECTIVITY”.² Thus, self-constructionism stands as opposed to social constructionism in the struggle over subjectivity: who is to control? Agency is also defined as “[t]he power of a human SUBJECT to exert his or her will in the social world. To have agency is to have social power; to lack it is to be ignored or subjugated by others who possess it.”³ In this sense, to what extent are Moll and Maria conscious of the factors and forces that shape their personalities and constitute their individuality, and, hence, they are

³ Ibid., p. 306.
responsible for the repercussions of their decisions and actions? Is it the society that affects them or is it their free will that conducts their *modi vivendi*?

In “Constructing the Subject, Deconstructing the Text,” Catherine Belsey states; “One of the central issues for feminism is the cultural construction of subjectivity.”⁴ Though the main thesis is not directly feminist, the exploration of the novels concentrates on the circumstances and impulses that make Moll and Maria choose prostitution (and theft in Moll’s case, as well) as a way of living. Furthermore, the study refers to Sigmund Freud’s notion of gender poles and how Jean Baudrillard debunks it. William Pawlett shows this difference in his *Jean Baudrillard; “For Baudrillard the body is understood as ‘cultural fact’ . . . not as a biological or natural ‘fact.’ In other words, the ways in which we understand our bodies, or our embodiment, depends upon the culture in which we live.”⁵ Baudrillard himself assures, contrary to Freud, that “[a]natomy is not destiny.”⁶ Similarly, Elizabeth Grosz emphasises that “the body must be regarded as a site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions, production, or constitution. The body is not

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opposed to culture, a resistant throwback to a natural past; it is itself a cultural, *the* cultural, product."\(^7\) Thus, the study will depend on the social-constructionism versus self-constructionism of both heroines. Hence, it is a matter of representation and self-representation, and the struggle it brings into surface as Teresa de Lauretis reflects; ‘The construction of gender is the product and the process of both representation and self-representation.’\(^8\)

Chapter one explores in part the communal forces that shape the individuality of Moll Flanders and reflect her agency. How does social constructionism forge her character? How does she react? In other words, to what extent is she self-conscious of what occurs to her? Such questions will get the answers according to major critics of Daniel Defoe. In addition, the implementation of masquerade by Moll will be tackled and how it contributes to her subjectivity in the light of Jacques Lacan, Joan Riviere and Judith Butler versus Sigmund Freud. Chapter two aims at an analysis of the feminine odyssey, mainly of Maria in Paulo Coelho’s *Eleven Minutes* in the light of Jean Baudrillard’s notion of gender poles as an anti-thesis to Sigmund Freud’s. This analysis will


\(^8\) Ibid., p. 117.
be conducted whenever pertinent with a comparative study between Maria and Moll’s subjectivities. Chapter three sheds the light on the subjectivities of both heroines altogether with deeper comparison of their demeanour and behavior in addition to approaching similar or opposing situations that encounter them. The conclusion sums up the foregoing discussion of subjectivity with reference to the authors' opinions of the purpose of their writings.

It is not fair analyzing Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* in terms of feminine subjectivity without touching upon Freud, especially that Coelho mentions him in one of the conversations between Maria and the librarian Heidi.

Interestingly enough, the lives of both writers intersect in several terrains: Defoe was a journalist and a dissenter, and Coelho was a journalist and a nonconformist, as well. Defoe lived in an age when women had no freedom. Coelho also lived in a "period of conservatism and repression." Moreover, Coelho claims in an interview to *World Literature Today* magazine that his "literature is totally committed to a new political attitude: man in search of his own identity." It is like a

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recurrent motif in Coelho’s oeuvre, especially *The Alchemist*, *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept*, *The Zahir*, *Warrior of the Light: A Manual*, *Aleph*, and his latest ground-breaking 2014 *Adultery* in which he hints at agency in the lives of human beings;

YOU don’t choose your life; it chooses you. There’s no point asking why life has reserved certain joys or griefs, you just accept them and carry on. We can’t choose our lives, but we can decide what to do with the joys or griefs we’re given. . . . We aren’t who we want to be. We are what society demands. We are what our parents choose. We don’t want to disappoint anyone; we have a great need to be loved. So we smother the best in us. Gradually, the light of our dreams turns into the monster of our nightmares. They become things not done, possibilities not lived.  

Coelho premises his writing on this foundation and goes on showing the struggles of his hero/ine against social construction. How can Maria face the world alone in a strange country? Hence, the motivation to write this dissertation stems from such interesting similarities to probe the depths of the worlds of two writers from different eras and different cultures.

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Chapter I

Social Constructionism of Moll Flanders

Defoe exposes the maltreatment of women in eighteenth-century England through the character of Moll Flanders. In his ‘The Education of women,’ he criticises depriving women from their right of education;

I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and a Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence; while I am confident, had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves.  

So, social injustice and male–prejudiced society depriving women of education are the main reasons of women’s depravation and corruption. Moll chooses to be a prostitute because her society is not one like the French that takes care of orphans as she refers to this point at the early stages of her life;

Had this been the custom in our country, I had not been left a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without help or helper in the world, as was my fate; and by which I was not only exposed to very great distresses, even before I was capable either of understanding my case or how to

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amend it, but brought into a course of life which was not only scandalous in itself, but which in its ordinary course tended to the swift destruction both of soul and body.¹³

The social construction of Moll's character is quite manifest especially at this stage of her life. She is on her own, left with no one to provide her with the suitable care and education. She prepares the reader in a prophesying way to what is to come and that her future is not going to be that really auspicious one. Defoe – in excoriating his society for not educating women and starting the novel with Moll lambasting the indifference of her society towards orphans – take a feminist stand defending and fortifying her against any accusations of presupposed amoral nature.

The seeds instilled in her during childhood are the responsibility of her society. Her early subjectivity and self-consciousness are socially constructed. There is some kind of foreshadowing here. She prepares the reader for the idea that what she has become is not her fault but the fault of her government and her society. The reader can also notice in this text/passage the dire material situation of orphans who are left helpless and defenseless against the aggressions of life; the very

¹³ Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1988), p. 10. All subsequent references to the novel will be to this edition and they will be parenthesized.
justifiable reason that makes one deviate from the right path. Thus, she is not suitably socially raised up and cared for. One can also ponder over the legitimacy and rationalized justification of Moll's deeds and propensities and whether there is any religious encumbrance that restrains her from conducting prostitution to get her living. Moll does not receive the suitable religious education in her early childhood. Being born in Newgate prison, she "had no parish to have recourse to for my nourishment in my infancy. . ." (p. 10). This is another drawback that should be taken on the English government and society for not giving children a proper religious cultivation. Moll is alienated and estranged within her own society and religion. The concentration on materiality and peripheralisation of spirituality will make of the society members more merchandisable and malevolent than cooperative and benevolent.

During her life with the nurse till she gets eight years old, she endeavours to avoid going to the service, something which was common in eighteenth-century England. It is true that she is afraid of going there; however, the main reason she does not want to is that she wants to be a gentlewoman. Hence, one can see that Moll Flanders is conscious of herself and identity even at this early period of her life. In spite of the fact that her knowledge of what a 'gentlewoman' means – i.e. 'to be
able to work for myself, and get enough to keep me without that terrible bugbear going to service" (p. 14) – is naïve; still she does not comply to degrade herself to going to service. Agency and self-consciousness are present at Moll's early childhood.

At a later stage, during her residence with the Colchester family, Moll manages to learn French, dancing, singing and playing music. Thus, she refines her character with education and knowledge confined to high-class people only. She gains a higher sense of her identity as she asserts her vantage points comparing herself to the family daughters; "I was apparently handsomer than any of them; . . . I was better shaped; and . . . I sang better, by which I mean I had a better voice; in all which you will, I hope, allow me to say, I do not speak my own conceit of myself, but the opinion of all that knew the family." (p. 19)

G. A. Starr in 'Defoe and Casuistry: Moll Flanders' claims that Moll admits being vain in her adolescence years; however "her pride was neither groundless nor self-generated."14 The evidence is her just aforementioned talents and excellences.

Since she is a beauty, Moll also falls in love with the eldest brother Robert. Though love and sweet words motivate her at first, yet money plays the major role and prompts her to risk herself into an illegal affair. Thus, money is a raison d'être of her deviation and nonconformity and it is her society that drives her to that.

Many critics stand by Moll and lay over the society the whole agency and moral responsibility for her depravation. In an article titled "Genuine Artistic Intent," Alan Dugald McKillop delineates eighteenth-century England as "a dangerous hinterland beyond the limits of respectability" and he perceives Moll as a victim of society, showing the workings of economic and social compulsion; an unfortunate adventuress, showing the workings of chance and random circumstance; a cool exponent of self-interest, systematically trying to figure profit and loss in business, love, and crime. Though an outcast from the middle class, she carries many of its standards with her.\(^\text{15}\)

In this passage, McKillop shows Moll's milieu as a materialistic one interested in money and profit. This reflects on and affects Moll's character as the reader notices her pecuniary reflections on the amount

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of money she gains after every relation, marriage, bargain or theft. Furthermore, what supports McKillop’s idea about the society victimizing Moll is the Colchester-sister's censure and dispraise of the patriarchal male-dominated society and its commodification of women;

[T]he market is against our sex just now; and if a young woman have beauty, birth, breeding, wit, sense, manners, modesty, and all these to an extreme, yet if she have not money, she's nobody, she had as good want them all for nothing but money now recommends a woman; the men play the game all into their own hands. (p. 20)

Hence, women lack every simple right they deserve because they do not have money. Therefore, they are maladjusted. Moll turns to be a prostitute when she has no husband to provide her with protection and security. In order to act accordingly with her society, she becomes materialistically oriented. McKillop puts it clearly; "Moll may be tout entiere a sa proie attachée . . . [S]he is after all concerned with the social and economic preconditions for sexual union. She is too business–like to be either demure or lascivious."\(^{16}\) Her society is materialistic and so becomes Moll. Her marriages and sexual liaisons are based on materialistic profits and benefits. Her subjectivity is the product of her society. A materialistic society engenders a generation

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\(^{16}\) McKillop, p. 351.
interested in money and indifferent to morals. Moll is dyed with the general atmosphere of her milieu. Therefore, little responsibility and agency are laid upon her for opting for a twisted way of life.

Ian Watt, one of Defoe's most famous commentators, overtly supports Defoe's "The Education of Women" along with other writings which elicit "a somewhat rancorous spirit towards the failure of the gentry to provide proper models of conduct . . ."17 This is just like Moll's aforementioned condemnation of the maltreatment of orphans and the society's indifference to women and its sexism. The result is Moll's prostitution when she has no husband. She makes of her body a commodity. That is what it is in a society that knows nothing more prerequisite than materiality and money. In the "Unity of Moll Flanders," Terence Martin analyses Moll's subjectivity and metamorphic selfhood comparing her status when she is a prostitute and when she is a robber. In her first career, Moll's sex is her basic resource to live a respectable life; respectable in the context of eighteenth-century middle-class standards. She is a "shrewd bargainer, aware that the market value of a woman depends principally upon herself, she has traded on sex as a

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commodity to get on respectably in the world." Here, one may object to Martin's point concerning respectability because Moll is always in need of material or marital security. Of course, marital security should ensure the material one. At the first period of her coming to Bath, she declares that she has no motives to be a mistress of any kind under any circumstances; "I was not wicked enough to come into the crime for the mere vice of it . . ." (p. 94). In her second career, age becomes a main factor that eliminates sex from Moll's game. She resorts to sex and masquerade. For Terence Martin, Moll's motive to steal is her need to survive rather than middle-class uprightness. This change in professions from prostitution to theft, according to Watt, is attributed to Moll's pliable and adaptable subjectivity. Whether looking for respectability or survival, it is society that holds the whole responsibility for her deviation. Firstly, a patriarchal society has no respect for women. Secondly, surviving in such a society requires schematic resourceful persona one cannot imagine biddable to male-oriented and male-formulated rules. Thus, Moll finds herself locked in the eighteenth-century English patriarchal impasse with no decent way to live by. Her nonconformity through using

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her body as a means to get her living and robbery for the same reason are foisted on her by the societal forces surrounding her. Terence Martin suggests that Moll's thefts symbolize 'her desire to have back again the reliable 'goods' that have departed – her fertility and the accompanying sexual attractiveness of younger days.'\(^{19}\) She has nostalgia for her seductiveness and productiveness despite the fact that she is indifferent to her children. This is not a *nostalgie de la boue*. On the contrary, this is a nostalgia to feel her own existence in a matriarchally–peripherally–dominated patriarchally–dominated society. Women's position in eighteenth–century England is just peripheral. This leads them to pursue twisted ways to go on their lives without the domination of the alpha male. The making of the female identity at this period of the English history is social. The societal forces of that period are the causal circumstances that forge the female subject. In his article 'Defoe as a Comic Artist,' Martin Price summarises Moll's motive to wrongdoing as follows; 'Her drive is in part the inevitable quest for security, the island of property that will keep one above the waters of an individualistic, cruelly commercial society.'\(^{20}\) There is no self–consciousness in Moll's actions and deeds as Price

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 364.

holds; "[T]he ways of her heart are revealed to her by her conduct more than by her consciousness."\textsuperscript{21} This point, however, is objectionable because Moll knows how to weigh the balance and whether it is to her benefit or loss. One may say that she is partially self–conscious and the social agency is more active than the personal (self) agency of the heroine. More closely scrutinized, Price sees Moll's inventories as ‘the balance of freedom against necessity’ and ‘poverty is the inescapable temptation to crime.’\textsuperscript{22} This is in economic terms. Here, the inventories are her assets and belongings that confirm her character and existence in a materialistic society. A materialistically–formulated and constructed society drives its citizens to act accordingly. Martin Price goes on further to probe deeply Moll’s character. For instance, he examines her relationship with the Bath lover and perceives as contradictory. First, she remarks that her coming to live together is by all means unpremeditated. However, she later confesses that she intended to have him sleep with her since the first conversing moments they shared. For Price, Moll is "a creature of mixed and unstable motives" and that ‘what [Moll] had been prepared to accept through economic necessity, she has encouraged

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.378.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 381.
through inclination."²³ Here, she is culpable for giving herself up when she is not in need. That is to say that once man puts one step on the road of vice, there is no going back. Indeed, it is so difficult to retrace one’s steps because seduction starts to work on. After a good while in wrongdoing, backtracking to the right path becomes arduous and onerous. Thus, just little blame is thrust upon Moll for opting for a twisted way of living.

