

Useful Background for Virginia Woolf, Orlando, ch. 3-4

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Order of the Bath:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Most-Honourable-Order-of-the-Bath>

pp. 134-37

The Masque of Truth: <https://www.britannica.com/art/masque>

pp. 142-46

Orlando's musings about Nature: "Modern systematic philosophical aesthetics not only first emerges in the context of the Enlightenment, but also flowers brilliantly there. . . . the eighteenth century . . . thinks of itself as the 'century of philosophy' Philosophical aesthetics flourishes in the period because of its strong affinities with the tendencies of the age. . . . 'Aesthetics' is derived from the Greek word for 'senses', because . . . a science of the beautiful would be a science of the sensible, a science of sensible cognition. . . . The Enlightenment also enthusiastically embraces the discovery and disclosure of rational order in nature It seems to many theorists in the Enlightenment that the faculty of taste, the faculty by which we discern beauty, reveals to us some part of this order, a distinctive harmony, unities amidst variety. Thus, in the phenomenon of aesthetic pleasure, human sensibility discloses to us rational order, thus binding together two enthusiasms of the Enlightenment."

(<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/#BeaAesEnl>)

p. 167

London coffee houses:

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/English-Coffeehouses-Penny-Universities/>

p. 198

Literary salons: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bluestocking-British-literary-society>

Writers Orlando glimpses and/or encounters:

John Dryden (d. 1700)—poet (first poet laureate of England), literary critic, translator, playwright, who dominated the literary world of the Restoration.

Joseph Addison (d. 1719)—famous for founding The Spectator magazine with Richard Steele. The magazine and Addison's essays published elsewhere became very popular and exercised a great influence over the reading public of the day.

Alexander Pope (d. 1744)—poet famous for biting satires and philosophical verse. As a child he contracted tuberculosis of the spine, which stunted his growth and caused serious health problems throughout what he called "this long disease, my life."

Jonathan Swift (d. 1745)—satirist famous for Gulliver's Travels and other prose satires of “savage indignation.” He suffered from vertigo, nausea, deafness, and eventually dementia, caused by Ménière's disease. For the letters he wrote in “baby language” to “Stella,” see

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-letters-swift/intimate-swift-letters-reproduced-baby-talk-idUKTRE70R00Y20110128>).

Earl of Chesterfield (d. 1773)—statesman and man of letters who wrote Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman

Samuel Johnson (d. 1784)—poet, moralist, literary critic, famous for his Dictionary of the English Language. Anna Williams, the blind daughter of a friend, lived in his household as his companion, conversation partner, and the supervisor of his domestic affairs.

James Boswell (d. 1795)—famous for his Life of Samuel Johnson.

pp. 192-93 Excerpt from Pope's The Rape of the Lock, a satire of 18th century high society epitomized by Belinda, a lovely coquette:

Sol [the sun] thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And op'd those eyes that must eclipse the day;
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow press'd

...

Shock [her lap dog], who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardors were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanish'd from thy head.

And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the nymph [Belinda] intent adores
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior priestess [her maid], at her altar's side,
Trembling, begins the sacred rites of pride.

...

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,

Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton [Hampton Court Palace] takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home;
Here thou, great Anna! [Queen Anne] whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they pass'd,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease . . .

p. 213—Pope wrote a mock epic entitled The Dunciad in which he mercilessly skewered all his literary enemies.

p. 214—Excerpt from Pope's "Epistle to a Lady on the Characters of Women":

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
"Most Women have no Characters at all."

. . .
In men, we various ruling passions find;
In women, two almost divide the kind;
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
The love of pleasure, and the love of sway.

. . . ev'ry Lady would be queen for life.

Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of queens!
Pow'r all their end, but beauty all the means.
In youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,
As leaves them scarce a subject in their age:

See how the world its veterans rewards!
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend,
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot,
Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!