

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-08150-5 - The Value of Virginia Woolf
Madelyn Detloff
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Value of Virginia Woolf

In *The Value of Virginia Woolf*, Madelyn Detloff explores the writings of Virginia Woolf, from her early texts to her challenging and inventive novels. Detloff demonstrates why Woolf has enduring value for our own time, both as a defender of modernist experimentation and as a novelist of innovation and poetic vision who also exhibits moments of intense insight and philosophical depth. A famously enigmatic figure, Woolf produced literary works that offer different rewards to different readers. *The Value of Virginia Woolf* examines not only the significance of her most celebrated fiction, but also the interplay of precision and freedom, beauty and wit, voice and language that give Woolf's writings their perennial appeal.

Madelyn Detloff is Associate Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Miami University. She is the author of *The Persistence of Modernism: Loss and Mourning in the Twentieth Century* and has published widely in such journals as *Hypatia*, *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *ELN*, *Literature Compass*, the *MLA Approaches to Teaching* series, and *Modernism/Modernity*.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-08150-5 - The Value of Virginia Woolf
Madelyn Detloff
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-08150-5 - The Value of Virginia Woolf
Madelyn Detloff
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Value of Virginia Woolf

Madelyn Detloff
Miami University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-08150-5 - The Value of Virginia Woolf
Madelyn Detloff
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107441514

© Madelyn Detloff 2016

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2016

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Detloff, Madelyn, 1965– author.

The value of Virginia Woolf / Madelyn Detloff.

New York : Cambridge University Press, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

LCCN 2015040732 | ISBN 9781107081505 (hardback)

LCSH: Woolf, Virginia, 1882–1941 – Criticism and interpretation. | BISAC:

LITERARY CRITICISM / Women Authors.

LCC PR6045.O72 Z6135 2016 | DDC 823/.912–dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015040732>

ISBN 978-1-107-08150-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-44151-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page vii</i>
Introduction: On Value	I
1 Eudemonia: The Necessary Art of Living	14
Motion of the Soul Toward Virtuosity	15
Laughter and Anguish – Two Edges, Two Endings	21
2 Incandescence: Attention and Illumination	29
Epistemic Humility and Cultivating Just and Loving Attention	32
Orlando’s Incandescence	40
A Case Study in Epistemic Humility?	43
3 Interdependence: Pattern and Precarity	46
Invisible Presences and Immense Forces	50
<i>The Waves</i> , Complexity, and the Self-in-System	52
The Body, Vulnerability, and the “Army of the Upright”	58
4 Civilization and Barbarism: A Reparative Exegesis	71
“What is this ‘civilization’ in which we find ourselves?”	74
Saw-Toothed Society	80
A Reparative Imperative	84
Epilogue: Woolf’s Legacy	93
Craftswomanship	94
Cultivating the Commons	99
<i>Notes</i>	103
<i>Works Cited</i>	123
<i>Index</i>	133

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-08150-5 - The Value of Virginia Woolf
Madelyn Detloff
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

Portions of the Introduction, now revised, appear in *Writing the World: Selected Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, edited by Diana Swanson and Pamela Caughie (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2015).

Portions of Chapter 3, now revised, appear in *Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-Second Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, edited by Ann Martin and Kathryn Holland (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2013).

My profound gratitude to Laura Holliday for her extraordinary editing; to my current and former students, who have taught me more than I have taught them; to my colleagues, especially my writing group compatriots Mary Jean Corbett, Katie Johnson, Tim Melley, Elisabeth Hodges, and Peggy Shaffer; to the members of the International Virginia Woolf Society; to my editor Ray Ryan and the outstanding external reviewers for Cambridge University Press; and to Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr., for her tutelage in the finer points of Plato, Aristotle, and Wittgenstein, as well as for her support and insight throughout this project.