In his article "In Defence of Moll Flanders," Arnold Kettle lays the blame on the society and its indifference to women, "Moll becomes a criminal because she is a woman."²⁴ The milieu is the catalyst that makes women resort to prostitution or theft. Moll tends to stay independent when no man or money are guaranteed to keep her secure in a patriarchal society. She is unconsciously driven to behave in such a manner as Kettle claims; "Moll is forced to be an individualist by her decision to be free in the man's world of eighteenth-century England."²⁵ This is supported by Robert Alan Donovan in ‘The Two Heroines of Moll Flanders'; "[Moll's] motives are primarily economic, having less to do with

²³ Ibid., p. 384.
²⁵ Ibid., p. 395.
social status than with physical and material well-being. . . .”

Pecuniary security becomes pivotal in eighteenth-century England, especially for women. Donovan shows the motives behind Moll's first marriage from Robin:

Moll . . . is impelled by the strongest force of her character, her longing for material security and well-being, to desire this marriage . . . [S]he has naively allowed herself to be drawn into a liaison with the elder brother . . . and exchange[d] her present precarious situation for a secure and respectable one . . .

Thus, Moll's main motive to resort to marrying the younger brother despite her deep passion for the elder brother is purely financial or economic. She lacks the fortune to keep her integrity in a ferocious society. Here comes the focal point of the theory of subjectivity: agency and constructionism. Is Moll a subject or an object or both altogether? Is, as Donovan puts it, "the guilt of her life . . . her own rather than that of the heartless and venal society that has produced her"? Donovan denotes that Moll is a subject as well as an object and that "duality in her vision is a duality in herself." In her relation with Robert, Moll

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27 Ibid., p. 399.
28 Ibid., p. 403.
29 Ibid., p. 403.
makes of herself an object. More precisely, her body becomes the object with which she gains money and love; "I was more confounded with the money [italics mine] than I was before with the love, and began to be so elevated that I scarce knew the ground I stood on" (p. 23). For her, love is not as important as money. Money may secure her, but an illicit love relationship will not. Marriage may do, but in her relation with the bourgeois philanderer, Moll has no option but to accept his brother's proposal for marriage. Robert stands for the patriarchal order that Moll falls victim to. So, here Moll is an object; merely a thing manipulated then dumped. She becomes a subject when she starts to think rationally of marrying the younger brother Robin. She is faced with a deadlock and marriage is the sole way to save her reputation and secure her future. When she comes to weigh her condition, she is a subject. When she acts both ways, object and subject, it is her society that affects and directs her actions. Hence, it is the milieu that formulates and forges her character and from its laws stem her comportments. Besides, her culpability is removed since the "immoral act is nullified if the perpetrator is ignorant of its moral bearings."  

\[30\] Ibid., p. 403.
In his *English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century 1700–1789*, Clive T. Probyn demonstrates that when Moll’s society does not provide Moll with a cosy safe place she starts to find the means to rebel against its laws. She contrives the ways, defies and contravenes the patriarchal society ‘either by an act of will or through a deterministic necessity.’\(^{31}\) Moll needs to accommodate with the harsh circumstances and encumbrances that encounter her. She resorts to her body as an attraction, i.e. a means to gain money. Even in her early life and first relation with the elder brother, Robert, she is well aware of her beauty and the consequential financial results that follow or accompany the process of making love with Robert. Probyn puts it bluntly;

> For Moll the connection between her sex and money is made early on. Her first lover throws a purse of guineas into her lap at the moment he expresses his love for her. Moll is more excited by the money, which thereafter becomes the motive and the erotic product of her sexual relationships.\(^{32}\)

Supporting this, G. A. Starr shows how Moll was passive in succumbing to Robert’s seduction;

> [A]ll initiative is ascribed to the man, and much is made of Moll’s passivity. . . . [S]he represents herself as carried


\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 38.
along by her circumstances (here, the precarious dependence of her role in the Colchester family); by external inducements well adapted to her situation (here, a great deal of gold); and by the persuasiveness and cunning of others (here, a man full of flattery and stratagems who knows "as well how to catch a woman in his net as a partridge when he went a-setting").  

In other words, Starr concentrates on the social agency and its control over the heroine. For him, Moll has little agency and self-consciousness compared to the seductive power of vice: the society's diabolical drive for committing adultery and theft. Starr demonstrates, "Moll herself is characterised less by what she does [videlicet self-constructionism] than by an array of motives and pressures that contribute to her seduction [videlicet social constructionism]." In this sense, Moll is not culpable for succumbing to seduction.

Moll’s means of masquerading and its impact on her character meet Jacque Lacan’s concept of the masquerade and the Split Self and Joan Riviere’s notion of the masquerade.

Indeed, masquerade plays a major role in Moll’s life in going through the difficulties she encounters in her patriarchal society. When Moll reaches forty-eight, she turns from prostitution to theft. She wears 

33 Starr, p. 426.
34 Starr, p. 426.
man's clothes, picks up “Gabriel Spencer” as an alias, and goes out with a male partner in their thefts without letting him know her true identity or name. This masculine disguise has its significance in eighteenth–century English society. It has the work of defense mechanism. Theoretically speaking, this is well manifest and explored in Joan Riviere's article 'Womanliness as a Masquerade.' In 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade,' Stephen Heath states the pith of Riviere's article; "A woman identifies as a man – takes on masculine identity – and then identifies herself after all as a woman – takes up a feminine identity."³⁵ This self-conscious schizophrenic identity is a form of the woman's alienation which is more reinforced in patriarchal societies. Alienation is based on a lack of something. This creates a double identity and this is what Lacan’s discourse centres around: “the notion of “a divide,” a primary or fundamental split that renders the subject internally divided and that establishes the duality of the sexes.”³⁶ In psychoanalytic terms, what women lack is symbolically a phallus or a penis. This idea of lacking goes back to Sigmund Freud. She is symbolically a castrated woman with no power. In this vein, Heath posits;

The masquerade serves to show what she does not have, a penis, by showing – the adornment, the putting-on – something else, the phallus she becomes, as woman to man, sustaining his identity and an order of exchange of which she is the object. . . . Adornment is the woman, she exists veiled; only thus can she represent lack.\textsuperscript{37}

To project these ideas on Moll's life, one has to see them in the light of some critics of Defoe. In \textit{The Rise of the Novel}, Ian Watt refers to what is to be seen as masculine and feminine in Moll’s character;

\[T\]he essence of her character and actions is, to one reader at least, essentially masculine . . . . it is at least certain that Moll accepts none of the disabilities of her sex, and indeed one cannot but feel that Virginia Woolf’s admiration for her was largely due to admiration of a heroine who so fully realised one of the ideals of feminism: freedom from any involuntary involvement in the feminine role.\textsuperscript{38}

If this is to be true, then it is all to lay the blame on Moll’s society, which is absolutely masculine, that leads Moll to behave other than what her femaleness requires. That is to behave opposite to conformity: non-femininity and nonconformity. When a woman masquerades herself as a man, then there is something wrong in the system that manifests their [man and woman’s] relationship and determines the woman’s position in their milieu. There is no equality in gender terms. Women are lacking

\textsuperscript{37} Heath, p. 52.
compared to men. As Judith Butler denotes in her polemical study *Gender Trouble*, the position of women is inferior to that of men according to Jacque Lacan and her inferiority is due to a lack that is idiosyncratic; therefore, she is in need of masquerading because she is intrinsically in need of protection.\(^39\) Butler goes further on to delineate Lacan’s notion of the masquerade and its relation to women’s lack;

On the one hand, masquerade may be understood as the performative production of a sexual ontology, an appearing that makes itself convincing as a “being”; on the other hand, masquerade can be read as a denial of a feminine desire that presupposes some prior ontological femininity regularly unrepresented by the phallic economy.\(^40\)

To look at this from the perspective of eighteenth-century England, the catalyst of the masquerading woman is her peripheralisation by a purely patriarchal materialistic society. Had Moll not been marginalized, she would not have behaved other than what she really is. Had Moll not been in need of protection, she would not have disguised as a man and resorted to prostitution or theft. It is money that guarantees woman a respectable status in the man’s heart as the sister of the Colchester family remarks. To gain money, Moll has to play the game of men. Butler questions Riviere’s definition and notion

\(^{39}\) Butler, pp. 59-60
\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 60.
of the masquerade if it is “the means by which femininity itself is first established, the exclusionary practice of identity formation in which the masculine is effectively excluded and instated as outside the boundaries of a feminine gendered position . . .”

By projecting this idea on Defoe’s novel, one finds that this is quite axiomatic when Moll’s disguise as a man circumvents her from the conundrum of getting caught while stealing by just taking off the male appearance and recuperating her true identity, that of the female;

"[It was a long time before I could behave in my new clothes—I mean, as to my craft [viz. theft]. It was impossible to be so nimble, so ready, so dexterous at these things in a dress so contrary to nature; and I did everything clumsily, so I had neither the success nor the easiness of escape that I had before . . . (p. 188)"

At first, this *modus operandi* of masquerading does not fit with her femaleness or feminine identity. Then she endeavours to cope up with the situation in order to survive. Chicanery and deception are her means to feel secure in a fraudulent society. In other words, sartorial masquerading has its potential psychological bearings that give the person undercover a power against the other party. Moreover, what supports the aforementioned idea of masquerade according to Riviere is

41 Ibid., p. 61.
the apprehension of Moll’s complicitous man by the police. This is scathingly sarcastic and caustic in relation to the symbolism of man, patriarchy and their power inflicted on women in eighteenth-century England. There is irony as well as a troubling moral dilemma in the sexism deeply rooted at the heart of gender relationships of that era so that transvestitism is used as a means of masquerading and chicanery. Moll’s gender-bending or transvestitism embodies and assures her split self into masculine and feminine subjectivities. Man gets his due and retribution while Moll becomes free and carefree. Since “the 'mask' of the 'women who wish for masculinity' can be interpreted as an effort to renounce the 'having' of the Phallus in order to avert retribution by those from whom it must have been procured through castration,” then Moll succeeds in masquerading, evading her apprehension by the police and keeping her sanctuary.42 In other words, she overcomes the masculine patriarchal order by taking on a masquerade just as Maria absorbs the sadistic power of Terence as will be seen later in this chapter. Moll succeeds in accomplishing “the desire to castrate and take the place of the masculine subject, a desire avowedly rooted in . . . rivalry.”43

42 Ibid, p. 65.
43 Ibid., p. 69.
This is quite clear in Moll’s account of the male confederate when he is to be tried after finding no clue of Moll or the so-called man purported to be “Gabriel Spencer” as his co-burglar leaving him thus the sole culpable culprit for larceny:

[H]e got his indictment deferred, upon promise to discover his accomplices, and particularly the man that was concerned with him in his robbery; and he failed not to do his endeavour, for he gave in my name, whom he called Gabriel Spencer, which was the name I went by to him; and here appeared the wisdom of my concealing my name and sex from him, which, if he had ever known I had been undone. . . . He did all he could to discover this Gabriel Spencer; he described me, he discovered the place where he said I lodged, and, in a word, all the particulars that he could of my dwelling; but having concealed the main circumstances of my sex from him, I had a vast advantage, and he never could hear of me. He brought two or three families into trouble by his endeavouring to find me out, but they knew nothing of me, any more than that I had a fellow with me that they had seen, but knew nothing of. (p. 191)

Moll proves to be of a flexible agent who is capable of adopting a binary feminine–masculine gendered subjectivity or even subjectivities independent of man and patriarchy. Albeit she admits that ‘it was impossible to be so nimble, so ready, so dexterous at these things in a
dress so contrary to nature’ (p. 188), yet she proves that she has a malleable subjectivity that can cross the boundaries of gender no matter how many complexities and encumbrances society has woven and thrust upon her. She proves that she can find her way out of alienation which is, as Heath reflects; “a structural condition of being a woman . . . a structural condition of subjectivity in general (for Lacan) . . . playing the game which is the act of womanliness.”44 What this act constitutes is her feminine identity versus the masculine identity and its guardian: patriarchy. In other words, here, Moll destabilises and undermines the hegemonic discourses of the patriarchal order, videlicet “[f]emininity becomes a mask that dominates/resolves a masculine identification, for a masculine identification would, within the . . . heterosexual matrix of desire, produce a desire for a female object, the Phallus . . . .”45 This phallus is symbolized by the male attire or the masculine masquerade Moll puts on in her theft complicity with her male partner. Furthermore, Moll also masks her feminine identity while sleeping with him. More practically explored, this masquerade can also be seen as a cover for the sexual relations and impulses Moll had in her past years in favour of a more financially secure source: theft. According to Terence Martin;

44 Heath, p. 54.
45 Butler, p. 68.
“[t]his is a false return to sexuality.”\textsuperscript{46} It is true and candid when she comes into a relationship with the anonymous Bartholomew–Fair gentleman; “She has, however, brought sex and theft together for the first time, for she robs the gentleman pretty thoroughly in the coach. Reminded of her \textit{femininity} [italics mine, and now she is over fifty], her first, and natural, commodity, by the attention she has received,”\textsuperscript{47} she starts to think of herself not surely as an old woman, but rather of her sexually seductive past. Here, she unmasks the masculine identity and shows her fully feminine self. What motivates her to return to her sexuality is the unrelenting quest for security, the lack of which is caused by the society itself. Martin argues, “Stealing has led back to sex, only to be displayed by the preferred security of the latter.”\textsuperscript{48} Other than the disguise of youth, there is the disguise of a beggar which is also symbolic in eighteenth–century England. Albeit it is a mask, yet it is emblematic of the reality of woman’s position in a patriarchal society. A woman is really a beggar. She has to beg her security and good treatment from men. Society imposes on Moll what Martin calls “psychic metamorphosis.”\textsuperscript{49} Her subjectivity undergoes what seems a sudden

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Martin, p. 365.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 366.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 366.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 368.
\end{itemize}
change in her character and perception in relation to the idea of penitence. When she is caught and taken to Newgate, she cannot bear such a life there before being sentenced with death. When she gets her amnesty and sentence of transportation, she is “perfectly changed, and become another body” (p. 247). Her re–experience with her nightmarish birthplace transforms her into a totally another person. She thus recuperates her true identity. Maria does not change that suddenly as Moll does. Her soul is transformed gradually as she walks on the road to Santiago with Ralph Hart and as she sinks into the sea of his love.

