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“The London Scene”: Gender and Class in Virginia Woolf’s London

SUSAN SQUIER

Whether she thought it “the most beautiful place on the face of the earth” or “the very devil,” to Virginia Woolf the city of London was the focus for an intense, often ambivalent, lifelong scrutiny. Not only did she make her home there for nearly all of her fifty-nine years—first in the narrow streets of Kensington and then in the spacious squares of Bloomsbury—but she found it a powerfully evocative figure in the literary tradition within which she wrote. And one of the most powerful nonfiction representations of Virginia Woolf’s response to London was the series of six essays which appeared a little over fifty years ago, from December 1931 to December 1932, in the magazine *Good Housekeeping*. As their titles indicate, the essays surveyed the highs and lows of the city: “The Docks of London,” “Oxford Street Tide,” “Great Men’s Houses,” “Abbeys and Cathedrals,” “‘This is the House of Commons,’ ” and “Portrait of a Londoner.” Plotless, descriptive, slight as these essays seemed at the time to Woolf, to readers of today the “London Scene” essays are fascinating, for as I will show, they reveal Virginia Woolf’s ambivalence about identity, social position, and access to material possessions, and they contain the strategies forged to accommodate her changing sense of self and social place without alienating the *Good Housekeeping* audience. Although the “London Scene” essays celebrate a conventionally modernist setting, the city, they are anything but conventionally modernist in their approach. At their best they subvert the often complacent genre of the urban travelogue to portray gender and class relations in the modern city.¹

Woolf struggled with conflicting identifications in the “London Scene” essays, between insiders (men, the upper classes) and outsiders (women, the working classes), and she used a number of different

techniques (not always with complete success) to cope with this conflict. With two major deletions in revision of "The Docks of London," Woolf established her identification with the consuming middle class, and avoided friction with the magazine's audience. In "Oxford Street Tide," Woolf used the contrast between an appreciative observer of city life and a sour "moralist" to suggest her divergence from the conventionally anti-urban sentiments of Victorian and modernist thinkers, a difference based on her affirmation of outsiders and the working class. In "Great Men's Houses," she subverted the demands of the standard journalistic house tour, making it instead an ironic challenge to the values implicit in Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* and an exposé of woman's exploitation, whatever her class, by those heroic "great men." In "Abbeys and Cathedrals" and "'This is the House of Commons,'" Woolf's point of view wavered between insiders and outsiders, perhaps due to her persistent allegiance to the concept of a literary elite even when ideologically opposed to the existence of social hierarchies. Although they reveal the same fluctuating identification, for my purposes those two essays are less interesting than the others, and I will not discuss them. In the final "London Scene" essay, "Portrait of a Londoner," Woolf nostalgically evoked a characteristic Victorian Londoner, Mrs. Crowe, only to bid farewell both to her and to the rational, ordered city she chronicled. In so doing, Woolf established her own point of view, in distinction both to her Victorian forefathers and her modernist brethren, preferring to the security of the insider the freedom and vitality of the outsider.²

In manuscript, "The Docks of London" provides one of the most sustained visions in Woolf's works of the industrial or commercial city. The draft version of the essay is worth quoting at some length, because in revision Woolf made two drastic deletions which changed the character of the essay completely. Juxtaposing to the romance of the sea the antiromantic details of laboring London, the essay considers, in the first deleted passage,

the process, which is daily discharged in the port of London, of receiving this immense merchandise, of taking it on shore, of opening it, sorting it, sampling it, weighing it, selling it, distributing it, & passing it on, in its crude state, to be cooked, baked, tanned, worked, seasoned, rolled,—made in short into the million different luxuries & necessities upon which not only London but all England will feed; will wear—will use in its cars in its houses, in its streets—this vast patient skillful & unremitting labour is full of sweat & agony & squalor & horror. Looking

out to sea is one thing, at the splendid ship, crowding her white sails, leaning across the bosom of the argent West, but turn East; look at the blight & squalor that surrounds us; as we turn, to go towards the voracious city which those white sails feed. Nothing can be much more dismal. Factories & offices line the shore; stand crowded in the mud. Behind are the meanest streets in London. The line of warehouses is black, dingy, decrepit looking. Here & there are vast factories; whether new or old does not matter—The same dingy grey black coats them all. They crowd without order or intention. If a window is broken broken it remains. They have neither size nor strength. They seem run up & purely utilitarian & to fall. When one of them has been blackened by fire it seems scarcely more derelict & ruinous than the other. Behind them in ridges of grey rise the mean streets—which house the dock laborers.³

