The Fox

“The Fox” is a short story written by DH Lawrence in 1922. It shows the lives of two women March and Benford and their will to survive during the post-war period; throughout the narration the narrator encounters also Henry a young soldier and a fox which is the cause of the two ladies’ problems.

 Benford and March seem to be very determined women because of their intention to “raise” a farm together even without a male support. Nevertheless they had to face to economical problem: even if Benford wasn’t poor March had little or no money. It follows that Benford ’s father gave his daughter the start. [so their independence was strictly connected to money]. Furthermore, they weren’t able to command “farm life” sometimes: one day animals escaped from the fence (the heifer was out). Anyway the two women have two different way of being: March is more masculine than Benford. March had abilities in outdoor work so that in a way or another, both women tend to offset each other making possible their independence.

A first problem is presented by the fox: the fox is a carnivorous animal, a predator, so it is self-assured also it has got peculiar characteristics such as cleverness, willingness. Furthermore the fox might be something more and different in spite a simple animal because it represents a pretext and a key-point to the development of the short story. It is also a symbol, so it stands for March’s need of a male character next to her. Indeed even in the fox is an animal the subject pronoun used to make references to it is the male pronoun “he”. So the reader understands that March is attracted by him: making an hypothesis, one knows the reproductive period of a fox goes from the end of February and March. So I suppose that Laurence gave the surname March to the protagonist to recall into her surname her attitude and behaviour. Into the short story March is attracted by the fox and then by the man who recalls its physical appearances. It follows that the surname of the protagonist is strictly connected to hers behaviour and feelings concerning her sexual desire.

A male figure appeared one day when March and Benford finished their cups of tea. Both women were scared about this figure who was a young soldier who was searching to his grandfather, dead about three years before. At first Benford is more scared than March that took her gun and went to the door to understand who was there. Secondly Benford offered a meal and a place where rest; she hosted him as he was his younger brother while March was in a way or another attracted by him and scared at the same time.

Day after day, Henry is more attracted by March’s silence and her gaze. They spent good days together so that Henry asked her to marry her. She is doubtful about what Henry wanted from her, furthermore she thought to have a sort of paternal role towards Benford so that she will be disoriented if March will decide to go on bride to Henry. Due to the relationship between March and Henry (maybe more attractive/passionate than sentimental one) there was a negative incline of the relationship between the two women. Benford acquire “jealous” attitudes to March. Such behaviour is conveyed in the text by numerous appearance of Benford during March and Henry’s interactions.

Into the letter send by March to Henry, she seem to have changed idea about her future with him, certainly influenced by the relationship with Benford. If, on one hand March represented a “male support” to Benford, on the other hand she represented a female one to March. Time spent together and the two different “approaches to life” make their relationship stronger than March and Henry one. It is no clear which kind of love is the one between the two female character but it is enough to make Benford more important than Henry.

Considering the poem and its analysis, the reader can identify five key-words for war even considering “the war” represented by the fox: scarceness, gun, evil (demon referring to the fox), exasperation, fear.

Also he can identify five key-words for the role of women: love, hard work, survival, willpower, independence.