To go back to the very outset of Defoe’s novel, one may find that the foremost and biggest masquerade is the masquerading *nom de guerre* of the heroine *per se*;

My true name is so well known in the records or registers at Newgate, and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there, relating to my particular conduct, that it is not be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work . . . . It is enough to tell you, that as some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm (having gone out of the world by the steps and the string, as I often expected to go ), knew me by the name of Moll Flanders, so you may give me leave to speak of myself under that name till I dare own who I have been, as well as who I am. (p. 9)
Two points are to be analysed here: Moll’s nickname as a disguise for her true identity and its direct corollary, videlicet her authoritative haecceity narrating the novel from her own perspective. Firstly, it is of prerequisite necessity for a repented criminal like Moll to conceal her true character in a society such as the eighteenth-century English society. The real person under the name “Moll” may be prone to harm by the people whom she deceived in the past. Therefore, for safety prerequisites, an alias is given to Moll. This very name is indicative of her character or more precisely her careers. In his article “Genuine Artistic Intent,” Alan Dugald McKillop notes that “Moll” is “a generic name for a female criminal.” Looking up “Moll” in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, one finds two meanings. The first is “a gangster’s female companion” while the other is related to the onomastics and archaism of the word and it means “a prostitute” (COD). This is true since Moll’s two careers are prostitution and theft. Thus, the name of the character contributes to and plays a part in forging her haecceity and personality. Secondly, Moll uses the first person in narrating her life story. The authoritativeness of the novel’s incidents stems from the way Moll narrates her story. Speaking in the first person point of view gives

50 McKillop, p. 347.
the character more credibility. Moreover, pay close attention to Moll’s use of simple short words “My true name is so well known in the records . . .” (p. 9). Albeit she conceals her true name and identity, anyone can go back to Newgate and find Moll’s data and information since every criminal should have a life timeline registered there, and then know the Moll’s real name. What matters here more is the authenticity of incidents and their down-to-earth occurrence in terms of eighteenth-century English society and its circumstances. One can sense concealment and frankness from the very beginning of the novel. This in consequence shows Moll’s doppelgänger or split self: one that wants to narrate the incidents of her life story as they really are and another to justify the misdeeds she did and secure what remains of her life. This is also a counterblast to the idea of situating woman as man’s other. Toril Moi illustrates the general position of woman according to man in her Sexual/Textual Politics;

throughout history, . . . “woman” has been constructed as man’s Other, denied the right to her own subjectivity and to responsibility for her own actions. . . . The fact that women often enact the roles patriarchy has prescribed for them does not prove that patriarchal analysis is right: Beauvoir’s uncompromising refusal of any notion of a female nature or
essence is succinctly summed up in her famous statement “One is not born a woman; one becomes one.”

Moll is given voice because of the atrocities and suppressive acts inflicted on women in eighteenth-century England. She has her voice, her own individuality, haecceity and the agency to expose her society. It seems like Moll is saying, “This is my story and I tell it the way I like. It is nobody’s work; it is mine!” From a feminist point of view, Moi, as well as Beauvoir; looks at femininity as a social construct. It is socially constructed by patriarchs and alpha males dominating the society. In narrating her story, Moll here becomes a subject rather than an object, the center around which rotate the actions of the novel rather than a mere margin, a self rather than an “other.”

Another clear masquerade Moll puts on is early at the beginning of the novel and it is more a psychological mask that is also deployed against the patriarchal order. It is when Moll is eight years old and about to be taken to service as it was the custom at that time of the history of England. Moll, who aspires to be a gentlewoman, cannot bear such an idea. She is not the type of person who would kowtow to others. Therefore, she uses her innocence and tears in front of her nurse to circumvent the crisis of being a servant; “I talked to her almost every

qtd. in Hall, p. 98.
day of working hard; and, in short, I did nothing but work and cry all day, which grieved the good, kind woman so much, that at last she began to be concerned for me, for she loved me very well” (p. 12). Her disguise here is weeping which “moved my good motherly nurse, so that she resolved I should not go to service yet . . .” (p. 12). Look how Moll is able to manipulate others since her early childhood. That is not to be taken as a negative point against her for she delineates that all what she said to the nurse was “all nature; but it was joined with so much innocence and so much passion that, in short, it set the good motherly creature a–weeping too, and she cried at last as fast as I did, and then took me and led me out of the teaching-room” (p. 13). Moll criticises her society and its guardian symbolised by patriarchy for its virulent treatment of the children. Instead of sending them to service, it should be preoccupied with taking care of them and how to raise them properly to be good active human fellows in the society. Furthermore, in this passage, the “teaching–room” can be seen as indicative of Moll’s personal or individualist preoccupation with being a gentlewoman. This is due to the fact that education is associated with people of the posh. Only high–class people are to be educated. Children who are left uneducated are more prone to deviation from the right path to crime and
felony. That is why social constructionism is highly crucial in *Moll Flanders'* setting as well as any society’s. Moll’s society is not only condemned for its sexist prejudice against women and its misogynistic treatment of them, but also for its maltreatment of children. An evidence of this that Defoe/Moll substantiates is that of a woman who was virulently thrown out of her house along with her children. (p. 58)

The disguise is a pretence that Moll effectuates to show herself as somebody different from whom she really is. For instance, after the elder brother Robert fools her, she pretends to be a demure immaculate woman to the extent that her husband Robin does not know about her relation with his brother nor does he know that he married a woman whose honour is stained, and by whom?! By his own brother. What do you expect from an orphaned young woman to do in such a predicament? The other party, men, are more wicked than women. Moll notes that “[s]o naturally do men give honour and justice and even Christianity to secure themselves” (p. 52). If men are to be considered sinister, then she is not half sinister as they are. She is faced with an impasse and she has to find for herself a way and be on the safe side otherwise she has to bear the consequences of alienation. She has to claim modesty otherwise she would be left utterly undone or at least
totally desperate and desolate, “left alone in the world to shift for [her]self” (p. 51). Her marriage or even sexual liaisons are based on social as well as economic calculations.

In The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the Novel, Helene Moglen justifies Moll’s disguise as righteous because she only looks for an alternative only after she is “deprived of [a] licit relationship” with the man “upon whom [she] can economically rely.”52 By the same token, it is so pertinent to recall again McKillop’s justification for Moll’s misdeeds and pretences; “[S]he is after all concerned with the social and economic preconditions for sexual union. She is too business–like to be either demure or lascivious.”53

Both Moll and her second husband, the gentleman–tradesman, lie to each other and pretend that they are well–off. They leave each other because he goes bankrupt. She is left alone again. Therefore, she goes on in her disguise but this time as a widow called “Mrs. Flanders” (p. 57). Another alias is to be taken in order to conceal the fact that she is still a married woman. Changing names indicates her evasive identity. She has no fixed identity in order not to be apprehended.

53 McKillop, p. 351.
Marital relations are all based on money rather than love or mutual respect. There is a deep fissure in between men and women. Woman should have money in order to get a husband as Moll illustrates;

That as my sister–in–law at Colchester had said, beauty, wit, manners, sense, good humour, good behaviour, education, virtue, piety, or any other qualification, whether of body or mind, had no power to recommend; that money only made a woman agreeable; that men chose mistresses indeed by the gust of their affection, and it was requisite to a whore to be handsome, well–shaped, have a good mien and a graceful behaviour; but that for a wife, no deformity would shock the fancy, no ill qualities the judgment; the money was the thing; the portion was neither crooked nor monstrous, but the money was always agreeable, whatever the wife was. (p. 60)

To repay men and patriarchs their due, Moll helps a friend of her, with whom she masquerades as widows, to humiliate and restore a suitor who abandoned her (Moll’s comrade) simply because she had made some inquiries about his character and demeanour. Moll observes;

[S]he made his obtaining her be to him the most difficult thing in the world; and this she did, not by a haughty reserved carriage, but by a just policy, turning the tables upon him, and playing back upon him his own game [italics mine]; for as he pretended, by a kind of lofty carriage, to
place himself above the occasion of a character, and to make inquiring into his character a kind of an affront to him, she broke with him upon that subject, and at the same time that she make him submit to all possible inquiry after his affairs, she apparently shut the door against his looking into her own. (p. 65)

Thus, a topple of gender roles takes place here in this incident. A reaction to the cruelty of men should be taken so that they think of being considerate to women and reconsider the repercussions of their sexism. Women are active agents and participants in the process of choosing a husband. They are not passive any more. They choose and they are the ones who impose their preconditions. They are not culpable for their actions since they are mere reactions to the man’s misdeed and misdemeanor. They play the same game making the rules for their own benefit. Moll succinctly expresses this idea saying “it was but just to deal with them in their own way and, if it was possible, to deceive the deceiver” (p. 68). So, she can be active unlike what Freud claims her nature to be; videlicet, passive.

In her turn, Moll also pretends by spreading rumours that she is a rich widow while she is not. She gets her man under her own preconditions. When he comes to know that she is poor, he will be in an embarrassing situation if he withdraws his offering for marriage besides
his hope that she might be lying. Therefore, he implores, “Be mine with all your poverty” (p. 70). Moll’s split self here is doubled in manner of both wealth and gender. She claims to be wealthy while she is poor. She takes the male’s role or power of choosing the partner or spouse. A split self in terms of wealth leads to an equivalent dichotomised subjectivity in terms of gender. This is all a corollary of the social rules and traditions that prejudice men to women, videlicet the social constructionism and societal forces of sexism. Powers are reversed for Moll’s benefit or rather she is the one who reverses them and topple the table over the masculine patriarchal head showing a great dexterity in manipulating situations in favour of her own sex. Thus, she is a woman on her own account full of herself with struggling agency and adamant subjectivity to get what she thinks is right or rather most suitable for her. Just like her later incident with the male–thief–partner, Moll succeeds in accomplishing and quenching “the desire to castrate and take the place of the masculine subject . . .”\textsuperscript{54} Thus, she takes a vantage point in taking the initiative in her relationships with men.

It is important to say that Moll is quite conscious of the machinations she plots and masquerades she puts on though the main

\textsuperscript{54} Butler, p. 69.
motive is the patriarchal society. When the banker proposes to Moll while he is still married trying to get divorced, Moll openly admits;

My heart said yes to this offer at first word, but it was necessary to play the hypocrite a little more with him; so I seemed to decline the motion with some warmth, and besides a little condemning the thing as unfair, told him that such a proposal could be of no signification, but to entangle us both in great difficulties; for if he should not at last obtain the divorce, yet we could not dissolve the marriage, neither could we proceed in it; so that if he was disappointed in the divorce, I left him to consider what a condition we should both be in. (p. 122)

Since the man is married, she cannot marry him till he is divorced according to the British law that prevents polygamy. Therefore, she goes on for another prey who becomes her Lancashire husband. She comes to know him through a woman who claims to be his sister, the sister of a gentleman. He turns to be a highwayman pretending to be a gentleman. The relationship between Moll and this man would not have come into marriage without her pretending to be a gentlewoman. However, the result is the disclosure of both her and him being bankrupt. Moll notes that “we are married here upon the foot of a double fraud: you are undone by the disappointment, it seems; and if I had had a fortune, I had been cheated too, for you say you have nothing” (p.
129). They are cheated by each other. Consequently, they separate with the man promising Moll not to show his true identity or bother her if he comes to know that she is married again.