Suffering and horror; squalor and sweat. The blame for this painful *mélange* of facts and feelings is inescapable. It belongs to the unthinking consumers of England, who expect bales of wool to turn easily into smooth sweaters for Bond Street stores. Woolf details the complicated process of commercial production, whose price is pain and whose habitat is this dismal quarter of the city. She forces upon our attention the dramatic difference between the romantic dreams of the West, where “splendid ships” sail the seas, and the squalor of the East, where mean streets sport dingy warehouses and brutally utilitarian factories. The contrast is historical as well as geographic: on land once graced by grass and trees, churches and country inns, now squats the “voracious city” with its factories and warehouses, the detritus of careless, greedy, haphazard industrial production. In this passage from the unpublished draft of “The Docks of London,” Virginia Woolf creates a memorable image for a painful fact: the price in human suffering paid by the working classes to produce the necessities and luxuries which middle- and upper-class England consumes.

Yet when we examine the published version of this scene, we find a drastic change. Unpeopled, the vista presents only architectural disorder; its only pain is the visual discomfort of the sensitive, detached aesthete who perceives it. Facts, before so firmly presented—the price of industry and commerce, the human cost of refining raw materials—have melted into atmosphere. Whether consciously or unconsciously, independently or following editorial suggestion there is no way of knowing, Virginia Woolf toned the facts down as she revised “The Docks of London.” By the final version she had deleted both

extended passages of social criticism, and the narrator's sympathy for the workers had given way to a more comfortable alienation from them, a sense of them as tainted and sinister and of their area of the city as mysterious, dingy, freakish, "a dwarf city of workmen's houses."⁴

One way of explaining this shift in "The Docks of London," one more example of which I will go on to discuss, would be to say that anticipation of the audience's probable negative response shaped Woolf's revisions. Yet her own discomfort with the "facts" of dockside London, of which she complained in a letter to Ethel Smyth in March 1931, seems also to have bearing on the deletions. Possibly she herself felt torn between her sense of cultural privilege, as a daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, and her female experience, dating back at least to her adolescence, of the "outsider's feeling."⁵ The *locus* of allegiance in "The Docks of London" seems to change from identification along gender lines, as a powerless woman, to identification along class lines, as one of the privileged London elite. However, gender is at times only implicitly present in the portrait of working-class London, and class privilege belongs to the narrator, as to Woolf herself, by virtue only of her ancillary position as one of the "daughters of educated men."⁶

In the second extensive deletion, gender relations join class relations overtly, when Woolf compares the space of servants to that of the "master." The result is a delightfully Dickensian vision of London divided between messy, exploitative male masters and overburdened female housekeepers, a vision which regrettably appears nowhere in the published version. When the passage begins, we survey an area in which it seems

as if fortifications were being raised. But in fact these dykes are built of old fires [ashes] & vegetables. London is sending out the contents of her dustbins. Barges come down heaped with tin cans. The Londoner leaves behind him every day a fire [tin] & fish, bones, ashes, vegetables. And here they are, [being] dumped by men out to these ancient fifty year old rubbish heaps, by the river; which grow & grow; & sometimes catch fire—smoulder; & sometimes remain damp & sodden, so that weeds flourish & rats accumulate. And here is an ambiguous vessel, neither ship nor machine, but something between the two, which is dredging the river bottom. The silt will be carried out seventy miles & dropped into the sea. All is activity & [housemaids] Everywhere things are being sorted, ordered, kept in being. Here is London's scullery, its washing up place, its kitchen offices. And then, just as we are given up to thinking of London as the master, where men, whose habit of throwing away

tins, cabbage, skittles keeps the whole population here busy clearing [cleaning] up after her, down comes a great steamer bound for India . . .⁷

