

I Am 'She': An Analysis Of 'Fox'

By D.H. Lawrence

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Abstract:

This paper presents a detailed analysis of 'The Fox' by D. H. Lawrence. An attempt has been made to manifest the ardent desire of a woman through the eyes of various feminist critics. It will also highlight Lawrence's perspective of what it means to 'write like a woman' and how it is reflected successfully.

Keywords: Textuality, feminism, women writing.

Introduction:

"Alas! Your place is neither here nor there"—this appears to be the situation of male writers today, who took up their pen and spoke 'for women. When women began to express themselves in literary excellence which was vividly of their own, the male writers were not simply marginalized but were also viewed as "literary trespassers" (Hilary and Lawrence, 1982). So was the situation with D. H. Lawrence: an essayist who 'wrote as a woman would write' (Anais and Lawrence, 1964). To him it was crucial that the female experience should discover an articulation in his books. Subsequently his books are loaded with women characters like Constance Chatterley, Amma and many more. Anyways, this does not hamper Kate Millet in criticizing Lawrence as "the most talented and fervid of sexual politicians" (Kate, 1971) in spite of the fact that he wrote 'like' a woman and 'for' a woman.

This paper analyzes how Lawrence succeeds in displaying the female involvement in his novella called "**The Fox**" which discusses the way of life of the two ladies who have a non-sexual association. Externally they are autonomous, solid and equipped for living on their own. However, in all actuality, for both of them to run the homestead with little experience, raise chickens and secure them from fox turns into a difficult task. At the point when

the youthful Henry enters into their lives, this odd, however agreeable companionship goes into a different direction. Lawrence here deals with distinctive shades of a woman's identity through the characters of the two ladies; March and Banford.

To comprehend and value Lawrence's work better, a few perceptions are made by critics about what it is to write 'like' a woman and about women's issues are presented here. With the rise of the new basic speculations of 'Reading Women' and 'Writing Women', writing 'like' a woman has come in as an attack from the feminist quarters. "If writing is a transgression punishable by death", says Jacobus, "then being written about, by however loving a father, can also prove fatal" (Jacobus, 1971). If however, "sexuality and textuality both depend on difference" (Elizabeth, 1980) as viewed by Elizabeth in **"Writing and Sexual Difference"**, then at that point what does it make a difference if the talking voice is male or female? "Women's problems, women's insights, women's very special adventures: these are material; and what matters is sexious art is ultimately the uniqueness of vision, the skill of execution...of course the serious artistic voice is one of the individual style, and it is sexless..." (Joyce, 1980).

Description:

In **"The Fox"** Lawrence talks about two women living in solitude in a farm. Banford and March try to run the Bailey all by themselves, notwithstanding the dread of the fox, until a young man named Henry— a metaphorical fox makes an entry into their lives. His entrance into the farm changes all connections. Prior to his entry the connection among March and Banford prohibited men. There was no power battle. Lawrence depicts an exceptionally female condition which is of comprehension and congruity. The risk to this quiet environment comes at first from the fox that kills their chickens and later from Henry whose entrance changes the plan of things in the farm. The fox becomes the symbol of maleness. March is confused about her sexual sentiments and dreams. Lawrence portrays distinctive shades of the characters of the two ladies. He portrays Banford as a traditional woman, fragile, requiring somebody to take care of her. On the other hand he portrays the character of March who acts like the man thereby taking care of it. The female side of her is uncovered only after she meets Henry.

Lawrence effectively depicts the distinctions on their character qualities through his three way relationship. March on the other hand plays the psychological male in the company of Banford and the desirable female in the company of Henry. This Clashing demeanour and reactions are brought out very well by Lawrence to understand gender role and relationships.

It is clear that the narrative itself is from a woman's point of view, to be more precise from March's point of view. In fact the reader is made to see Henry as a fox because March viewed him as such. The narrative however, deals with not only the physical actions of the women, but also talks about their psychological states of mind. The symbolism is purposely sexual.

"She lowered her eyes and suddenly saw the fox." "She put her gun to her shoulder..." "She struggled, confusedly she came to herself..." At last she became aware that Branford was calling her..."

(Lawrence, 1982)

Such lines as these abound in the novella, drawing the reader's attention to each and every action of the female protagonist. It is significant to take note that how Lawrence utilizes the pronoun 'she' while referring to March, perhaps to emphasize her femininity.

"She took her gun again and went to look for the fox. For, he had lifted his eyes upon her...she did not so much think of him, she was possessed by him. She saw his dark, shrewd, unabashed eye.... she felt him invisibly master her spirit.... she knew the way... she knew his muzzle..."