Hence, the relationships between men and women in eighteenth-century England were not on good terms. Footings between both genders are not equal. Men dominate and women are dominated. This leads to a chasm between them so that women no longer care for marital intactness. Rather, they would go and search for pecuniary security regardless of the morality of their means. Thus, Moll opts to live a life of fraud looking for respectability the wrong way because men were the wrong party. What about Maria? Does society affect her? Or does she detach herself totally from it?
Chapter II

Maria: A Heroine on Her Own Account

The main themes in Paulo Coelho’s *Eleven Minutes*, such as, adventure, alienation, sadomasochism will be discussed in this chapter in the light of the theory of subjectivity, gender struggle and agency. How do these themes affect the character of the heroine and how are subjectivities akin to or different from Moll? Whenever pertinent, there will be cross-references with Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*. Coelho’s work concentrates on the spirituality of sexuality rather than its corporeality. Its pivotal infrastructure is the soul not the body of the heroine. Maria’s character is independent and free. Maria is a woman who wants to discover the world through adventure. She has three aims in her life: adventure, money and a husband.55 Even her discovery and understanding of her body, and then her psyche tend to take a spiritual vein.

When Maria was eleven years old, she falls in love with a boy to whom she does not confess her feelings. He travels somewhere far away. For the first while, she feels alienated from him and from herself

Note: All subsequent references to this work will be parenthesized.
because she does not reveal her feelings towards him. She starts to feel and think that ‘love was something very dangerous’ (p. 5). A while later, Maria is confronted with a second love opportunity yet she does not let it go as the first one. Here, she starts to think of herself as an experienced young woman, who had already allowed one grand passion to slip from her grasp and who knew the pain that this caused, and now she was determined to fight with all her might for this man and for marriage, determined that he was the man for marriage, children and the house by the sea. (p. 8)

In this passage, one notes words that reflect self-consciousness, like ‘think’, 'experienced' though 'young', and 'determined to fight.' Besides, Maria is endowed with the mentality of a mature woman. She wishes this man to be her husband. This seems really mature of a fifteen–year–old girl. This boy can be considered Maria's first true love and actual relation. After he kisses her, she expresses her feelings of love in her diary;

When we meet someone and fall in love, we have a sense that the whole universe is on our side. I saw this happen today as the sun went down. And yet if something goes wrong, there is nothing left! No herons, no distant music, not even the taste of his lips. How is it possible for the beauty that was there only minutes before to vanish so quickly? (p. 9)
These very euphoric feelings of Maria do not last long because this dear lover abandons her for the sake of one of her girlfriends. Alienation seems as if it does not like the idea of leaving her alone. Maria thinks that life ‘rushes us from heaven to hell in a matter of seconds’ and love is "a cause of suffering" (pp. 9, 11). Her viewpoint of men tends after this relation to be a negative one for ‘men brought only pain, frustration, suffering and a sense of time dragging’ (p. 14). Moreover, she decides not to fall in love again ‘because love spoiled everything’ (p. 14). Her relation with this cheating little boy has turned her feeling of love apathetic. It is also similar to Moll’s first relation with Robert.

Because of frustrations and failures in love, Maria decides not “to fall in love again” (p. 15). At the age of nineteen when she starts working in a draper’s shop, she does not let herself be swept by the love of the owner of that shop by any means; “Maria knew how to use a man, without being used by him. She never let him touch her, although she was always very coquettish, conscious of the power of her beauty” (p. 17). Maria’s acute agency and strong autonomy are quite clear in her being “conscious of the power of her beauty [and femininity]” (p. 17). Moreover, there is a reversal of gender roles. She is the subject
holding control; he is the object. She is the one to “use” the other; he is the one “being used.” Her asset is her body and feminine beauty which is not “used by him” as an object of mere pleasure. Maria’s power lies in her seduction of the owner of the shop; “This strength of the feminine is that of seduction.”\textsuperscript{56} On the other hand, Moll’s asset is, for instance, her disguise as a rich widow. Money is paramount to anything else that her male partner should see in her. Materiality is idiosyncratic of eighteenth-century England. Money is not of the same importance to Maria at this stage of her life if compared to Moll when she is pretty and young. Coelho’s pivotal point is the soul; Defoe’s is the body as a merchandisable object.

The effect of alienation starts to take its toll on Maria the moment she arrives in Geneva. Her independency and agency transform into dependency on the other sex; “[H]er heart contracted with fear: she realised that she was completely dependent on the man at her side . . .” (p. 39). She soon summons up her courage and enlightens her sense of adventure. Again, self-consciousness and self-control are the remedy of all fears; “I can choose either to be a victim of the world or an adventurer in search of treasure. It’s all a question of how I view my life”\textsuperscript{56} Baudrillard, p. 7.
Her subjectivity is self-constructed no matter how many and profound predicaments she encounters. She is conscious of herself;

Maria chose to be an adventurer in search of treasure – she put aside her feelings, she stopped crying every night, and she forgot all about the person she used to be; she discovered that she had enough willpower to pretend that she had just been born and so had no reason to miss anyone. Feelings could wait, now what she needed to do was to earn some money, get to know the country and return home victorious. (p. 43)

Feelings are almost always present in Maria’s life despite her determination to set them aside. In this passage, Maria is similar to Coelho’s hero in *The Alchemist*. Santiago, the Andalusian shepherd, travels all through the Arabian desert to reach a treasure he dreamt about by the pyramids of Egypt. Coelho refers to Santiago the adventurer in *Eleven Minutes*, as well. (pp. 49–50) In *Eleven Minutes*, gender boundaries are broken so that adventure is not only masculine, but also feminine; nay, it is rather something human. Coelho is a spiritual writer in spite of all the sexually explicit scenes portrayed in this novel as well as others. In the already aforementioned passage, the deferral of falling in love does not indicate killing Maria’s feelings or burying them. Her keen care of her soul and acute self-consciousness
will keep her feelings afloat near the sphere of her heart so that they find their way out whenever she finds her “Prince Charming” (p. 19). However, she is practical enough to know when the best time is for being romantic or materialistic. Her preoccupation for the moment should be with how she can provide for herself. This is reminiscent of Probyn’s comment on Defoe’s works in general; “The body precedes the soul in Defoe’s work . . . When conventional pieties obstruct the individual in a state of necessity – where the choice is starvation or criminality – then spiritual accommodation can, and does, wait.”

Sometimes, Maria’s character seems vacillating when insecure. For instance, when she is fired by Roger, she considers going to her Arab boyfriend whom she came to know in a French-course class. She would “swear undying love, convert to his religion and marry him” (p. 49). Thus, she sometimes thinks of adventure and sometimes wants to be simply a wife of a wealthy man. What an incurable woman! This is the nature of women. They sometimes look for adventure. Sometimes, they want to be protected by their male partner or husband. This is what Baudrillard calls “femininity as a principle of uncertainty.” Maria soon finds a way out of her solitude and unemployment. She finds a job as a

57 Probyn, p. 29.
58 Baudrillard, p. 12.
model, takes some photos for this purpose and sends them to her family. She thinks that “[t]hey would all think she was rich and the owner of an enviable wardrobe, and that she had been transformed into her town's most illustrious daughter” (p. 50).

Maria cannot but speak of love and its charm. Feelings always float on the leaves of her diary. She prefers to think of life as a game, a roller coaster;

. . . I'm far too lonely to think about love, but I have to believe that it will happen, that I will find a job and that I am here because I chose this fate. The roller coaster is my life; life is a fast, dizzying game; life is a parachute jump; it's taking chances, falling over and getting up again; it's mountaineering; it's wanting to get to the very top of yourself and to feel angry and dissatisfied when you don't manage it. (p. 52)

She keeps reminding herself that she is an adventurer. She is nostalgic to the feeling of love. She wants to be loved and feel alive. Estrangement alienates her from love. A woman who is able to think of love and adventure in the depths of her loneliness is so full of self–consciousness and agency. She can find a way out of every trouble she encounters.
Putting on appearances and pretending to be someone other than whom she really is are not detrimental nor showing inconsiderateness towards others. Maria meets another Arab man who calls her from a model agency supposing he wants her to work with him in a fashion show. When he asks her about Joan Miro and Fellini, she does not spare a thought pretending that she knows them. (p. 55) Maria is an honest woman. She is honest with herself as well as others.

Maria starts to ponder over becoming a prostitute just how Moll initiates herself into the world of thievery;

What have I got to lose if, for a while, I decide to become a ... it's a difficult word to think or even write ... but let's be blunt ... what have I got to lose if I decide to become a prostitute for a while? Honour. Dignity. Self-respect. Although, when I think about it, I've never had any of those things. I didn't ask to be born, I've never found anyone to love me, I've always made the wrong decisions – now I'm letting life decide for me. (p. 66)

Maria speaks speciously and her justifications for the deed are casuistic. She thinks heedlessly not giving proper thought for the consequences. She wants to plunge into an unknown universe. She convinces herself that “she wasn’t [in Geneva] in search of pleasure, however, but work” (p. 67). Coelho poses the subject of prostitution as if
it is really a profession, above board simply like any other. However, it is not. It is a hazardous world that is full of exploitation, manipulation and jeopardy. It is based on the objectification of the female body. In addition, people who work or control the sphere of this universe are surely people devoid of moral values. Coelho’s heroine is an autonomous entity, a human being and this being – transcending gender boundaries – is absolutely not impeccable or immaculate. When Maria goes to work for the first time, she says that this is merely an “experiment” and that “[s]he hadn’t felt so well or so free in all the time she had been in Switzerland” (p. 68). Nonetheless, when somebody is “so free,” then he or she is rather mostly uncertain about what to do. Limits give humans their due. Hence, Maria starts to question the morality of what she intends to do as she gets fraught with “a growing sense that she was definitely making the wrong decision – the words ‘what am I doing here?’ kept repeating over and over in her head . . .” (p. 69). This partial scrupulousness and openness with herself are indicative of her full self-consciousness and agency in whatever she thinks or does. However, despair refuses to leave her alone. It insists on accompanying her in her alienated island, her estranged soul; “She found herself confronted by the feeling that so often pushes people into
making hasty decisions – despair” (p. 70). However, it is not only despondency that makes Maria transform the experiment into a first step in the profession. It is her high sense of adventure. Little thoughts come across her mind about the invalidity and immorality of such a job. It is her self-consciousness, the consciousness of a being that wants to explore and know the body in order to understand the soul. She is like Siddhartha in Hermann Hesse’s _Siddhartha_. Like him, she wants to go on a journey of self-discovery of the two aspects of human beings: good and evil;

[S]he would find adventure, money or a husband, as she had always dreamed she would . . . Instead of feeling depressed, she felt proud – she was fighting for herself, she wasn’t some helpless person. She could, if she wanted to, open the door and leave that place for good, but she would always know that she had at least had the courage to come that far, to negotiate and discuss things about which she had never in her life even dared to think. She wasn’t a victim of fate, she kept telling herself: she was running her own risks, pushing beyond her own limits . . . (pp. 74–75)

Maria’s self-consciousness shows that her subjectivity is self-constructed in spite of the despair she feels and all the difficulties thrust upon her by fate. Language is truly indicative of Maria’s self-consciousness. When she met her first client, she felt that “[t]he world
went into slow motion, and Maria had a sense of stepping out of her own body and observing herself from the outside. Deeply embarrassed, but struggling to control her blushes, she nodded and smiled, knowing that from that moment on her life had changed forever” (p. 76). Here, there seems to be a self-consciously schizophrenic Maria. It is either Maria or “[i]t's not Maria, it's some other person who's inside her body, who feels nothing, who mechanically goes through the motions of a ritual. She's an actress” (p. 77). This is supported by Maria herself as she writes – in her diary a week after her initiation into the world of prostitution – emphasizing the importance of love for her or rather her soul; “I'm not a body with a soul, I'm a soul that has a visible part called the body. All this week, contrary to what one might expect, I have been more conscious of the presence of this soul than usual. It didn't say anything to me, didn't criticise me or feel sorry for me: it merely watched me” (p. 78). Maria’s instigation into the world of the body as a merchandisable object makes her think more and more of her soul and it intensifies the perceptiveness of her self-consciousness. The more she plunges into this world, the more she will be elevated to the world of soul. The main reason is her realisation that love and soul are more important than sex and body: “I need to write about love. I need to think
and think and write and write about love – otherwise, my soul won’t survive” (p. 79). That is why she “was struggling in the pages of her diary not to lose her soul” (p. 86).

When Maria goes with her clients to a hotel, she has to spend with each one about forty five minutes. Out of this period of time, Maria demonstrates that “if you allow time for taking off clothes, making some phoney gesture of affection, having a bit of banal conversation and getting dressed again, the amount of time spent actually having sex is about eleven minutes” (p. 92). These eleven minutes are devoted to the body. Thus, most of the forty five minutes is devoted to the soul. Again, Coelho gives the soul more importance in terms of time and the duration of the relation. Maria’s job is to “know precisely which points to touch – on both body and soul, but mainly the soul – give some advice on personal problems, be his friend for half an hour, of which eleven minutes would be spent . . .” (p. 93). Why should she concentrate on the soul? Maria has promised herself never to fall in love yet to never give up writing or thinking about it. It is her persistence not to forget that she is “not [only] a body with a soul, [but] a soul that has a visible part called the body” (p. 78). So much emphasis on love and soul in this
novel of prostitution! Maria says that “the only word that is more important than the eleven minutes [is] . . . love” (p. 96).