Woolf's traditional identification of the city as female, "she," is tellingly undercut by her potent description of it as the "master." In a domestic vision which splits London dramatically along the lines of gender and class, the great city becomes a garbage-spewing upper-class man and the populace working-class housemaids. This dichotomy would recur in *The Years*, which as Jane Marcus has pointed out "shows us men making money, making war, making love, making books, and making a colossal mess, and women cleaning it up after them. Only a woman like Virginia Woolf could conceive of the metaphor of the artist as charwoman to the world."⁸ And only Virginia Woolf could conjure up the "ambiguous vehicle, neither ship nor machine," who bears such an evocative analogical relationship to its creator, with her conflicted sense of self and social place. Which was she, Virginia Woolf may have wondered: a glorious white ship bound for imperialist India? Or a dredge, a drudge, a prosaic female machine?

The published version of this fascinating passage, once again, is dull, safe, brief, and rather flat.

Barges heaped with old buckets, razor blades, fish tails, newspapers and ashes—whatever we leave on our plates and throw into our dust bins—are discharging their cargoes upon the most desolate land in the world. The long mounds have been fuming and smoking and harbouring innumerable rats and growing a rank coarse grass and giving off a gritty, acrid air for fifty years. The dumps get higher and higher, and thicker and thicker, their sides more precipitous with tin cans, their pinnacles more angular with ashes year by year.⁹

Woolf's shift in identification is unmistakable: now the ash heaps are built by invisible workers from "whatever *we* leave on *our* plates and throw into *our* dustbins." [Emphasis mine.] She has joined her audience in the consumer mentality of the middle class, rather than sharing the worker's drudgery.

From "voracious city" and garbage-spewing "master," London's identity has changed in the revised version of "The Docks of London" to "noble city," just as the narrator has shifted allegiance from the workers to the consumers. The deletion of these two passages of implicit social criticism lends an air of resignation to the essay's conclusion. Instead of the ironic voice which we might hear, if the social criticism remained to create a context for it, we hear only self-congratulation.

It is we—our tastes, our fashions, our needs—that make the cranes dip and swing, that call the ships from the sea. Our body is their *master*. We demand shoes, furs, bags, stoves, oil, rice puddings, candles; and they are brought to us. Trade watches us anxiously to see what new desires are beginning to grow in us, what new dislikes. One feels an important, a complex, a necessary animal as one stands on the quayside watching the cranes hoist this barrel, that crate, that other bale from the holds of the ships that have come to anchor.¹⁰ [Emphasis mine.]

The workers have become invisible. “One” only feels of such importance, prominence, and power if “one” is a member of the consuming class, standing at quayside watching rather than operating a crane or hoisting barrels. From the subversive vision of the essay’s earlier draft, Woolf has moved to complacency in the published version: “one” is now not the housemaid who cleans up after him, but the “master” himself.

Like so many of Woolf’s essays, “The Docks of London” ends in full tide. A wool auction is over, and now “[the] cart horses are struggling and striving to distribute the wool over England.” “Oxford Street Tide,” the next in the “London Scene” series, describes that wool when it has been transformed into a finished product, “thin vests and soft stockings,” for the Oxford Street stores. Although it reflects similar conflicting identifications as its predecessor, in this essay Woolf more steadily maintains her control over voice and point of view, by using the structural device, familiar from *A Room of One’s Own*, of the double perspective. In “Oxford Street Tide,” the primary perspective is that of an appreciative observer, impressed with the variety of Oxford Street’s finished goods, and even more impressed by the attitudes toward life they exemplify. Played off against that perspective is the view of a “moralist,” brought in only as a parody of the Victorian values he mouths. The latter scorns Oxford Street and all it represents, for reasons Woolf elaborates upon and attacks in the course of the essay. The division of perspectives into the moralist and the appreciative observer emphasizes the distinction between Victorian and modern valuations of the city, just as the image of Oxford Street as a “tide” recalls Victorian writers’ characteristic figures for the city, “a drastic war, a stream, a tide, or some variant of Cobbett’s ‘great wen,’” while also containing the modern image of urban life as a river of sensation and activity.¹¹

The appreciative observer celebrates the street as a manifestation of the urban spirit, in particular of its stimulating shock and change.

