

whatsoever that they are descended from Eve. When they talk, they use language that men would not dare to use. Their favourite topics are probably the Freudian complexes, birth control, or private press editions of works by George Moore and James Joyce such as *A Storyteller's Holiday* and *Ulysses*. Their whole personality is a caricature of feminism (Amy Lowell is said to be a chain smoker of cigars!). It is certainly entertaining to spend time with these 'intelligence-above-all' females, who are determined to act against God's will. But sometimes I can not help finding them altogether too pretentious. As a man, I feel an intense antipathy towards them.

Although I never expected Mansfield to be futuristic, I had certainly never imagined her as an ideal of femininity. So when I pushed the door open, I was almost expecting a middle-aged, kindly woman to stand up from the sofa in front of the fireplace, greet me with a smile, and shake me by the hand.

But as it turned out, the room—a long narrow one, with a fireplace opposite the door—contained not a single soul. A lamp cast a calm, pale yellow light. Paintings hung on the walls, and ornaments stood on the mantelpiece, in a variety of colours. A few easy chairs with patterned covers were placed before the fire. Murry told me to sit down in one of the chairs and started chatting with me. We talked about the similarities between the oriental Goddess of Mercy, Guan Yin, the Blessed Virgin Mary in Christianity, the Greek Virgin Diana, the Egyptian Isis and the Virgin in Persian Mithraism. The virginal saint seemed an indispensable symbol in every religion. We were in the midst of a heated discussion when there was a sound at the door. A young lady came in and stood smilingly in the entrance. 'Could this be Mansfield? She is so young . . .' I said to myself. She had brown curly hair and a small rounded face, lively eyes and an expressive mouth. She was dressed in bright colours; patent leather shoes, green silk stockings, a rose-coloured silk blouse and a plum-coloured velvet skirt. She stood there gracefully, like a tulip nodding in the breeze. Murry stood up and introduced us. She was not Mansfield, but the landlady, a Miss Beir or Beek (I forget exactly). Murry was living there temporarily. She was an artist, and most of the paintings on the walls were her work. She sat down in the chair opposite me, taking something like a miniature motor from the mantelpiece and holding it in her hand. Then she put on a pair of earphones like the ones used by telephonists, and when she talked, she leaned over and tried to get very close to me. At first I thought what she had on was some sort of electronic toy. But later I realised that this pretty lady had trouble in hearing (as I had in seeing), and had to use some mechanical means to make good nature's deficiency. (At the time I thought what a good subject it would be for a poem 'The Deaf Beauty'. It would be impossible to 'whisper sweet nothings' to such a lady!).