In *Eleven Minutes*, men are alienated as same as women. They are not in a better condition as Maria observes. Maria “wasn't the only person who felt lonely. . . . [Loneliness] is the worst of all tortures, the worst of all sufferings. Like her, . . . men . . . were all tormented by that same destructive feeling, the sense that no one else on the planet cared about them” (p. 94). This is not Defoe’s world with its alienation and peripheralisation of women. Nay, it is men who are estranged here seeking Maria’s counsel and help. Gender boundaries are broken. The feminine is in a better situation than the masculine. Another aspect of the topple of gender poles is the one related to adventure. Universally speaking, adventure is a word that corresponds with men not women. However, in Coelho’s work and world, adventure is attributed to women, as well. Women are human beings by the same standards and by the same token men are. Maria’s main reason for coming to Geneva is adventure. (p. 95) Along this adventure, Maria needs to think of love; however, she thinks now of herself as “a brave, happy, independent woman” (p. 96). She is a responsible self-confident subject, full of
agency and self-consciousness. She no longer thinks of love as self-destructive. According to her, love is rather self-liberating;

All my life, I thought of love as some kind of voluntary enslavement. Well, that's a lie: freedom only exists when love is present. The person who gives him or herself wholly, the person who feels freest, is the person who loves most wholeheartedly. And the person who loves wholeheartedly feels free. That is why, regardless of what I might experience, do or learn, nothing makes sense. I hope this time passes quickly, so that I can resume my search for myself – in the form of a man who understands me and does not make me suffer. (p. 96)

Maria’s notion of love surpasses the misandry in Moll Flanders. There is nostalgia for otherness, for the masculine. There is nothing such as this misandry in Maria apart from her feelings about the betrayal of her first boyfriend at the beginning of her adolescent years. There should be some time hopefully in the near future an amalgamation between two souls incarnated in two bodies as masculine and feminine. Freedom is what characterises souls rather than bodies. Maria’s notion that love equals freedom rather than enslavement stems from her idea that “[i]n love, no one can harm anyone else; we are each of us responsible for our own feelings and cannot blame someone else for
what we feel” (p. 97). This again indicates Maria’s agency and self-consciousness.

The idea of subjectivity in terms of gender is more clear in Maria’s relationship with Ralph Hart. Coelho speaks of Maria’s “female soul [and] her male approach to life” (p. 103). She is simply like his other adventurous hero in *The Alchemist*, Santiago. She is not less masculine than him if one wants to take adventure as something masculine. Furthermore, from the very first moments of their encounter, there is not a speck of dehumanisation or objectification of Maria’s being a woman. Coelho observes;

> [F]or the first time in many months, someone was looking at her not as an object, not even as a woman, but as something she could not even comprehend; the closest she could come to putting it into words was: 'he’s seeing my soul, my fears, my fragility, my inability to deal with a world which I pretend to master, but about which I know nothing.' (p. 108)

Ralph Hart is “a man like any other man, full of insecurity when confronted by a woman he didn’t know” (p. 111). Again, alienation is characteristic of men in Coelho’s work contrary to Defoe’s. Ralph is an “insecure little boy” (p. 120). Because of his increasing sense of insecurity and feeling of inferiority, he endeavours to feel better so he
euphemistically asks Maria if she is a “sex worker” (p. 111). Maria feels offended and for the first time she feels ashamed of what she is doing. Because she is honest and has nothing to lose, she candidly replies:

I'll get up and leave. But you can leave right now, if you want; we can't have famous painters sitting at the same table as a prostitute. Because that's what I am, you see. A prostitute. I'm a prostitute through and through, from head to toe, and I don't care who knows. That's my one great virtue: I refuse to deceive myself or you. Because it's not worth it, because you don't merit a lie. (p. 113)

Honesty is all that matters for Maria. Unlike her, Moll would lie about her condition. For instance, her implementation of the aforementioned masquerades is not employed by Maria by any means. Maria goes on to deride Ralph’s perception of her “special light”; “I can’t understand . . . how you could possibly say that you could see a ‘special light’ in a woman who, as you discovered while you were painting, IS NOTHING BUT A PROSTITUTE!” (p. 114). Maria’s candidness, conspicuousness and uninhibitedness can be shocking; however, it would be even more flagrant if such words were uttered by Moll. When the banker complains to Moll about his adulterous wife and proposes to marry her, she can only be frank to herself;
What an abominable creature am I! and how is this innocent gentleman going to be abused by me! How little does he think, that having divorced a whore, he is throwing himself into the arms of another! That he is going to marry one that has lain with two brothers, and has had three children by her own brother! One that was born in Newgate, whose mother was a whore, and is now a transported thief! One that has lain with thirteen men, and has had a child since he saw me! Poor gentleman! (p. 159)

Unless Moll behaves this way and hides her truth from her new partner, her situation is doomed to be extremely horrible. The societal forces of insecurity and sexist behaviors against women drive Moll to lie. She contemplates and laments her past; “Oh, what a felicity is it to mankind . . . that they cannot see into the hearts of one another! How happy had it been for me if I had been wife to a man of so much honesty, and so much affection from the beginning!” (p. 159). Moll is not that repugnant creature; however, her character is socially constructed. Though she tries to have some agency in conducting a good way by being a good wife, fate soon disrupts this agency. She takes vows to be a good wife to this man; “Well, if I must be his wife, if it please God to give me grace, I'll be a true wife to him, and love him suitably to the strange excess of his passion for me; I will make him amends if possible, by what he shall see, for the cheats and abuses I
put upon him, which he does not see” (p. 160). The man unfortunately dies and Moll is left desolate again in the lurch. Contrary to Moll, Maria is fully self-conscious and self-responsible. Her subjectivity is self-constructed.

In the struggle of subjects between Maria and Ralph, he calmly replies to Maria’s candid confession; “This has nothing to do with you as prostitute, but with you as woman. . . . You have a glow about you. The light that comes from sheer willpower, the light of someone who has made important sacrifices in the name of things she thinks are important. It’s in your eyes – the light is in your eyes” (p. 114). Women are not deprived of willpower as they are in eighteenth-century England. There, they have to struggle to attain it by being nonconformist. In return, “Maria felt disarmed; he had not taken up her challenge” (p. 114). This can be seen in the light of Baudrillard’s viewpoint of gender poles. In *Seduction*, he states;

> The feminine . . . suggests a challenge to the male to be the sex, to monopolize sex and sexual pleasure, a challenge to go to the limits of its hegemony and exercise it unto death. Today phallocracy is collapsing under the pressure of this challenge (present throughout our culture’s sexual history), and its inability to meet it.  

59 Baudrillard, p. 21.
Baudrillard deconstructs the psychoanalytic concept of patriarchal domination and hegemony. Similarly, in Coelho’s world, gender poles are different from Defoe’s. They are naturally spontaneously reversible. In Defoe’s eighteenth-century England, phallocracy and patriarchy were dominating. Now, they are not, at least in Maria’s world of Geneva.

When Ralph speaks to Maria about her willpower which he sees as a special light, she calms down and comes to think that “there [are really] interesting men on the face of the Earth” (p. 114). Ralph Hart is one. It seems that he understands her soul or as if he speaks her language or shares her journey and quest for adventure and love. Again, Coelho emphasises on the importance of love and soul rather than body. This journey is symbolised in their walk along the road to Santiago: simply a pilgrimage of souls searching for each other. Coelho tells us:

They set off along the road to Santiago, which first climbed and then descended down to the river, then to the lake, then on to the mountains, to end in some distant place in Spain. . . . It did not occur to either of them to ask why they were making that pilgrimage together, it was the most natural thing in the world; he knew everything about her, although she knew nothing about him. (p. 116)
In Defoe’s work, there is a passage that seems somehow similar and equivalent to this one. It is also about Moll and the banker;

After dinner, we walked to see the town, to see the church, and to view the fields and the country, as is usual for strangers to do and our landlord was our guide in going to see the church. I observed my gentleman inquired pretty much about the parson, and I took the hint immediately that he certainly would propose to be married; and it followed presently, that, in short, I would not refuse him; for to be plain, with my circumstances I was in no condition now to say no; I had no reason now to run any more such hazards. (p. 157)

With Ralph Hart, Maria’s feelings of alienation start to vanish. Likewise, Moll feels secure with the respectable banker. He is not like the men of his time. Both Maria and Moll feel secure with their partners. Both men share a sense of insecurity. The banker sees in Moll a good faithful woman. Ralph sees in Maria a special light that will enlighten his melancholic soul. Ralph tells Maria; “I’ll come and see you so that you can save me” (p. 120). He has an overwhelming sense of insecurity. He is “revealing his fragility” (p. 125). Fragility and frailty are no more characteristic of femininity but also masculinity. Maria has the vantage point and is in a better condition than him. Yet, she does not tell him to save her. She has plans for going back to Brazil and complete her
odyssey back home. However, she finds herself falling in love with someone special and different from the rest of men she has met. She loses some of her agency yet she remains self-conscious: "I would like to believe that I'm in love. With someone I don't know and who didn't figure in my plans at all. All these months of self-control, of denying love, have had exactly the opposite result: I have let myself be swept away by the first person to treat me a little differently" (p. 122). Coelho's intensive concentration on love is at its highest degree when Maria writes her diary. Through writing, she is given total freedom in expressing feelings and emotions. In the narrative part of the novel, she is almost always at work. Her body would distract her a little from thinking of love and soul. Maria's conception of love, which is Coelho's as well as it is clear in his other writings, is free from any selfishness or will of possession. It is – unlike Moll's money-based relationships – independent, unconditioned, free from any sexism or merchandising, and simply human. In her diary, Maria writes; '[T]he great aim of every human being is to understand the meaning of total love. Love is not to be found in someone else, but in ourselves; we simply awaken it. But in order to do that, we need the other person. The universe only makes sense when we have someone to share our feelings with' (p. 126).
Between the two poles of gender, the other is indispensable in the matter of love. But, there is no objectification or dehumanisation. It is based on mutual respect and acceptance of the other rather than exploiting them. Because Maria believes in the freedom that love bestows, she accepts Ralph Hart into her world. Since she is an adventurous woman, ‘she accepted everything that fate had placed in her path’ (p. 133). This again emblematises her self-consciousness and acceptance of fatality. It may be despair – as she said earlier – that leads her to disavow her promise to go back home in a specific period of time. Perhaps she sees in him a special light as well. When they meet, Maria says; "I'll play the part of prostitute or friend or Understanding Mother, even though in my soul I'm a Daughter in need of affection" (pp. 135–136). In terms of gender and subjectivity, Maria is the subject and the agent; Ralph is passive. He is lonely and in need of help although he has everything a man could dream of; "And yet here I am saying to a woman I met in a cafe and with whom I have spent one afternoon: 'I need you” (p. 137). The reversibility of gender roles is clear here. It is men who seek women's help. In Coelho, humanity is humanity. It is neither masculine nor feminine. Maria’s world is different from Moll's since it is not patriarchal nor sexist. It is a world that calls for clemency and humanity
without prejudice or partialness. It calls for gender egalitarianism, accepting the other and "recognising the other person and knowing that he or she was there" (p. 141). This is an acknowledgement of the existence and autonomy of the other that shares our lives. With the voice of a wise woman, Maria tells Ralph; "[T]he person you’re with has to exist too. Think of her" (p. 114). There is a call for independency and autonomy along with sharing. Feeling for the other without losing ourselves in them is independent subjectivity. Maria gives Ralph a pen as a gift and as a "sign of respect for the person before me, asking him to understand how important it is to be by his side. Now he has a small part of me with him, which I gave him with my free, spontaneous will" (p. 142). There is an intimate amalgamation between Maria and Ralph. There is no obsequiousness or servile obedience on Maria's part at all. The exchange of gifts can be seen as self-discovery as Maria notes; "I've discovered something I didn't know before. The giving of gifts. Giving something of one's own" (p. 143). Maria has no feud towards Ralph or men. She is not a misandrist. She is reconciled with her being a woman as well as the other sex. Her sense of femininity is intact and her subjectivity is unscathed.
This exchange of gifts in Coelho’s *Eleven Minutes* can be contrasted with the act of stealing in Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*. Moll’s stealing of small valuable things like gold watches and necklaces is considered a reminder of her lost femininity which she used to employ in her youth to attract men. This can be considered as an imbalance in Moll’s character and subjectivity. Inculpably, Moll’s resort to stealing is socially constructed. She is only to blame when she reaches a degree where she is well–off and does not quit stealing. Theft as well as prostitution is a social malady that infects the members of the society due to the injustice of its system. The older Moll gets, the more she loses her femininity and attractiveness. Therefore, she starts stealing. For Maria, who is still young, giving gifts increases her sense of her selfhood. In terms of gender, she is not after discovering or assuring her femininity but rather her humanity and human subjectivity. Even if she is after that, her “free, spontaneous will” will not depreciate her selfhood into a mere object, dehumanise her at all or decrease her sense of self–consciousness. Maria is full of herself unlike Moll who “is a woman . . . determined to be a human being . . .”60 “Moll,” according to Robert Alan Donovan, “is clearly what David Riesman would call an ‘other–directed’

60 Kettle, pp. 391-392.
person; she has no character or personality of her own, only what she reflects of the society she happens to be in." Moll’s identity is integrated within her society’s overall mindset. Self-constructionism characterises *Eleven Minutes*, social constructionism characterises *Moll Flanders*.

