**Introduction**

In this depth analysis I’m going to analyze the characterization of women in “The Fox” and see how the two women perceive the war.

The fox is a novel that provides the readers with strong images of two women’s life during WWI, March’s and Bandford’s. Their life is a rural one: they manage a farm in the English district of Berkshire in order to survive. But suddenly, a man, the soldier Henry, supplants in their daily life and upsets their previous order. Sure enough, it is a novel of love and hatred, attraction and repulsion, stability and precariousness, which will end in a dramatic way.

Henry actually doesn’t contribute to the farm management. On the other side, March and Banford play an active role. While men used to fight in the war, women had to work in order to support themselves. All in all, it occurs a kind of emancipation of women since they gain responsibilities they have never had before.

**The relationship between March and Banford**

They are two women of thirty years old working on a farm. Bandford is presented as the most delicate and weak because of her physical appearance, but March is weaker than she. March is able to work hard as a man and she will always be the man of the situation but she is in the air and she is subdued by Bandford. March and Bandford are the surnames of the women and they are meaningful because March refers to the month in which the nature awakes, and Bandford refers to something distant (to band) and strong. The surnames communicate as the women really are.

Relationships are at the centre of text’s investigation.

They can be analyzed from the direct reported speech or considering the characters’ reactions described by the narrator.

Their bond is not balanced; indeed Banford perceives March quite as a male figure, because of her behaviour. The narrator himself asserts “She would be the man about the place”. It follows that Banford feels satisfied, both on the physical level and on the sentimental one. On the other hand, March looks for a male figure in her life, intimately nourishing the desire of a sexual gratification

The relationship between Banford and March changes when Henry arrives at the farm. Henry and March seem to get every day closer to each other, and at the same time, he slowly seems to distance himself from Banford.

March is not autonomous to chose what to do because she has to decide who is minded to lose. Bandford and Henry fight to kept March, but she didn’t know what to do.

This is the demonstration that relationships limit the personal autonomy.

**Women’s perception of the war**

D.H Lawrence’s The Fox is set at the end of the First World War. In the whole story, even if the word “war” appears only 4 times, the intelligent reader understands that war is the background of the story.

War is always depicted through indirect textual references. Indeed the reader can make up a general overview only once he has read the whole short story. Right from the first pages of the novella there is a clear reference to  war:

“War conditions, again, were very unfavourable to poultry-keeping. Food was scarce and bad”.

“Since the war the fox was a demon”

Lawrence is perfectly able to synthesize the meaning of the war as a time of famine and suffering in only two sentences.

In the economy of the text the fox is considered a demon because it represent the issue of the lack of food and the poverty that the two young ladies have to face.

Last but not least, war is quoted in Henry’s presentation: Henry is a soldier who has fought in Salonika (now called Thessaloniki), a Greek port where Anglo-French forces landed on  October 5thy, 1915.

Reading the Story, the readers can trace out the negative aspects of war in the novel. Misery seems to be reflected in Bandford and March’s rural activities, especially in rearing. Indeed, as you can see from the beginning of the novel, the omniscient narrator asserts: “ War condition [..] were very unfavourable to poultry-keeping. Food was scarce and bad.” Such statement makes you immediately think about the difficulties of living during the post-war period.

It is also important to say that Bandford and March’s living conditions are hard since they are unable to manage the farming and rearing activities properly. It follows that, even if they are independent from the juridical point of view, their independence seems to not lead them to good results. Therefore, their living condition seems to suggest to the reader their need of somebody who can help and raise them from such terrible condition.

They have also to face another economical problem caused by the war: the reader must consider that the two women have not enough money to start the business. Indeed, at the beginning of the novel, the narrator says “Banford's father [..] gave his daughter the start”. They have an amount of capital that enables them to survive in spite of their difficulties in the management of the farm. As a consequence, their independence is not given by their actual self-sufficiency.

In spite of this, in Lawrence’s novella the two female characters seem to be very determined. Just consider their intention to manage a farm together even without a male support. As a matter of fact, the narrator asserts “They had taken the farm together, intending to work it all by themselves” right in the first lines of the novel. In addition, interesting to notice is also Banford’s statement: “We consider ourselves quite efficient”, that unveils her awareness of being independent.

**Quotations from “The Fox”**

*Quotations about women emancipation*

During the war women acquired social position because they worked to substitute men. When the conflict ended men wanted to return to their assignment but women desired to be recognised their emancipation. So it created a conflict between men’s and women’s point of view.

*'Oh, well,' broke in March, 'we don't believe in living for nothing but work.'*

*'Don't you?' he answered. And again the quick young laugh came over his face. He kept his eyes steadily on the obscure woman in the corner.*

*'But what will you do when you've used up all your capital?' he said.*

*'Oh, I don't know,' answered March laconically. 'Hire ourselves out for land-workers, I suppose.'*

*'Yes, but there won't be any demand for women land-workers now the war's over,' said the youth.*

*(pag. 3)*

*Quotations about famine and poverty*

Even if Great Britain was one of the winners, at the end of the war inflation increased so were difficult to survive.

*War conditions, again, were very unfavourable to poultry-keeping. Food was scarce and bad*

*He was gone. The captain, upset, took a gin and bitters. Henry managed to hire a bicycle. It was twelve o'clock when he left the camp. He had sixty miles of wet and muddy crossroads to ride. But he was in the saddle and down the road without a thought of food.*

*Banford flew into the village on her bicycle to try and buy food. She was a hospitable soul. But alas, in the year 1918 there was not much food to buy.*

*'There's no food. There's nothing here. You must wait a bit,' said Banford to them.*

*(pag. 5)*

*Quotations about financial amount*

She, however, was the principal investor, for March had little or no money.

*'Why,' came March's vague voice, 'what do you want to waste your money for?'*

*'I thought it would be well spent,' said Banford.*

*'I wasn't thinking of anything except the way the wind was blowing,' said March.*

*'Oh dear,' replied Banford, 'I could have had as original thought as that myself. I'm afraid I*have*wasted my money this time*