To him, Oxford Street is a synesthetic delight: “[The] mind becomes a glutinous slab that takes impressions and Oxford Street rolls upon it a perpetual ribbon of changing sights, sounds, and movement.”¹² His vision of the city not only challenges the Victorian antipathy to urban commercialism expressed by the moralist, who proclaims his distaste for its “blatant and raucous” spirit, but also queries the modernist assumption that urban stimulation produced alienation and anomie. Instead, he reports that the city dweller thrives on sensation in an almost visceral way: “News changes quicker [in Oxford Street] than in any other part of London. The press of people passing seems to lick the ink off the placards and to consume more of them and to demand fresh supplies of later editions faster than elsewhere.”¹³ For Woolf’s appreciative observer, London offers more than merely a pleasant aesthetic experience. Its discontinuous nature has political consequences as well: the dashing stream of urban life shakes the city dweller loose from habit to entertain, transform, liberate.

And, in their transitory nature, the commercial Oxford Street “palaces” are fanciful structures which also please us in new ways. “The charm of modern London is that . . . it is built to pass. Its glassiness, its transparency, its surging waves of coloured plaster give us a different pleasure and achieve a different end from that which was desired and attempted by the old builders and their patrons, the nobility of England.”¹⁴ While nobles wanted the illusion of permanence, the new democratic crowds, the working-class street vendors, prefer an architecture reflecting their own spirit of creative innovation. “We knock down and rebuild as we expect to be knocked down and rebuilt. It is an impulse that makes for creation and fertility. Discovery is stimulated and invention on the alert.”¹⁵ Furthermore, Oxford Street induces empathy with the varied voices of the street crowd, enabling identification with the dispossessed, even the criminal. By stripping us of the defining and limiting possessions of the private home, the city street permits imaginative passage into many lives. This role-playing possibility in city life recalls the theme of Woolf’s brilliant little essay, “Street Haunting.”¹⁶

Woolf uses the appreciative observer in “Oxford Street Tide” to express her own conviction that the city, at its best, nurtures egalitarian politics, aesthetic inventiveness, and personal empathy. The introduction of the moralist, whose stodgy political, aesthetic, and social values Woolf mocks, permits a consideration and a dismissal of the Victorian anti-urbanism he embodies, too. “Even a moralist,” Woolf ironically asserts, “who is, one must suppose, since he can spend the afternoon

dreaming, a man with a balance in the bank—even a moralist must allow that this gaudy, bustling, vulgar street reminds us that life is a struggle; that all building is perishable; that all display is vanity.”¹⁷ Yet the consolations of philosophy are purchased by a fat bank balance; no such portentous summations are accessible—happily, Woolf implies—to the lively but impecunious crowds of Oxford Street. No moralist or philosopher, the observer mocks such contemplative tendencies as alien to the spontaneous commercialism of the city. “[Until] some adroit shopkeeper has caught on to the idea and opened cells for solitary members hung with green plush and provided with automatic glow-worms and a sprinkling of genuine death’s-head moths to induce thought and reflection, it is vain to try to come to a conclusion in Oxford Street.”¹⁸ With this parody of the moralist’s Victorian judiciousness, the essay ends, mocking the impulse to retreat into contemplation as an escape from the salutary immediacy of urban experience.