Maria’s self-control has its limits. In her diary, she writes admitting her love for Ralph:

I’ve met a man and fallen in love with him. I allowed myself to fall in love for one simple reason: I’m not expecting anything to come of it. I know that, in three months’ time, I’ll be far away and he’ll be just a memory, but I couldn’t stand living without love any longer; I had reached my limit . . . It’s enough just to love him, to be with him in my thoughts and to colour this lovely city with his steps, his words, his love. (pp. 150–151)

Maria’s love is unconditioned. She willingly lets herself fall in love, which indicates her self-consciousness. Furthermore, her acceptance of the fact that nothing may “come of it” proves this. The fact that she “couldn’t stand living without love any longer; I had reached my limit” indicates the paramountcy of love and soul to sex and body. Her belief in the soul takes her to think that “really important meetings are planned

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61 Donovan, p. 401-402.
by the souls long before the bodies see each other” (p. 151). After the meeting of souls comes the meeting of bodies. After spiritual love comes bodily sexual love.

Terence is a special client to the club where Maria works. His relation with Maria is sadomasochistic. In sadomasochism, there is a kind of domination–surrender relationship. The sadist is the dominator; the masochist is the dominated. As a special client, Terence has the right to do whatever he likes in exchange for one thousand francs. Hence, he is the sadist and the dominator. When he starts initiating Maria to the world of sadomasochism, he uses a language that is full of imperative verbs. Only then, she understands what a special client like Terence wants; “Punish her! Special client! In a flash, she understood everything, took the thousand francs out of her bag and put it down on the desk” (p. 157). Maria is not the sort of person to succumb so easily even if the pecuniary outcome of a meeting is one thousand francs. She refuses to kowtow to Terence. *Ab ovo*, she topples the gender poles upside down. It is not the masculine that dominates here as the case was in eighteenth-century England. It is the feminine that is trying to pose control. Maria says to Terence, “I know what you want . . . And I won’t do it” (p. 157). On the other hand, Terence, feeling that Maria is
self-willed enough and confident of what she says, tells her; “I won’t force you to do anything. You can either stay a little longer, if you like, or you can leave” (p. 157). He becomes more lenient because she shows him that she is not that acquiescent woman. However, Maria will not leave the place until she finds out about this special client. He is mystical. She inquires about what he is exactly after. He replies; “Pain. Suffering. And a great deal of pleasure” (p. 157). When he tells her how pain and suffering are transformed into joy and pleasure through sacrifice, she thinks about experiencing such a transformation since she is an adventurous woman. She is willing to enter this ‘play’ with Terence. (pp. 157, 159) In front of this man, “[a]nother Maria was there now: she was no longer offering gifts, she was offering herself up as a sacrifice. . . . She was entering a role, becoming a different person, a woman she did not know at all” (p. 159). She lets herself be taken by the stream since she understands the reason behind such a world as Terence puts it succinctly; “Because there is no greater pleasure than that of initiating someone into an unknown world. Taking someone’s virginity – the virginity not of their body, but of their soul . . .” (p. 160). She understands that because she knows well how to take her customers away from their universe along with its troubles to her
universe of repose. The world of sadomasochism is brand new for Maria. The virginity of souls stands for innocence, and initiating her into that world is like taking her in an adventure of self-discovery. This adventure in reality is like a play in drama. Terence tells Maria of the rules;

. . . when the theatre curtain goes up, the play will begin and cannot be stopped. If it does stop, it is because our souls are incompatible. Remember: it is a play. You must be the person you have never had the courage to be. Gradually, you will discover that you are that person, but until you can see this clearly, you must pretend and invent. (p. 160)

This idea of play and theatre is redolent with William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* where Jacques says, “All the world’s a stage / And all the men and women merely players.” In spite of Jacques’s melancholic nature, one can infer so much agency, each in his own world and space. The implied meaning here should not be taken as the passivity of human beings towards the world, age and death. On the contrary, it is their self-consciousness, vivacity, autonomy and agency that should be taken for granted – although “they have their exists and their entrances.” This also applies to the world of

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63 Shakespeare, 2.7. 142.
sadomasochism which Terence is about to initiate Maria into. Self-discovery in this world requires a dominator and a dominated person. Terence fairly enough adds; “We take turns. One cannot exist without the other; no one can know how to humiliate another person if they themselves have not experienced humiliation” (p. 161). There is no sexism at all and Terence emerges as an egalitarian person with no prejudice to his sex or patriarchy. Up till now, this seems preliminary to the initiation because nothing happens at their first meeting. When Terence comes back to the club to pick up Maria, she requires; “I’d like my usual drink and my usual dance, and some respect for my profession” and in turn Terence “hesitated for a moment, but it was all part of the theatre, dominating and being dominated” (p. 190). Terence understands the reversibility of gender poles since he is the one who considers this as a play and introduces it to Maria with the possibility of exchanging roles. He knows well that in theatre roles are reversible. The metaphor Shakespeare employs is truly applicable here. Life is like a theatre where players take turns. In terms of gender, Terence is dominated; Maria is dominating. The woman is agent and in control. Like Shakespeare, Coelho believes in the equality between men and women. Women feel just like what men feel. In spite of his seemingly
macho character, Terence levels himself with Maria trying to illustrate or analyse her willingness to experience sadomasochism; “You're like me. You're not here for the thousand francs, but out of a sense of guilt and dependency, because of your various complexes and insecurities. That is neither good nor bad, it's simply human nature” (p. 190). He says that while they are in his kingdom at the hotel. Because roles are reversible, Maria starts to be compliant with Terence’s orders” [Terence] both fascinated and frightened her . . . It was nice being ordered around. . . . She obeyed – impotent out of choice, submissive because she wanted to be” (p. 192). In this passage, agency and self-consciousness are quite manifest in spite of all Maria’s compliance. She is under control out of her own will. She is dominated because she wants to experience what it means to be dominated. She wants to master her role in the play. The more she masters her role, the more she comes to realize that “[t]his wasn’t just theatre now, it was reality: control was out of her hands. She felt like an object, a mere instrument, [italics mine] and incredible though it may seem, that feeling of submission gave her a sense of complete freedom” (p. 193). What is before her is not an artist who can see in her a special light and with whom she does not feel herself as an object. She is with someone who is humiliating her but this
humiliation is freeing her from every constraint and encumbrance. This supports what the Marquis de Sade says about the experience of surpassing our limits in order to know ourselves better; “[T]he most important experiences a man can have are those that take him to the very limit; that is the only way we learn, because it requires all our courage” (qtd. in Coelho, p. 162).

Omnipresent agency is what characterises Maria’s subjectivity all over the novel. She is self-conscious in every relation she has. She knows that she is in “an Adventure . . . [where] she was no one, and being no one meant that she could be everything she had ever dreamed of” (p. 194). When Terence handcuffs and beats Maria, she starts to experience “self-annihilation, subjective and a complete loss of any sense of Ego, desire or self-will” (p. 195). There she is a mere object to the man before her. He possesses and objectifies her. However, this very feeling is what frees Maria because she also senses “that the man was breathing hard, worn out with wielding the whip and spanking her hard on the buttocks, whilst she felt herself filling up with strength and energy” (p. 196). A reversal of gender poles occurs here. She starts to be stronger than him and in the ascendant; “[I]t is not you who will give me pleasure, it is I who will make you play, and thereby rob you of your
pleasure."⁶⁴ This seems exactly what happens with Maria and Terence; “[T]he pleasure had been entirely hers; he had not enjoyed a single moment of ecstasy” (p. 197). Maria is the “Dominatrix” (p. 204). There is an image of “the male and his weakness,” as Baudrillard puts it bluntly;

The panic men feel when faced with the "liberated" female subject is equalled only by their fragility before the pornographic chasm of the "alienated" female sex, the female sex object. Whether a woman demands sexual satisfaction . . . or offers herself in a state of total prostitution – whether the female be subject or object [italics mine], liberated or prostituted, her sex is to be devouring, a gaping voracity.⁶⁵

In this sense, it is the feminine that dominates, that is freer; the masculine that is dominated. Coelho understands the mechanism of such relations; “She lit two cigarettes and gave him one of them – the roles were reversed, she was now the mistress serving the slave, rewarding him for the pleasure he had given her” (p. 198). However, this domination is in turn not stable for it can be toppled and reversed again. Baudrillard again debunks the general axiom that Freud departs from which prioritises the activity of the masculine and the passivity of

⁶⁴ Baudrillard, p. 22.
the feminine; ‘There is no active or passive mode in seduction, no subject or object [italics mine] . . . [for] seduction plays on both sides and there is no frontier separating them.’

Maria’s sadomasochism can be compared to the transvestitism of Moll Flanders in terms of gender. In both cases, there is a reversal of gender poles. However, the main difference stems from the implementation of tools and constructionist reasons. Transvestitism is socially constructed while sadomasochism is experienced by Maria self-consciously. Both Maria and Moll get freer. Moll’s companion goes to prison. Terence, however, is rewarded for freeing Maria or at least taking her into a world she has never known before. Maria’s relation with Terence is purely physical. It can also be opposed to her relation with Ralph. Here, their relation is spiritual. Ralph, who sees in Maria a special light, feels terrible for Maria’s experience with sadomasochism no matter how self-conscious she was; “[I]f you’re sure that’s the right path for you, I will be sad, I’ll remember that feeling of desire, our meetings, our walk along the road to Santiago, your light. I will treasure the pen you gave me, and every time I light the fire, I will remember you. But I will never again come looking for you” (p. 211). This path of

66 Ibid, p. 81.
sadomasochism is opposed to the road to Santiago as a spiritual path. The first is a journey of self-discovery of the body but it is very hazardous; “[I]t frightens me to think that I could only find myself at the very limits of degradation” (p. 211). It is something like a nostalgie de la boue. It is totally unwholesome to the soul. On the other hand, the road to Santiago is a spiritual journey of self-discovery. It symbolises Maria and Ralph’s journey to find love again. It is elevating and conducive to a kind of paradise. Ralph wants to take Maria out of that dangerous world called sadomasochism so that she does not get addicted to it. Therefore, he introduces her into another kind of pain. He makes her walk on sharp stones by the Lake of Geneva. This is simply a way of freeing her from something she didn't as yet really know about, something she found very seductive, but which would leave far deeper marks than any handcuffs. Although she knew he was trying to help her, and however hard she tried to go forward and show him the light of her willpower, the pain would not allow her any thoughts, noble or profane; it was just pain, filling everything, frightening her and forcing her to think that she did have limits . . . (p. 213)

Maria conquers and defeats her feelings of surrendering and giving up. She wants to prove to Ralph as well as to herself that she is
a woman of strong willpower. She is a subject. She is not an object as she was with Terence;

[Just when she thought she was about to give up, she was filled by a strange feeling: she had reached her limit, and beyond it was an empty space, in which she seemed to float above herself, unaware of what she was feeling. Was this what the penitents had experienced? At the far extremity of pain, she had discovered a door into a different level of consciousness, and there was no room now for anything but implacable nature and her own invincible self. . . . she had crossed the frontiers of the body, and now there was only soul, 'light', a kind of void, which someone, some day, called Paradise. (p. 214)

Maria gets into a higher level of self-consciousness in a form of self-flagellation inflicted on her by her soulmate Ralph Hart. Ralph tells Maria about sacred prostitution through history and how it has transformed into something of despicable nature in our modern times;

"[N]owadays, men control the world, and the term serves only to create a stigma, and any woman who steps out of line is automatically dubbed a prostitute" (p. 221–222). Here, Coelho talks about prostitution and prostitutes in contemporary terms. There is a condescending look at prostitutes simply because patriarchy portrays their job as something irreverent and profane after it was sacred.
In an interview, Coelho says that Maria’s soul starts to transform on the road to Santiago. She starts to feel repugnance and abhorrence towards prostitution. It causes Maria’s subjectivity to be disintegrated and out of harmony; “I don't care whether it was once sacred or not, I HATE WHAT I DO. It's destroying my soul, making me lose touch with myself, teaching me that pain is a reward, that money buys everything and justifies everything” (p. 222). The body is what imprisons Maria. She wants her soul to be free from the body's constraints. She simply needs love. Love and soul are more important than sex and body; “I cannot simply do nothing, pretend that everything is normal, that it's just a stage, a phase of my life. I want to forget it, I need to love – that's all, I need to love” (p. 222).

