

# The Variation of *One* as a Personal Pronoun

—Comparing Application Patterns of *One* in Woolf’s Works and Other Occurrences—

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## 1. Introduction

In this presentation, I discuss the effect of the indefinite pronoun *one* used in Virginia Woolf’s novels, comparing it with Katherine Mansfield’s use of *one*.

## 2. The reason for the comparison

Woolf and Mansfield are both said to depict “stream of consciousness” in their works. Although these two female authors describe character’s consciousness, their methods of describing it differs. S ellei (1996: 88) says that Mansfield tends to follow the traditional way when she depicts a third-person narrative story, and on the other hand, Woolf practises more experimental and innovative way of writing.

Those works which I pick up in this paper are published in almost the same period of time, and they are in third-person narrative. Their style difference can be observed by comparing their uses of personal pronouns.

## 3. The characteristics of Woolf and Mansfield’s works

This part will show what kind of personal pronouns and how many of them are employed. Table 1 shows the background information.

Table 1 <Background information>

Author	Title	Type	Token	Publication	Abbreviation
K.Mansfield	<i>In a German Pension</i>	4654	34660	1911	<i>IP</i>
K.Mansfield	<i>The Garden Party</i>	5713	62858	1922	<i>GP</i>
V.Woolf	<i>Jacob's Room</i>	7263	55235	1918	<i>JR</i>
V.Woolf	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	6987	64746	1925	<i>MD</i>
V.Woolf	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>	5924	52434	1927	<i>TL</i>

All five novels here are said to be consciousness describing novels. In Table 2, you can see the number of personal pronouns that are used in each text.

Table 2 <Number of personal pronouns in each text>

	<i>IP</i>	<i>GP</i>	<i>JR</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>TL</i>
<i>He</i>	348	721	569	1176	1001
<i>she</i>	497	1178	555	1540	1325
<i>I</i>	712	722	238	120	55
<i>One</i>	19	37	75	107	181

It is true that *one* as a personal pronoun is not as frequent as the other personal pronouns on the list. However, in *MD* and *TL*, *one* is used more frequently than *I*. On the other hand, in *IP* and *GP*, *I* is much more frequent than *one*. Since these novels are in third-person narrative, it is normal to have *she* most frequently.

#### 4. Text analysis

In *IP* and *GP*, *one* is mostly used in direct speech. There are a few applications in free indirect discourse. Although the number of *one* used in free indirect in Mansfield's texts is small, employing *one* in this manner may suggest that *one* has a certain effect when writers describe consciousness.

When *one* appears in *MD* and *TL*, *one* shows its own characteristics.

When *one* was young, said Peter, *one* was too much excited to know people. Now that *one* was old, fifty-three to be precise ... now that *one* was mature then, said Peter, *one* could watch, *one* could understand, and *one* did not lose the power of feeling, he said. No, that is true, said Sally. (*MD*, 212)

So that if it was her beauty merely that *one* thought of, *one* must remember the quivering thing, ... and work it into the picture; or if *one* thought of her simply as a woman, *one* must endow her with some freak of idiosyncrasy; or suppose some latent desire to doff her royalty of form as if *her* [Mrs. Ramsay] beauty bored *her* and all that men say of beauty, and *she* wanted only to be like other people, insignificant. (*TL*, 35)

These extracts indicate *one's* effect that the personal pronoun *one* can appear in either direct or indirect discourse. In the first extract, Peter Walsh is talking to one of his old friends, Sally. The first sentence is in direct speech, although there are no quotation marks as the final sentence underlined with a wavy line is. Peter is talking about his own past. The reporting clause shows its directness. Peter uses *one* representing himself here. The second sentence, however, suddenly becomes indirect speech. The past tense forms "was" and "could" indicate the indirectness of this sentence, but the personal pronoun stays the same. The narrative forms change but the *one* remains the same. This helps to keep the flow of narrative smooth.

The second extract is the thought of Mr. Bankes, and here he thinks about Mrs. Ramsay's beauty. The sentence is in free indirect thought. *One* and *she/her* are used here, but the important thing is to realise that "she/her" in this extract represents Mrs. Ramsay from the point of view of Mr. Bankes. When "one must" appears, the point of view starts to be fixed on Mr. Bankes. The modal verb "must" has no past-tense form, therefore, when *must* appears, it does not give the reader any tense information. It is possible to consider "must" in 8) as either past-tense or present-tense. The interpretation becomes obscure. And such an effect is yielded by the use of *one*, not by any other personal pronoun. If this sentence was a simple indirect discourse, *one* here should be just *he*, and probably, "must" would be "had to".

#### 5. Conclusion

In this presentation, I have compared Woolf and Mansfield's novels. Virginia Woolf employs *one* to make the technique more effective. And when we think of how *one* is effective in FID, it is important to know in which type of discourse the personal pronoun is applied. The role a personal pronoun plays differs in each discourse. What I would like to emphasise here is that the direct or indirect interpretation inevitably enable us to see if that personal pronoun is uttered subjectively or objectively.

<texts>

Woolf, Virginia, 1925. *Mrs. Dalloway*, Penguin Books, England.

-- 1927. *To the Lighthouse*, Penguin Books, England.

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