(Lawrence, 1982, p. 139)

The above passage is used by Lawrence at a time when March encounters the fox and is trying to kill him. When she is attempting to enter the male space, the domain of significant action, Lawrence emphasizes, by way of the narrative, her femininity. This is done, in any case, not to obscure her accomplishment but rather to make her efforts all more triumphant.

As Olive Schreiners heroine Lyndall in **"The Story of an African Farm"** uses the word "little" in her discourse deploring the way in which young ladies are instructed to give up action in favour of attractiveness, "little one, you

cannot go", they say "your little face will burn your and your nice white dress be spoiled" (Holmes and Meier, 1980). The word little figures noticeably in her speech recommending that the little girl's littleness represents a cultural imposition and isn't just an honest physical fact. Same happens to be the case with Lawrence. His use of the pronoun 'she' represents the fact that how March as a 'woman' is trying to overcome the limitations that society imposes on her; she is trying in her own specific manner to overthrow the cultural impositions. However, Gilbert in "Costumes of the Mind" considers The Fox as a "transvestite work", and goes on to show how and goes on to show how feminist transvestism becomes a means to subvert and repudiate the hierarchical views of the male modernists like Lawrence (Gilbert, 1980). She feels that the "Foxy soldier Henry and his two vulnerable female opponents, Banford and March, form a love/hate triangle whose tension is resolved only when Henry manages to divest the transvestite March of her male clothing, her female companion, and her autonomous power

(Gilbert, 1980: 201-202).

This is not altogether true, for March even to the very end holds her independence and her independent power. Lawrence, "writing from a woman's point of view" us ample evidence to show that March although in spite of all her defences, still retains or tries to retain her own individuality, her own power.

"And she was so tired, so tired like a child that wants to go to sleep, but which fights against sleep as if sleep were death. She seemed to stretch her eyes wider in the obstinate effort and tension of being awake. She would keep awake. She would know. She would consider, judge and decide. She would have the reins of her own life between her own hands. She would be an independent woman to the last"

(Lawrence, 1982)

Rest here is utilized as a sort of metaphor for submission and March fights against it. Indeed, even Henry, despite the fact that he executes the creature fox, murders what for him was an allegorical fox, that is, Banford, strips March of her male dress, does not, anyway prevail with regards to picking up independence over her, in making her respect himself.

"The boy... had a cloud between his brows and the strain of discontent in his eyes. He wanted her asleep, at peace with

him. He wanted her at peace, asleep in him. And there she was, dying with the strain of her own wakefulness.... 'if only we could go soon'

(Lawrence, 1982: 205).

Henceforth, *The Fox* isn't as has been claimed by Gilbert, a "costume drama of mis-rule". Lawrence by and by subverts the "hierarchical principle of an order based upon male dominance/female submission" by employing the "transvestite disorder"

(Gilbert, 1980)

This is the situation in "**The Fox**" however huge numbers of his different works too like "**Lady Chatterley's Lover**", "**The Lost Girl**", "**The Lady Bird**" and some more, yet it is past the extent of this paper to examine his different works. Even in his leadership fiction like "**Plumed Serpent**", Lawrence employs the "feminine point of view" (Carol, 1980). Many a time, Lawrence "sought the help from women in order to verify his portrayal of female psychology" (Hilary and Lawrence, 1982). Henceforth, a lot of "**Sons and Lovers**" depends on Jessie Chambers account as *The Trespasser* depends on Helen Corke's. He was so well-suited in rendering the female experience that Mable Dodge Luhan invited Lawrence to "Understand things for me. To take my experience, my material, my Taos, and to formulate it all into a magnificent creation..."

(Alfred and Knoff, 1975 cited in Lawrence, 1980).

Further, Lawrence did not portray the female character as different writers of his age did– to give a record of their physical demonstrations; he managed the totality of their encounters. Subsequently, sexual experience likewise turns into a vital part of his compositions. "It is fair to say", composes Rosalind

"that he was the finest novelist to achieve a specifically and exclusively sexual focus in his presentation of female character; he began the intense interest in women's sexual emotions and needs what has burgeoned in our times into a little sub-species of the novel of its own"

(Rosalind, 1987).

Conclusion:

Moreover, not having the inside methods of composing which empowered ladies journalists like Dorothy Richardson what's

more, Virginia Woolf “to escape the social self by turning inwards and creating a new internal reality” (Hall, 1987), Lawrence portrays the sexual involvement in express terms which maybe, prompted the reality of a considerable lot of his books being restricted. However, writing ‘like’ a woman, Lawrence exhibits that

“Like words, gender identity can be travestied or exchanged; there is no “proper” referent, male or female, only the masquerade of masculinity and femininity!”

(Jacobus, 1986).

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