This project began accidentally. A copy of Samuel Smiles’s *Character* appeared in the hefty pile of Interlibrary Loan books I received one morning while working on my first book, *Avuncularism*, at my first job at Simmons College in Boston. I returned it after a quick read when I found it had nothing to do with uncles, but I was so haunted by Smiles’s mysterious meanderings about Edwin Chadwick, John Ruskin and the filthiness of Venice that I kept a copy of *Character* on my desk for most of my time at Simmons and later at Southwestern University. For this reason, I first want to thank all of the fabulous librarians I have worked with over the years who sometimes know better than I do what book or which essay I should read, and who labor with limited resources to make sure I can have those materials in my possession for possibly unreasonable stretches of time. Some of these wonderful professionals are Lisa Anderson, Dana Hendrix, Carol Fonken, Lisa Hopkins and Laura Forbes Glass.

At both Simmons and at Southwestern I have had supportive colleagues who, in various ways, encouraged this project, and I would like to thank in particular Pamela Bromberg, Renee Bergland, Helene Meyers, Elisabeth Piedmont Marton, David Gaines, James Kilfoyle, Carina Evans, Walt Herbert, Thom McClendon, Laura Hobgood-Oster, Elaine Craddock, Alisa Gaunder, Dirk Early, Maria Lowe, Romi Burks, and Eric Selbin. Several research fellowships and sabbaticals from Southwestern enabled me to travel to archives and libraries in England to conduct crucial research, and I credit Dean James...
Hunt and the Southwestern University Awards Committee for continuing to prioritize Humanities scholarship, and for making sure I had necessary resources for those trips to the British Library and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. President Edward Burger’s commitment to faculty scholarship at Southwestern has been especially encouraging during the final phases of this book, and I look forward to enjoying that commitment in future endeavors.

Over the years, I also benefitted significantly from generous fellowships and travel grants from the Whiting Foundation, the Sam Taylor Foundation, Yale Center for British Art, the British Academy, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at University of Texas at Austin. Invitations to deliver early versions of these chapters from Roger Louis at UT, from Helena Michie at Rice, and from Claudia Nelson at Texas A&M, helped enormously as I imagined, extended and revised this book. Letters of support from these scholars as well as Teresa Mangum, Joseph Childers, and Robyn Warhol helped me as I moved from one archive and one chapter to the next. The British Studies community at University of Texas provided a convivial intellectual home for me as I was mapping out The Sanitary Arts, and I’m especially appreciative of Sam Baker for his enthusiasm and encouragement. I must thank the editors and readers at Representations for publishing the earliest version of my first chapter, and William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson for finding the perfect home for my third chapter “Victorian Dust Traps” in their collection of essays, Filth: Dirt Disgust and Modern Life. To my readers for Ohio State University Press, Linda Shires and Barbara Leckie, I owe an enormous intellectual debt. Their careful, close readings of my manuscript allowed that final set of revisions to be both joyful and exciting. My editors at The Ohio State University Press, Sandy Crooms, Malcolm Litchfield, and most recently Lindsay Martin, have made the publication process as easy as possible, and I would like to thank them as well as all of my contacts at the press who helped to compile and print this project. More thanks goes to Natalie Zelt at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center for helping me obtain the cover image. My dear friends Kim Smith, Elizabeth Green Musselman, and Lisa Moses Leff have made the special challenges of the “second book” seem less impossible, less onerous, and certainly much more fun. Rebecca Stern’s ongoing perspective and humor about all things professional were also much valued. As always, Caroline Levander provided the best advice, support, and friendship at the most crucial moments of the project’s evolution. Members of my family have been uniquely supportive of my project too: my father sent me every clipping from The Wall Street Journal over the last decade that even remotely pertained to sewers or British museum culture, and my mother taught me everything I know about filth and cleanliness.
Finally, I thank my husband, John Pipkin, who vitally connects me with a robust contemporary literary culture and also makes me laugh, and my son Max, who is simply the best kid in the world.