The next essay in the “London Scene” series fights the popular myth of a great man’s house as a “cell for solitary thinkers,” as it purports to offer a tour of the homes of Thomas Carlyle and John Keats. Yet Woolf’s real goal in the essay is subversive: to fight the image of the “great man” created by Carlyle himself, who asserted “it is the spiritual always that determines the material,” by focusing on the material conditions of the great man’s life. Woolf intends to show a “Man-of-Letters” who is not the “Hero” or “most important modern person,” as Carlyle saw him to be, but merely a prosaic domestic master. To Carlyle’s definition of history as “at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here,” Woolf opposes this small chapter in the history of women—both great and ordinary—behind the great man. Lighting on the one crucial, telling fact about the Carlyles’ establishment—its lack of running water—she movingly describes the enormous effort which went into the daily operation of that great man’s home—an effort put forth by women.¹⁹

While Carlyle sat “in the attic, under a skylight . . . as he wrestled with his history,” down in the lower quarters of the house his wife and maid worked to keep the bathwater hot and dirt at bay. “All through the mid-Victorian age the house was necessarily a battlefield where daily, summer and winter, mistress and maid fought against dirt and cold for cleanliness and warmth.”²⁰ This vertical division in the Carlyles’ home recalls the division of London into male parlor and female scullery which Woolf deleted from the published version of “The Docks of London.” Politically, the vision is radical: mistress and maid are

united in one battle, the fight to clean up the very mess produced by Thomas Carlyle. While Carlyle asserted, in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, that "The Hero as Man of Letters . . . is one of the main forms of Heroism for all future ages," Woolf's essay reveals the reality of *woman's* labor and the extent of *woman's* heroism.²¹ The ostensible portrait of a great man's house becomes a portrait of the tortures his requirements inflicted upon maid and wife alike. Even the portrait of the great man has been subverted into a striking portrait of his wife, the long-suffering Jane Welsh Carlyle.

By pumping and scrubbing, days of victory, evenings of peace and splendour were won, of course. Mrs. Carlyle sat as we see from the picture, in a fine silk dress, in a chair pulled up to a blazing fire and had everything seemly and solid about her; but at what cost had she won it! Her cheeks are hollow; bitterness and suffering mingle in the half-tender, half-tortured expression of the eyes. Such is the effect of a pump in the basement and a yellow tin bath up three flights of stairs.²²

Jane Carlyle's hollow cheeks ask how splendid or peaceful any evenings could be that failed to free her of next day's chore: filling that tin bath up three flights of stairs. Woolf's sympathy for the mistress is unmistakable, as also is her concern for the working-class maid beside whom she toiled.

The spatial imagery of this portrait of the Carlyles' house explicitly connects sexual and class oppression, mistress and maid. Emphasizing the amount of time women spend in physical labor each day, it suggests that the forms of labor, rather than her familial or class ties, really define woman's place in society. Because both Jane Welsh Carlyle and the maid are responsible for the hot water, clean rooms, and regular meals which Mr. Carlyle requires to write his history, both women are associated with the same space in the home. While the great man fills the top floors, the women cluster in the lower regions: kitchen, wash-room, scullery, basement. This spatial analysis has both a sociological and a psychosocial dimension: just as women's domestic tasks keep them in the lower reaches of the home, so they limit them to the lower reaches of society. And though the Victorian home, like the mind it represented, was strenuously and repeatedly purified, in its metaphoric spatial relations it revealed the repressed reality. Leonore Davidoff has demonstrated that in the Victorian era, "[for] middle-class children . . . social divisions and their erotic overtones were also reflected in a spatial view of their world—a view which started with their own bodies, extended to the houses where they lived, and eventually to their . . . city."

So, just as mistress and maid are linked together in the Victorian man's mind by their mutual possession of the frightening force of female sexuality, they are also associated in the spaces of home and city, through their shared physical labor.²³

In "Great Men's Houses," Woolf guides the reader to consider the value of a great man's love which finds itself impotent against "bugs and tin baths and pumps in the basement." Unfortunately, she was not yet ready in 1932 to sustain the implications of that vision. Instead, she retreated to a cozy fatalism familiar from the conclusion of "The Docks of London." "But then, we reflect, as we cross the worn threshold, Carlyle without hot water laid on would not have been Carlyle; and Mrs. Carlyle without bugs to kill would have been a different woman from the one we know."²⁴ The echo of that difference remains to haunt the reader.

