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TECHNOLOGY****SIN TO REPENTANCE OF A PICARO IN MOLL FLANDERS BY DANIEL DEFOE****Aditi Kashyap\*, Suman Devi, Gulshan Kumar**

\* Department of Applied Sciences and Humanities, School of Engineering and Technology, Ganga Technical Campus, Bahadurgarh, Haryana, India

**ABSTRACT**

Moll Flanders is a story of a lady who has inherited a proclivity to evil, and in whose life that aptness finds a lot of scope. The novel contains a number of dramatic situations and happenings to force Moll for doing sin in her own life until she realized her all evils and move towards repentance. Moll provides a human face to crime. But, we have to recognise Moll as a person, who suffers and triumphs, loves and loses, a person with a versatile personality to be able of doing so many things but has down moral values, sometimes she is - an innocent face. At last, she learns the lesson of repentance.

**KEYWORDS:** Picaresque, Sin, Repentance**INTRODUCTION**

Voluminous writer, novelist, journalist of his age. He is a remarkable feature, who produced numerous pamphlets and an ample of books on different subjects. He is chiefly remembered as a novelist. One of his famous novels is "Robinson Crusoe" (1719) and it is followed by "Moll Flanders" (1722), "A Journal of Plague Year" (1722) and "Roxana" (1724). He had a keen interest in politics. He was, indeed, not only a prolific writer but also a versatile one. He travelled widely in England and on the continent. Robinson Crusoe is his first full-fledged novel.

**LITERACY CONTEXT OF MOLL FLANDERS**

Defoe did not use only one style of literary terms. As, we read the novel deeply, we see the different literary context in Moll Flanders. When, we start to read it, it is a novel in narrative form. But, when we indulge deeply, we see more than one literary context. Basically, it is a picaresque novel. As per the objection of the one critic, it also comes under "Quasi-Picaresque". Finally, we can say it has the elements of Picaresque, Quasi-Picaresque, Puritanism, Romance, Crime narrative. Try to put it in one category it is not possible.

**Picaresque:**

In England, Moll Flanders was probably the first novel in this literary term. The term Picaresque was initiated or derived from the Spanish word Picaro (Rogue). A Picaresque novel is one which describes the adventures, tricks, thefts, wandering of a low born protagonist. Moll has the qualities of a Picaro, as she wanders and applies different tricks for survival and she is also a low born due to her birth to a whore and a thief. She enjoys sexual freedom. She cannot be contrasted except "Wife of Bath" in English literature who enjoys the company of husbands and lovers in her whole life.

**A Quasi- Picaresque:**

Moll turns to be religious after a long voyage of crime and sins. She goes on the path of repentance. This feature of Moll makes this novel in doubt whether it is right or not to treat it as a Picaresque novel. Picaresque novel is never religious while Moll is religious at the end of novel. But, the major portion of the novel deals with Picaresque elements of Moll i.e. adventure, crime, sexual freedom, loose-structure and long strings of episodes revolving around Moll as whole. For, this conflict of Picaresque gives another term to novel which may be called as: "Quasi-Picaresque Novel".

**Romance:**

The term Romance, originates from Anglo-Norman and Old French romanz, Romans, which means story of Chivalry and love. Romance has totally a different conception in English Literature. It means romantic stories, Chivalrous feats of heroes/heroines and knights. Romance appears in Moll Flanders when she lives her life with

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the gypsies. Another romantic element comes when she becomes a gentle woman by getting married with a gentle man, as a wife of younger son of a rich family. But, her married life is finished after her husband's death. Romantic element again rises with the incest theme of Moll appears in her imagination when lying in the arms of her husband but she thinks that she lies in the arms of her husband's elder brother. Incest theme really commits when unknowingly, she has three children with the next husband who turns out to be her own brother.

#### **The Autobiographical Mode:**

Moll Flanders is a novel, which is written in the form of an autobiographical novel. In real sense, the author of this novel is Daniel Defoe, but for adopting the technique of an autobiographical mode, he hides himself against the protagonist to make a direct address to the audience. The novel begins as

*“My true name is so well known in the records, or registers at Newgate, and in the old-Baily, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there, relating to my particular conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my name, or the account of my family to this work ; perhaps, after my death it may be better known; at present it would not be prosper.”*

These opening lines clear the concept that the protagonist herself is writing the novel. This narrative mode makes a direct interaction between the writer and the readers. Charles Dickens has used this technique in “David Copperfield” which is a famous novel of Dickens.

