

**A JOURNEY IN QUEST OF TRUTH
READING VIRGINIA WOOLF'S SHORT FICTION**

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ABSTRACT

Virginia Woolf is often singled out as an exemplar of the subjectivizing tendency in fiction. For some, like Georg Lukacs, this tendency takes the form of a failure in the writer's cardinal commitment to describe "objective" social and historical conditions, or "reality as such." A possible source of the subjectivist assumption, which casts Woolf, at best, as a "poet" of the inner experience, or as a "distortionist" incapable of representing things as they are, can be traced back to her own critique of "realists" such as the Edwardian novelists. As the predication of the "the thing we seek" indicates, "truth or reality" is something to be discovered. At one pole, there is the seeking subject, and at the other, the sought thing which lies outside the self. Reality may also be seen as truth or wholeness, an aspect of the actual, a unitary core within the multiplicity of the present moment. This paper shall establish Woolf's quest of 'truth' through a comparative study of her short stories. I shall also focus on Woolf's "everybody" as an agent of composition where all experience is refracted through the subject. Frequently Woolf resorts to images because of the possibility of defining the outer realm ostensibly by means of visual thing presentations, but only with the help of words already chosen by a seeking subject. It is not therefore a question of choice between Kantian idealism and Lockian empiricism. What Woolf explores, in both her expository writings and fictions, is the interfusion of three realms: "reality," the external world of things, and the internal world of our thought.