In "Portrait of a Londoner," the last "London Scene" essay, Woolf combines roles which were riven in "Great Men's Houses," to create Mrs. Crowe, the housekeeper/historian. Mediating London life through her own idiosyncratic perspective, Mrs. Crowe gives us a view of London unlike that from the docks, the Oxford Street shops, or the houses of great thinkers. A "collector of relationships," Mrs. Crowe engages in a Dickensian objectification of the people around her. "She looked out of place among other people's chairs & tables; she must have her own chintzes and her own cabinet and her own Mr. Graham under it to be completely herself."²⁵ Yet once secure in her familiar surroundings, Mrs. Crowe turns to the text of the city around her, which she interprets in her conversation. "Mrs. Crowe by no means dwelt on the past—she by no means exalted it above the present. Indeed it was always the last page, the present moment that mattered most. The delightful thing about London was that it was always giving one something new to look at, something fresh to talk about. . . ."²⁶ Sharing her creator's technique for safeguarding her place in society while still assuming the central role of speaker, she pitches her tale to her audience, avoiding obvious cleverness or profundity lest it alienate someone, particularly some *man*. Instead, she entertains by retailing what resembles village gossip, though "[the] village was London, and the gossip was about London life."²⁷

There is a real power in Mrs. Crowe's homely conversation, however. Her gossip creates a world and shapes it to her needs. "Mrs. Crowe's great gift consisted in making the vast metropolis seem as small as a village with one church, one manor house, & twenty-five cot-

tages."²⁸ Though without formal institutional sanction, the urban history which she creates at her tea table plays a crucial role in city life: it makes the unmanageable and chaotic suddenly comprehensible, *intimate*.

Thus, to know London not merely as a gorgeous spectacle, a mart, a court, a hive of industry, but as a place where people meet and talk, laugh, marry, and die, paint, write and act, rule and legislate, it was necessary to know Mrs. Crowe. It was in her drawing room that the innumerable fragments of the vast metropolis seemed to come together into one lively, comprehensible, amusing and agreeable whole. Travellers absent for years, battered and sun-dried men just landed from India or Africa, from remote travels and adventures among savages and tigers, would come straight to the little house in the quiet street to be taken back into the heart of civilisation at one stride.²⁹

Mrs. Crowe not only brings London's rich texture into focus, humanizes it, and gives it a past, but she distorts it. Reducing the vast metropolis to a feudal village in her gossip, she civilizes and moralizes it as well. So, to the colonial administrators who turn first to Mrs. Crowe's drawing room on returning from their savage jungles, the city seems not challenging and diverse, but "comprehensible, amusing and agreeable." Urban interpreter for imperialists, Mrs. Crowe embodies the intrinsic conservatism which Virginia Woolf at times revealed, and with which she struggled, in her "London Scene" essays.

Such a homogeneous, ordered, and rational perspective cannot long prevail in the modern city. Perhaps it is for this reason that Mrs. Crowe dies at the end of "Portrait of a Londoner." "[Even] London itself could not keep Mrs. Crowe alive forever. It is a fact that one day Mrs. Crowe was not sitting in the arm chair by the fire as the clock struck five; Maria did not open the door; Mr. Graham had detached himself from the cabinet. Mrs. Crowe is dead and London—no, to some people London will never be the same city again."³⁰ With Mrs. Crowe's demise, London seems irreparably changed—to "some people." The qualifying phrase suggests that when her unifying, stabilizing perspective is gone, the city splinters into a thousand different vistas. And with the new relativism in perspective comes a change in social organization too. Rather than the single, established hierarchy of Victorian imperial London, we have a new and perhaps more egalitarian modern city. Now Marias are free to find jobs as more than maidservants; now Mr. Grahams, who have held up the drawing-room cabinet for all these years thanks to the leisure provided by

inherited wealth, must remove themselves from the furniture and venture out to make a living, like ordinary people.