#### **Sin to Repentance:**

The full title of the novel is:

*“The Fortune and Misfortune of the famous Moll Flanders who was born in Newgate and, during a life of continued variety for Three score Years, besides her childhood, was Twelve Years a Whore, five times a wife (whereof once to her own brother), Twelve Years a Thief, Eight Years a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew rich, lived honestly, and died a penitent.”*

The title of the novel covers almost a paragraph so that readers take keen interest and they have the keen curiosity to know Moll Flanders. The full title suggests that Moll is not an ordinary person but in real sense a picaresque (rogue) who wanders from one place to another as a whore, criminal, thief, wife, mistress. She is on the voyage from sins to repentance. The name of the protagonist is also significant, as Moll stands for a woman of loose morals and Flanders stands for immortality. Moll Flanders is a Picaresque novel in real sense of English literature. The story of novel tells us the fall of a woman by her own low moral values and ends with the re-birth of Moll after repentance.

Moll is born in Newgate prison, her mother who having been convicted of felony, is to be transported to Virginia. Her mother is also a fallen woman. Initially Moll is not a character of low moral values. After having birth in Newgate Prison in London, she is handed over to relatives of her mother's. Moll, a little girl wanders into the midst of a band of gypsies and is taken away by this group from one place to another till she runs away from them in the town of Colchester. Before, this incident, she is like an innocent girl, but this unfavourable condition changes her destiny. Run away from gypsies, Parish Officials handed her over to the care of a good woman who is a teacher and runs her own school.

She teaches her to live a life of a gentle woman not life of a fallen woman. But, circumstances unfavoured her life, as this teacher dies and after this teacher's death, Moll is given shelter by a wealthy aristocratic family where she learns knowledgeable things for life in the company of the daughters of the family. Moll learns writing, dancing, speaking French and singing. Her beauty with her learning makes her an aristocratic household.

But destiny wants different for her. The elder son of the family traps Moll by the trick of flattery, to seduce her. And, this young man forces her to marry his younger brother. She is totally trapped by the elder son. She enjoys her married life as a wife the younger son of the family but she is in the feeling of incest in her mind, as even in her husband's arms, she thinks to be in his elder brother's arms. The younger son of the family dies after five years and again she feels lonely in world of happiness.

After this, she moves ahead to search a man to whom she can get marry and settle down and finally she find a linen draper who woos her and wins her as his wife. The linen draper flees away to France, due to heavy debts



on him. She finds herself a grass-widow, if not actually a widow. She is again a lonely woman in the world of colours.

Moll again searches a man of wealth to be her perfect match. Finally she gets a man who seems wealthy to her and who, in turn, thinks her to be wealthy widow. After marriage, they find themselves the poor one who does not have anything as they were thinking. And the tragedy happens, when she learns about her husband that he is her own step brother, when she finds her husband's mother as her own mother too in Virginia. She discloses this incident to her husband, who is no more her husband. She shocks of her living with her own brother as his wife. Her mother suggests her to live an incestuous life with him. This is something intolerable. She leaves them and returns back to England.

After this tragic incident, she becomes a hired mistress for six years and also gives birth to three children of a man who is already a married one. This shows her falling moral values.

Then Moll goes to a village in Lancashire in the company of a woman who is trickster and who introduces her to a man who seems to be a rich one. The man gets the impression that Moll is a rich widow; and so he marries her. Soon, the world of illusion dismisses. Now, Moll becomes a mid wife introduced by the Land lady to whose house Moll leaves after returning to London. Moll addresses this Land lady her Governess.

Now, after giving birth to child, she marries to a man working in the Bank of England even when her husband of Lancashire is still alive but she does not any hope of his coming. Her marriage with this man of bank proves fruitful and they enjoy the life happily. But after five years of this marriage and giving birth to two children, the man dies of continuous depression due to financial crisis.

Now, Moll is forty-eight years old and she has no beauty charm and no temptation left her. So, she becomes a thief compelled by her avarice. She continues her thefts to costly goods, obtained by tricks and so many things. She is favoured her luck and continued to adopt theft as her profession.

Then comes the day when Moll's luck forsakes her. She is caught in the act of committing a theft. She is taken to Newgate prison. This is the place, where she was born and where she has now been brought to suffer the consequences of all her crimes. Now, she has feeling of disgust and she is overcome by remorse, but this is not her true remorse. Then, her Governess comes to meet her and advises her to confess her misdeeds in front of Clergy man. Then, Moll confesses all her misdeeds in front of clergy man and this time she regrets in true sense. She realises herself to the lowest-level and the spiritual effect of the clergy man's discourses-all these combine to bring about Moll's regeneration. Moll now undergoes a transformation. Here, is a rebirth of Moll Flanders. She sheds all the evils of her life and now she knows the path of peace that only comes through repentance. Moll is now a true penitent. There is the combination of many things against her to make her a hardened sinner. She is an inborn evil character and her bad luck and so many things are the results of her life.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper is that there is a hope of salvation even for the most hardened sinner. The only key to all the problems is the repentance and it is because of this repentance that Moll is able to adjust herself after such a long list of evils with the world and she is leading a life in Virginia, far away from England. Till the end of her life she spends her life in a state of repentance.

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