In Coelho’s novel, there are some passages that reflect women’s dependency on men and their lack of agency. For example, one of these passages shows the nature of the first relationship between Adam and Eve; “Original sin was not the apple that Eve ate, it was her belief that Adam needed to share precisely the thing she had tasted. Eve was afraid to follow her path without someone to help her, and so she wanted to share what she was feeling” (p. 225). This does not negate men’s complicity. However, it confirms women’s lack – which was
explored before according to Freud and Lacan – and their inferiority to men. Coelho agrees with such notion yet he also believes in the reversal and reversibility of gender poles; ‘[A] man is also a woman; he wants to find someone to give meaning to his life’ (p. 225). There is nothing such as gender boundaries or fixed position of gender poles in Coelho. It is all reversible. *A Dangerous Method* is a movie adapted by Christopher Hampton based on his play *The Talking Cure* which is also based on John Kerr’s *A Most Dangerous Method*, the story of Freud, Jung and Sabina Spielrein. Sabina – a woman suffering from hysteria yet later cured of it and trained to become a psychiatrist – asks Jung what seems a rhetorical question; “Don’t you think that there’s something male in every woman? And something female in every man? Or should be?” Jung’s answer is in the affirmative67. Hence, the man also lacks something whatever it is as woman does. The lack in both leads them to seek each other. When they find each other, they should not seek to possess one another as Maria indicates; “I love this man sitting before me now, because I do not possess him and he does not possess me. We are free in our mutual surrender . . .” (p. 225). There is no possession or objectification of the other. Actually, there is no

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'other.' There is an 'I' reflected in the human whom we seek to share our feelings; '[H]e could be a woman . . . and I could be a man . . . a being infinitely superior to everything I knew. . . . he and I were one person' (pp. 277–278). In Coelho, language and humanity is free from possession, objectification or sexism. Therefore, Maria’s physical encounter with Ralph Hart seems ‘as if she had mysteriously recovered her virginity, as if she were discovering a man's body for the first time’ (pp. 227–228). As touched upon previously, losing virginity entails fragility. Contrariwise, restoring virginity is like a new rebirth, a resurrection or restoration of power. Baudrillard reflects that “[o]ne must love in order to seduce, and not the reverse.”68 That is why Coelho prioritises love to body and makes Maria go on her relationship with Ralph, not Terence. Furthermore, discovering his body can also be seen as a brand new self-discovery because he is her soulmate since ‘he and I were one person’ (p. 278). Maria “felt she had discovered herself through independence, despair, love, pain, and back again to love – and she would like things to end there [where she can find] the embrace of recognition” (pp. 234–235). It is her self-recognition, self-realisation and her subjectivity.

68 Baudrillard, p. 88.
Chapter III

Subjectivities Compared

Moll and Maria’s first two lovers have their detrimental effect on the poor young ladies through treachery and abandonment. Moll behaves “as if there was no such thing as any kind of love but that which tended to matrimony.” Likewise, Maria always thinks of each boy she comes to love as her future husband. After they had been shocked by the treacheries of their lovers, Moll and Maria tended to think ill of men. In her essay 'Moll Flanders: A Woman on Her Own Account,' Miriam Lerenbaum displays the change in Moll's character after the first shock she gets from her first lover, Robert; "Between her first rendezvous and her illness, Moll has moved from innocence to experience with traumatic consequences." Maria does not suffer from her first love by the same degree Moll does. Probably, the reason is that she does not go too far away with sexually intimate relations. All what happens between them is just a kiss while Moll has gone further from that to the extent of losing her virginity. Maria does not objectify her

69 Starr, p. 426.
body or give up her honour at the very beginning. Getting deflowered, Moll’s fortification is devastated. Losing virginity is emblematic of fragility. When Maria loses her virginity, she is undoubtedly self-conscious of what she does; “she, weary of being the only virgin amongst her group of friends, allowed him to penetrate her” (p. 15).

Contrary to Moll, the practical and pragmatic Maria tends to be self-reliant and autonomous. She learns first aid, works harder on her religious faith trying to think of herself as a “modern-day saint” (p. 11). Furthermore, she later on gets a job in a draper's shop. Unlike Maria, Moll continues to depend on men as her guardians. She seeks money and safety in and through men. Her character and subjectivity is socially constructed. She is inculpable for her passiveness. Like Moll, Maria is frustrated by her first lover. In Maria’s case, however, there is no money at this stage to influence her. She is simply an innocent teenager dreaming of “the man for marriage, children and the house by the sea” (p. 8). One may say that Maria has a family to protect and provide for her while Moll does not. Being an orphan aggravates Moll’s situation and makes her think each time she finds herself alone of finding an alternative man to secure her. Here, Lerenbaum writes about what she calls the ‘matrimonial career’ of Moll Flanders. She thinks that
Moll does not choose her future career [marriage]; it is thrust upon her by all the forces of society. Society prepares her ill for the marital career it virtually demands of her. . . . If Moll is self-indulgent and willful, it is because she has been encouraged to be so by those around her. Her orphaned state serves only to sharpen her vulnerability to flattery and praise. The memoir form encourages her to be honest and outspoken about her aspirations, but her wishes and values are themselves neither unconventional nor unfeminine. She does not rebel against the feminine role: Moll assures us that for the duration of each of her marriages she was a good wife and mother, amiable and docile, and we have no reason to disbelieve her. 71

Thus, Lerenbaum shows the societal forces that have led Moll to behave the way she does. However, one point to object to is Lerenbaum’s thought that Moll is not that rebellious woman. Actually, Moll is rebellious against the atrocities of the society. Prostitution and theft are characteristics of the era and contrary to what Christianity calls for. Moll is a nonconformist just like her creator Mr. Defoe. But the raison d'être is society, its maltreatment and sexism. Lerenbaum continues to diagnose more closely Moll's financial interest and her assessment of the amount of money she has at the end of each relation. For Lerenbaum, this reckoning does not stem from her being

71 Lerenbaum, pp. 104-105.
paranoid or compulsively insatiable or avaricious, nor is it because of her being a symbol of the capitalist spirit. The reason is that she already knows fate's ambushes and treacheries.\textsuperscript{72} She is well-aware of the atrocities and indifferences of her society. Her being poor entails her being unsafe and an easy prey to men. Furthermore, a more aggravated picture of the eighteenth English society's treatment of women is portrayed in the novel. In highlighting Moll's first relation with Robert, Lerenbaum argues that her falling sick, lovelorn, lovesick and pining for him is not just a pubescent frustration or a matter of childish immature airs and self-centredness. Moreover, it is an acknowledged disenchantment that is experienced by the majority of women that share Moll's circumstances.\textsuperscript{73} Out of these observations, Miriam Lerenbaum gets through to the conclusion that Moll is involved from top to heel in the feminine role. That is to say Moll is passive in the sense that her actions are mere reactions to the society, its mainstream and what it poses before her. Back to Maria, she grows up mentally and starts to have relations and make love without falling in love. At this stage, Maria behaves simply like any impulsive young girl who wants to explore the realm of men without getting hurt. She wants to discover the other in

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., pp. 105-106.  
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p. 106.
order to know herself. Moreover, Maria's preoccupation is love even though money is almost always prioritised or when she decides to abandon love at certain stages of her life. She states the importance of love in her life as she writes in her diary;

> My aim is to understand love. I know how alive I felt when I was in love . . . I simply don't fall in love. With each day that passes, I see more clearly how fragile men are, how inconstant, insecure and surprising they are . . . Although my aim is to understand love, and although I suffer to think of the people to whom I gave my heart, I see that those who touched my heart failed to arouse my body, and that those who aroused my body failed to touch my heart. (p. 16)

Here, for Maria, spirituality and sensuality, love and sex do not intersect while they should be so. Men are in need of women, not the opposite. She starts to make men seek her out. Self-consciousness is highly dominant in Maria’s life story. She has a tendency to experience and explore. Her sense of adventure is maximised with and after every failure in her relations.

Ian Watt explores the identity of Moll Flanders when he writes;

> The essence of her character and actions is, to one reader at least, essentially masculine. . . . [I]t is at least certain that Moll accepts none of the disabilities of her sex, and indeed one cannot but feel that Virginia Woolf's admiration
for her was largely due to admiration of a heroine who so
fully realized one of the ideals of feminism: freedom from
any involuntary involvement in the feminine role.\textsuperscript{74}

Miriam Lerenbaum objects to Watt's view of Moll's character as
masculine. She remarks that Defoe "has contrived a narrative in which
the major turning points of the heroine's life and her responses to them
are in great part peculiarly feminine."\textsuperscript{75} Here are two contrasting
viewpoints about the character of Moll Flanders. Whether she degrades
herself or she is degraded to be a prostitute and a thief, Moll, most of
the time, blames her society for leading her to be so. From the very
beginning of the novel, she starts to blame the government of her
country for not taking care of orphans whom she was one of, unlike the
custom in the neighbouring countries. Thus, she states;

\begin{quote}
Had this been the custom in our country, I had not been left
a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without
help or helper in the world, as was my fate; and by which I
was not only exposed to very great distresses, even before
I was capable either of understanding my case or how to
amend it, but brought into a course of life which was not
only scandalous in itself, but which in its ordinary course
tended to the swift destruction both of soul and body. (p.
10)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{74} Watt, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{75} Lerenbaum, p. 102.
The seeds instilled in her during childhood are the responsibility of her society. Her early subjectivity and self-consciousness is socially constructed. The reader can also notice in this text/passage the dire material situation of orphans who are left helpless and defenseless against the aggressions of life; the very justifiable reason that makes one deviate from the right path. Thus, she is not suitably socially raised up and cared for. One can also ponder on the legitimacy and rationalized justification of Moll's deeds and propensities and whether there is any religious encumbrance that restrains her from conducting prostitution to get her living. Moll does not receive the suitable religious education in her early childhood. Born at Newgate prison, she "had no parish to have recourse to for my nourishment in my infancy. . ." (p. 10). This is another drawback that should be taken on the English government and society for not giving children a proper religious cultivation. Moll is alienated and estranged within her own society and religion.

During her life with the nurse till she gets eight years old, Moll endeavours to avoid going to the service, something which was common in eighteenth-century England. True that she is afraid of going there; however, the main reason she does not want to go there is that she
wants to be a gentlewoman. Hence, one can see that Moll Flanders is conscious of herself and her identity even at this early period of her life. In spite of the fact that her knowledge of what a ‘gentlewoman’ means – i.e. ‘to be able to work for myself, and get enough to keep me without that terrible bugbear going to service (p. 14)’ – is naïve, still she does not comply to degrade herself to going to service. Agency and self-consciousness is present at Moll’s early childhood.

At a later stage, during her residence with the Colchester family, Moll manages to learn French, dancing, singing and playing music. Thus, she refines her character with education and knowledge only confined to high-class people. She gains a higher sense of her individuality as she asserts her vantage points comparing herself to the family daughters;

I was apparently handsomer than any of them; . . . I was better shaped; and . . . I sang better, by which I mean I had a better voice; in all which you will, I hope, allow me to say, I do not speak my own conceit of myself, but the opinion of all that knew the family. (p. 19)

Since she is a beauty, Moll falls in love with the elder brother Robert. Albeit love and sweet words motivate her at first, yet money plays the major role and prompts her to risk herself into an illegal affair.
Thus, money is the *raison d’être* of her deviation and nonconformity, and it is her society that drives her to that. According to Robert’s sister, women are considered nil without money;

... the market is against our sex just now; and if a young woman have beauty, birth, breeding, wit, sense, manners, modesty, and all these to an extreme, yet if she have not money, she's nobody, she had as good want them all for nothing but money now recommends a woman; the men play the game all into their own hands. (p. 20)

The way the English society looks at women as non-existent when impecunious is not only passive, but also extremely deleterious. At the time of Defoe, it was the patriarchal order that was predominating.

According to this order, Toril Moi states that iniquitously "... woman has been constructed as man’s Other, denied the right to her own subjectivity and to responsibility for her own action.” 76 Defoe is censorious of such a look and such a society that oppresses woman and degrades her to the state of a mere thing. That is best shown in his article “The Education of Women.”

In his *English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century 1700–1789*, Clive T. Probyn demonstrates that when Moll’s society does not accommodate Moll with a suitable environment and respectable means to live by she

76 qtd. in Rakesh, p. 2.
starts to find the means to rebel against its laws. She contrives the ways, defies and contravenes the patriarchal society 'either by an act of will or through a deterministic necessity.\textsuperscript{77} Moll needs to adapt and get along with the harsh circumstances and encumbrances that encounter her. She resorts to her body as an attraction, i.e. a means to gain money. Even in her early life and first relation with the elder brother Robert, she is well aware of her beauty and consequential financial results that follow or accompany the process of making love with Robert. As Probyn puts it clearly;

For Moll the connection between her sex and money is made early on. Her first lover throws a purse of guineas into her lap at the moment he expresses his love for her. Moll is more excited by the money, which thereafter becomes the motive and the erotic product of her sexual relationships.\textsuperscript{78}

The evidence on that is Moll's admission itself; "I was more confounded with the \textit{money} [italics mine] than I was before with the love, and began to be so elevated that I scarce knew the ground I stood on." (p. 23). As one finds it clear here, money is to her of greater paramountcy than love though it is still her first affair. She is well conscious of this. The agency of money is active at Moll's early life.

\textsuperscript{77} Probyn, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p. 38.
Contrary to Moll, Maria is more preoccupied with love than money. However, she is also self-conscious of what she wants most. She may be even more conscious and more autonomous since she is not controlled by societal forces, religious dogmas or moral restraints. She is simply merely a woman in search of adventure.

As a teenager when she has had her first orgasm, Maria states that “no need for a man who liked a woman’s body, but had no time for her feelings. She could do it on her own!” (p. 12). Thus, in gender terms, the feminine body and subject becomes independent from men. In *Eleven Minutes*, there is an emphasis on the woman’s soul and feelings rather than her body and sex. The feminine subject here is of a self-fulfilled subjectivity that does not rely on men to achieve her aims and pleasures. Maria tends not to let herself be overwhelmed with high hopes of marrying men she loves after her first frustration by the boy who abandons her for another girl of her colleagues. Since the early adolescent days of her life, agency and self-consciousness characterise Maria’s haecceity and subjectivity. Like Moll in her first love affair with Robert, a sense of misandry grows in Maria’s heart; “[M]en brought only pain, frustration [and] suffering . . .” (p. 14). Her agency and self–
consciousness is quite manifest in her determination not to “fall in love again, because love spoiled everything” (p. 14).

