

Analyse White Stockings by D.H Lawrence

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) is one of the most complicated and contentious authors of the 20th century in England. In his writings, he often looks at the sexual, emotional, and mental sides of relationships between people, especially in the setting of industrial modernity and the loss of traditional values. Lawrence thought that modern society had cut people off from their feelings and natural vitality. In his stories, poems, and essays, he always looks at the conflict between instinct and intelligence, passion and reason, nature and technology, and individuality and society norms.

*"White Stockings," one of his short stories from 1926, stands out as a subtle but strong look at gender roles, power, sexuality, and the psychology of marriage. Unlike *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and other works by him that are more openly sexual, *White Stockings* creates erotic tension through symbolic actions and psychological depth instead of direct sexual descriptions. The story shows how Lawrence felt about what it means to be male and female, about power struggles in marriage, and about how clothes and bodies can be used as symbols.*

White Stockings is a deep and complicated short story that shows how D. H. Lawrence felt about gender, sexuality, power, modernity, and class. Lawrence looks at deep psychological and social pressures in marriage and society through the seemingly simple event of a woman wearing white stockings. The story shows how fragile masculinity is, how strong female sexuality is, and how custom and modernity are always at odds with each other.

White Stockings is about Elsie and Ted Whiston, a young married couple. Ted is a miner and union member with strong working-class values, while Elsie is shown to be pretty, sure of herself, and a little flirtatious. Elsie wears white tights and a short skirt to a union meeting

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with her husband. This is the most important part of the story. Men, like Ted's friend Uncle Tom, are interested in her because of how she looks, which makes Ted feel jealous and unsafe.

The strain in the story comes from Ted's dislike of how Elsie acts sexually and femininity. He thinks that her clothes are sexy and a threat to his masculine power. The story ends in a vague way, with Ted asserting his power over Elsie, who eventually gives in to his will, even though she fought him inside.

Lawrence's Study of Power and Gender

1. Being male and feeling insecure

Ted Whiston is a good example of a working-class man whose personality has been shaped by factory work and socialist ideas. He is liberal on politics but traditional in his feelings. In spite of supporting equality in the public sphere, Ted wants to be in charge in the private sphere, as shown by his jealousy of Elsie's good looks.

Lawrence often made men look like they were in danger from women's sexuality and freedom. Ted is uncomfortable not only because he is jealous, but also because he fears that Elsie's sexual independence makes him less of a man. Lawrence thinks that industrial society has made men spiritually and emotionally weak, and Ted is a good example of this crisis of manhood.

2. Sexual Freedom and Femininity

Elsie represents the energy, sensuality, and uniqueness of women. Her short skirt and white stockings are a sign of modern beauty and freedom. She doesn't feel bad about her body and likes being praised. Lawrence writes about her as a woman who knows her sexuality on a deep level and doesn't give in to societal norms.

But Elsie's freedom is confined by what society and her marriage expect

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of her. The story shows how difficult it is for women to express themselves and for men to be in charge. Elsie at first doesn't want to follow Ted's rules, but in the end she does, which shows how strict society was in the early 1900s.

What Do White Stockings Mean?

1. White stockings as a Sign

The most important thing in the story is the white socks. They stand for:

- Sex appeal and sexiness
- Modern dress and the freedom of women
- Men who are worried about women's sexuality
- Class and the present

White is usually associated with purity, but Lawrence uses it in a funny way to mean sexiness and teasing. Men look at Elsie's legs because her stockings are showing, which shows the conflict between modesty and technology.

2. What You Wear and Who You Are

Lawrence often used what she wore as a sign of who she was and how she wanted to act in social situations. Ted's discomfort shows how much he believes in standard gender roles, while Elsie's clothes show how modern she is. The body is a contested space between male rule and female self-expression, and clothing is a place where power struggles happen.

Sexuality and Marriage

1. Marriage as a Battle of Wills

In *White Stockings*, marriage isn't seen as a loving union, but as a battleground where one person must control the other. Lawrence thought that marriage often stops people from having real sexual

interactions, which is what Ted's desire to control Elsie's body shows.

Lawrence thought that a man and a woman should be mystically and instinctively united, but he also knew that society messed up this idea.

2. Lawrence's ideas about sexuality

Lawrence didn't agree with Victorian prudence or Freudian reductionism. He thought that sexuality was not just a biological or psychological drive, but a divine life force. Sexuality is shown to be natural, strong, and upsetting in White Stockings. Ted's reaction is a symbol of societal pressure, while Elsie's body is a sign of life energy.

Class and the Present

1. Setting in the working class

The story takes place in industrial England because Ted used to work as a miner. Lawrence wrote a lot about how industry made people less human and messed up natural relationships. Ted's political activism is different from how conservative he is in his personal life. This shows how political ideology can't change personal ties.

2. The modern woman and the traditional man

Elsie is a modern woman who has been shaped by culture and social change in cities. Ted is the standard working-class man who thinks that modern women are a threat. In this way, the story shows the larger social problems of the 1920s, such as the rise of feminism and shifting gender roles.

Style and Technique of Narrative

1. Realism in psychology

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Lawrence uses psychological realism to show what his characters are thinking and feeling on the inside. The story shows Ted's resentment, Elsie's pride, and the issues between them that they don't say. Lawrence's writing is intense, sensual, and symbolic, which is typical of modernist exploration.

2. Modernism with Signs

Even though Lawrence wasn't as experimental as Joyce or Woolf, his modernism comes from the way he used symbols and themes to explore sexuality and awareness. Things like stockings, looks, and body language have deep symbolic meanings that reveal our deepest fears and wants.

1. Criticism from feminists

Different feminist writers have different thoughts on Lawrence. Some people think *White Stockings* is sexist because Elsie's entry supports the idea that men are better than women. Others think that Lawrence understands women's sexuality and doesn't like it when men are insecure. The story shows that Lawrence has both liberal and conservative views.

2. Reading for Psychoanalysis

From a psychological point of view, Ted's jealousy is caused by his fear of being castrated and his sexuality. Ted's reaction shows his need to control and possess, while Elsie's showing of her legs shows her unconscious sexual power.

Lawrence's View of How People Deal With Each Other

Lawrence thought that real relationships need a mix of male and female energies. However, *White Stockings* shows how hard it is to achieve such peace in today's world. Natural closeness is messed up by

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power battles, jealousy, and social conditioning.

The story shows Lawrence's larger criticism of modern society, which he thought cut people off from feeling, nature, and real relationships.

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