Mrs. Crowe's death is a fitting end for the "London Scene" essays because, in a sense, her preoccupation mirrors that of her creator. In these essays of 1931 and 1932, Woolf struggled to subsume under one voice her conflicting perspectives on life in London. As a result, the brilliantly amusing travelogue appropriate to *Good Housekeeping* frequently drowned out both realistic portrait and social criticism. At the end of the "London Scene" series, however, the death of Mrs. Crowe symbolizes Woolf's decision to cease the attempt to reconcile her conflicting identifications, to disguise her perspective as a woman and an outsider under the smooth, unchallenging voice of the insider. In the works to come, particularly in *Three Guineas* and *The Years*, her portrait of the city would more and more reflect her own experience as a woman in patriarchal society.

¹ Virginia Woolf's essay series, "The London Scene," appeared in the following order between 1931 and 1932: "The Docks of London," *Good Housekeeping* (Dec. 1931), 20:4, 16-17, 114, 116-17; "Oxford Street Tide," *Good Housekeeping* (Jan. 1932), 20:5, 18-19, 120; "Great Men's Houses," *Good Housekeeping* (Mar. 1932), 21:2, 10-11, 102-03; "Abbeys and Cathedrals," *Good Housekeeping* (May 1932), 21:3, 18-19, 102; "This is the House of Commons," *Good Housekeeping* (Oct. 1932), 22:2, 18-19, 110-12; "Portrait of a Londoner," *Good Housekeeping* (Dec. 1932), 22:4, 28-29, 132. B. J. Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). "Portrait of a Londoner" was originally entitled "A London Character." With the exception of that essay, the essays were reissued as *The London Scene* (New York: Frank Hallman, 1975) and (London: Hogarth Press, 1980). John F. Hulcoop has suggested that Woolf's "Six Articles on London Life" (the alternate title of the "London Scene" group) "were originally intended to be written in the form of 'Six Letters,'" of which "Letter One," now held in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, was the first. John F. Hulcoop, Note appended to "Letter One," Virginia Woolf (Articles), Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, March 8, 1971.

² For further discussion of Woolf's use of the city to establish a position for herself as a woman writer in the literary and social world of modern London, see Susan Squier, *Virginia Woolf and the Politics of City Space*, University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming 1985.

³ Virginia Woolf, "The Port of London," in *Six Articles on London Life*: St. Paul's, Great Men's Houses, The Port of London, Abbeys and Cathedrals, Streets and Shops, The House of Commons, Holograph, unsigned, first dated March 13, 1931, in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.

⁴ *The London Scene*, p. 8.

⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being* (New York: Harcourt, 1976), p. 132.

⁶ Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (New York: Harcourt, 1966), p. 13.

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⁷ Virginia Woolf, "The Port of London," early holograph draft of "The Docks of London." Holograph, unsigned, first dated March 13, 1931, in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.

⁸ Jane Marcus, "The Years as Greek Drama, Domestic Novel, and *Gottterdammerung*," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 80, No. 2, p. 301.

⁹ Virginia Woolf, *The London Scene*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹ G. Robert Stange, "The Victorian City and the Frightened Poets," *Victorian Studies* (Summer 1968), Vol. XI Supplement, p. 629.

¹² *The London Scene*, p. 17.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁶ Virginia Woolf, "Street Haunting," *The Death of the Moth* (New York: Harcourt, 1970), pp. 20–36.

¹⁷ *The London Scene*, pp. 21–22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1894), pp. 5–6. I am grateful to Professor Helen Cooper for pointing out this important contrast between Carlyle's vision and Woolf's in "Great Men's Houses."

²⁰ *The London Scene*, p. 24.

²¹ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History*, p. 206.

²² *The London Scene*, p. 25.

²³ Leonore Davidoff, "Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Diaries of Arthur J. Munby and Hannah Cullwick," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1979), 97.

²⁴ *The London Scene*, p. 26.

²⁵ "A London Character," *The London Scene*, The New York Public Library, Berg Collection.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*