Losing her Virginity, unlike Moll’s defloweration, is also out of her own will because she has grown “weary of being the only virgin amongst her group of friends” (p. 15). In eighteenth-century England, it is a shame if an unmarried woman loses her virginity. If she does, then she jeopardises her honour and femininity. When there is no more virginity, then femininity is in danger of fragility. That is why Robert plots to make his brother Robin intoxicated to a degree he cannot distinguish between a virgin and a deflowered woman. This he does for his own sake not Moll’s. He is the symbol of patriarchal meanness. Maria, however, topples the gender binary opposition taking a vantage point against the male partner with whom she loses her virginity; “she had to threaten him first, saying that if he didn’t, she would tell her father he had raped her. She used him as a way of learning, trying in every way she could to understand what pleasure there was in having sex with a partner” (p. 15). Unlike Moll, she is the one in control here. She is opportunistic since she blackmails him into doing whatever she likes. She is intact while he is fragile. She simply wants to explore the realm of sex through exploiting him taking revenge for all the frustrations she has suffered
with boys, especially the one she loved sincerely and cheated on her.

When Maria met the Swiss man named Roger, “she was ready to be transformed into the princess of the universe . . . just like Cinderella” (p. 23). Likewise, Moll wishes to be a gentlewoman since her early childhood. It is the feminine preoccupation with being respected as a woman, as a being, as an entity, just as men are. Women look for security in men and money. Maria starts to be likewise when she considers for a moment marrying Roger in spite of his being too old for her; “She didn't need to suffer for love, she could play this man along just as she had her boss at the shop, get married, have children and give her parents a comfortable life” (p. 25). Here, Maria is the one to “play” the man to get money from him just like Moll plays men’s own game. However, this is just a thought of the many random thoughts that come across Maria’s mind. Besides, Roger is not interested in Maria as a young beautiful wife. He just wants her as an object, a samba dancer at his club. So, pardon Maria’s thought of playing the man because he is the one who wants to play her as it appears later. Man is Moll and Maria’s opponent as Toril Moi shows Simone de Beauvoir’s pivotal basis of *The Second Sex* and she illustrates the general position of woman according to man in Moi’s *Sexual/Textual Politics;*
throughout history, . . . “woman” has been constructed as man’s Other, denied the right to her own subjectivity and to responsibility for her own actions. . . . The fact that women often enact the roles patriarchy has prescribed for them does not prove that patriarchal analysis is right: Beauvoir’s uncompromising refusal of any notion of a female nature or essence is succinctly summed up in her famous statement “One is not born a woman; one becomes one.”

Moll and Maria are not the kind of women who are ready to compromise with such a stereotype. They are nonconformist regardless of the different ways they both take in their relationships with men. As aforementioned, Maria’s preoccupation with the soul, and her self-consciousness are acute and keen. Furthermore, she is more preoccupied with herself and the integrity and autonomy of her subjectivity; “If I must be faithful to someone or something, then I have, first of all, to be faithful to myself” (pp. 26–27). She ruminates over Roger’s offer to go to Switzerland. She hesitates yet shows a good knowledge of herself as her hesitation stems from the fact that “she was a girl from the backlands of Brazil, with no experience of life apart from . . . the certainty that she was beautiful” (p. 31). She will always remember her mother’s advice; “Beauty, my dear, doesn’t last” (p. 17).

79 qtd. in Hall, p. 98.
Both Moll and Maria share a sense of alienation and a feeling of necessity and insecurity. Both have to work their ways out to get material security to survive in strange worlds: Moll is estranged within her own society; Maria is far away from her homeland. Alienation is overcome through adventure.

Vanity and preoccupation with appearance are shared between the far-in-time worlds of Moll and Maria. Coelho complains in *Eleven Minutes*, “Keeping up appearances – why was the world so concerned with appearances?” (p. 262). Femininity and vanity seem inseparable in both worlds. Moll and Maria are similar in spite of all the different circumstances that encounter both heroines. Putting on appearances is part of Moll’s character as explored in the discussion of masquerade that Moll implements in order to topple the binary opposition of gender and inflict revenge on men. Maria’s appearance is part of her self-esteem. It may be a result of her alienation, something to help her circumvent difficulties and something to brag about before her family and townspeople. It seems that Maria is conscious of this vanity and care about keeping up appearances. Is it not vanity and beauty what attracts men to women?
Compared to Moll, Maria is far more straightforward in her relations with men. Arnold Kettle states that “Moll wants to be honest – with herself, with us . . . but of course she can’t be.” Moll is fettered by her society, and she finds difficulties in setting herself free. Another aspect that can be explored in Maria’s encounter with the Arab man is objectification and dehumanisation of the female body and feminine subject. The Arab man offers Maria a shocking proposal; “If you come up and have a drink with me in my hotel room, I'll give you a thousand francs” (p. 56). Maria’s body turns simply to be a mere object that can be bought. On the one hand, Moll has an overwhelming sense of estrangement because “she had no one, absolutely no one in the world she could talk to; she was alone in a strange city, a relatively experienced twenty-two-year-old, but none of her experience could help her to decide what would be the best response” (p. 56). On the other hand, “she was no innocent and was used to the ways of men. . . . She dreamed of overcoming all difficulties purely by dint of her own intelligence, charm and willpower” (p. 57). Just as Maria is overwhelmed with a strong sense of alienation, she still has a sense of agency that struggles to survive and prove that she is a subject not an object. Maria

80 Kettle, p. 388.
is not that naïve to be vanquished by a man as this. When Robert seduces Moll, her status is summed up in her account that "I was more confounded with the money [italics mine] than I was before with the love, and began to be so elevated that I scarce knew the ground I stood on" (p. 23). Moll was not in need of money; however, she was lured by it, and was also fooled by Robert, who promised to marry her, yet broke his vow. Defoe attacks the extortionate patriarchal system symbolized by Robert. Maria, on the other hand, "so desperately needed" money. (p. 55) However, contrary to Moll, her immediate reaction is not succumbing to the seduction of sex and money; nay, she bursts into tears. It is her feeling of insecurity that generates in her a sense of despair. Maria thinks that this sense of dejection "could make a human being take a totally different course from the one he or she had planned" (p. 58). Despondency is what makes Maria accept the Arab man’s offer. It is the first time Maria receives a pecuniary offer in exchange for bodily sexual services. The case being so, "she seemed like a stranger to herself. Up till then, she had been a nice, cheerful, well-brought-up girl, and she would never have spoken like that to a stranger. But that girl, it seemed to her, had died forever: before her lay another existence" (p. 59). Notwithstanding that despair and alienation are the main reasons that
drive Maria to such deed, she demonstrates total self-responsibility, autonomy, agency and self-constructionism;

I don't feel in the least bit sorry for myself. I am still not a victim, because I could have left that restaurant with my dignity intact and my purse empty. I could have given that man sitting opposite me a lesson in morality or tried to make him see that before him sat a princess who should be wooed not bought. I could have responded in all kinds of ways, but – like most people – I let fate choose which route I should take. (p. 60)

Moll cannot dare say such things at all. First of all, she is an orphan living with a strange family. She may be in danger of being kicked out because of this man called Robert. Furthermore, what characterises Moll and Robert’s relation is the latter’s treachery, renunciation and forsakenness. Because he is a man and a member of the patriarchal materialistic bourgeoisie, he is saucy and impertinent enough to break his promises and relinquish his vows to Moll irrespective of her feelings. This is the way of the world in eighteenth-century England: man is superior and prioritised to woman. In mathematical terms, the gender equation of power is thus: man > woman. Maria’s encounter with the Arab man and its culmination in sex is based on straightforwardness and acceptance of the other. Maria
states that “no one was forcing me to accept anything” (p. 59). There is no exploitation of the other sex despite the fact that she is desperately in need of money. Gender poles and powers are equal because there is no sexism and no societal forces that make Maria feel less than any man. Agency and self-consciousness is at its highest and no one is to blame. Amongst the two couples, the only culpable person for mischief and impertinence is Robert and the patriarchal system he stands for.

Maria discovers that men “wanted to talk about the pressures of work, about their unfaithful wife, about how lonely they felt, how they had no one to talk to . . .” (p. 86). Alienation is what characterises Maria’s clients in contrast to Moll’s husbands and partners in a patriarchal milieu. A reversal of gender poles takes place between eighteenth-century England and our globalised modern world. In Defoe’s world, Moll is alienated because of men; in Coelho’s, men are estranged even more than Maria herself. Maria’s view of men is well manifest and characterised in her diary; “All men, tall or short, arrogant or unassuming, friendly or cold . . . are afraid. . . . [T]hey’re scared to death of women really. Perhaps not the woman they married, but there’s always one woman who frightens them and forces them to submit to her caprices” (p. 90). This assumes an overbalance of gender poles on
behalf of women. To conclude, both characters can be seen in what E. M. Forster says in “A Novel of Character” about Moll; “A character is everything and is given freest play. . . . Nothing matters but the heroine; she stands in an open space like a tree . . . ”\(^8\) Indeed, in spite of all societal forces, Moll attains her subjectivity. Maria is unquestionably autonomous from the beginning till the end.

Conclusion

Stephen Greenblatt states; “[T]here were . . . no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society.” Such a view, in the context of contemporary society, is an expression of the ‘politics’ of cultural despair.\textsuperscript{82} He claims that the state of subjectivity is ever unfixed and malleable to tackle since there are always factors that play with it. Moll, living in a patriarchal society, has been greatly affected by it, its material relations and its mundane sexist depreciating treatment of women. On the other hand, Maria, living solely depending on herself and fighting off her nostalgia and loneliness, is of more agency. If one has to look at the way Maria and Moll are treated by men, it will be unfair to say that Maria has suffered as same as Moll. Comparison is not possible between patriarchy in eighteenth–century England and the present time. It is right that patriarchy is still agent in our days, but not by the same degree as it was in the past. As a realistic writer, Defoe tries to portray the image of his time so down–to–earth as much as possible. It is thus

unfair to judge Coelho on the principle of Defoe’s realism. For instance, the world is full of dangers. How is it the case then in such a world of prostitution where there is nothing but drug dealers? Is it the world of Geneva and Switzerland that is so peaceful or is it Coelho that is so romantic?! He leaves us no choice. He begins his novel as a fairytale and finishes it the same way reminding us of that. In one of his interviews, he mentions that Maria is there in real life and that he writes out of a ‘personal principle’ (A Conversation with Paulo Coelho in *Eleven Minutes*, n.p.). In the dedication of his novel, Paulo Coelho says;

*Eleven Minutes* dealt with a subject that was harsh, difficult, shocking. [. . .]. I have a duty [. . .] to talk about the things that concern me and not only about what everyone would like to hear. Some books make us dream, others bring us face to face with reality, but what matters most to the author is the honesty with which a book is written.\(^83\)

This seems rather revolutionary if compared to what Defoe says in his preface to the novel;

[. . .] ‘tis hoped will not offend the chastest reader or the modestest hearer; and as the best use is made even of the worst story, the moral ‘tis hoped will keep the reader serious, even where the story might incline him to be otherwise. To give the history of a wicked life repented of,

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necessarily requires that the wicked part should be made as wicked as the real history of it will bear, to illustrate and give a beauty to the penitent part, which is certainly the best and brightest, if related with equal spirit and life.\textsuperscript{84}

Coelho is not preoccupied with the moral message as Defoe was. Defoe lived in an age when he dreamt of freedom and agency for all the members of the society. Coelho still lives in a world where almost everyone is agent and responsible for his subjectivity in spite of all constraints imposed by media or whatever sources of information he gains his knowledge from. He is rather romantic and believes in the ability of man to attain his/her full independent subjectivity.

\textsuperscript{84} Daniel Defoe, preface, Moll Flanders, by Defoe (Beirut: Librarie de Liban, 1988), p. 4.
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ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في موضوع الذاتية (الهوية) في روايتي (مول فلاندرز) لدانييل ديفر وإحدى عشرة دقيقة لباولو كويمر. بما أن موضوع الهوية متشعّب جدًا فإننا ستقصر في هذه الدراسة على الفروق بين الجنسين وأدوارهما وعلى تحليل البنية الاجتماعية والذاتية في كل من الروايتين. كيف تتعامل البطمتان مع العوائق والمشكلات التي تعرّضهما في عالميما؟ وإلى أي حد هما متشابهتان وكيف تختلفان من الناحيتين الاجتماعية والذاتية؟

بذلك فإن موضوع الرسالة يهدف بصورة أساسية إلى مقارنة بين البطمتين ومقارنة العوامل التي صاغت شخصيتيهما. النقطة الرئيسية في الفصل الأول تدور حول شخصيتي مول فلاندرز كمكّن اجتماعي. وتعتمد الخلفية النقدية على نقاد بارزين ديفر. علاوة على ذلك، العلاقات بين الجنسين هي موضع بحث ارتكازاً على نظريّات جاك لاكان وجوان ريفيير وجاديث باتمر. يركز الفصل الثاني على شخصيّة ماريا كمكّن ذاتي منعزل عن التأثيرات الاجتماعيّة في رواية إحدى عشرة دقيقة لكويمر. هنا يركز تحليلنا على مقارنة ومقارنة مفاهيم الجندر لدى نقاد بارزين في هذا المجال كسيغموند فرويد وجون بودريار. يقوم الفصل الثالث على مقارنة شخصيتي البطمتين. ويلخص الفصل الختامي النقاط الرئيسية للبحث. هناك أيضاً عرض وتحليل موجز لآراء الكاتبين في روايتيهما. فكل كاتب قدم عمله بأسلوبه الخاص.