

# The Diffused Narrative Space:

Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*

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## I

Virginia Woolf said about her seventh novel, *The Waves*, that it is “an abstract mystical eyeless book: a playpoem” (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* 203). As she states that it is an “eyeless book,” this novel is “an exploration of self-consciousness” (Rosenbaum 351) and “a presentation of the purest psychological analysis of literature” in which “spontaneous psychic life is presented” (Humphrey 14). Moreover, the “stream-of-consciousness is still mimetic but it is no longer realistic in the mode of the *style indirect libre*” (Segal 111).<sup>1</sup> What is obvious about the form is that whole narrative is divided into two: the italicized parts and the direct-speech parts. As a result of this kind of “differentiation,” both parts represent “the various layers of consciousness” (Iser 113). *The Waves* has a unique spatiotemporal structure. The two levels of narration and idiosyncratic presentation of the world of consciousness break the whole narration into fragments. Woolf’s technique of fragmentation and disintegration, which are characteristics of modernism (McFarlane 80), undermines the norm of frame of reference.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the frame of reference which the narrative consciously or unconsciously complies with, and to prove that the frame of reference is not rigidly determined in this novel. As a beginning we will examine briefly two types of frame of reference concern-

ing plot and character: the frame of reference as the present time, and Percival's function as a frame of reference. Another frame of reference which I shall treat in the main discussion is the boundary between the inside and the outside, self and the other. I shall prove that as a result of the assimilation of the narrators the direction of the points of view can be reversible, and the frame of reference is undermined. This frame of reference is in a sense constructed by the notion of our critical viewpoints. By means of transposing the fixed category, we may reach Woolf's very world of "the atoms as they fall upon the mind" ("Modern Fiction" 190).

It is difficult for the reader to pursue the frame of reference as plot that orders the story in *The Waves*. Instead of plot, we notice that an index<sup>2</sup> as constantly flowing present time which can be called clock time or calendar time functions as a kind of frame of reference. This index of the present time consists of one side of the double temporal structure in *The Waves*: the homogeneously passing present time presented by the external point of view and the internal time of characters which is passing heterogeneously and is presented by the internal point of view, and it undermines the logic of plot, that is, the relationship between cause and effect. Though the sentences and the soliloquies are arranged according to this index, the index is not meaningful or significant as plot. This index of the present time, which seems to be usually assimilated in the characters' consciousness and be rarely noticed in the story, comes into the foreground of the reader's perception. However, this frame of reference is diffused by the other temporality of the characters' internal thought drifting freely from the past to the future.

The frame of reference concerning character is the existence of Percival. Percival is the only character presented objectively by the other characters, and he is the heterodiegetic person: the character whose narrative using the first person is absent (Genette 244). He, differentiated

completely from the other characters, could be the frame of reference for the six narrators in the direct-speech parts. He is neither the subject who makes utterances, nor the subject whose transposed speech, in indirect style (Genette 171), is narrated by the other characters on a metadiegetic level, in a narrative in the second degree (Genette 228). Concerning the distance, Percival is narrated through the technique of "telling" or diegesis by the other characters, especially after his death. Percival keeps more distance than the other characters, who are narrated mainly through the technique of "showing" or mimesis by the narrator. Furthermore, there is mostly the narrative of events concerning Percival, but both the narrative of events and the narrative of words exist for the other characters.

However, Percival's existence is too slippery for us to define him as a frame of reference. His presence in the external world in the case of his farewell party makes the other characters recollect their childhood age in the first section when Percival is absent. Even after his death, he is presented on the same level of discourse. He is externalized and differentiated from the other characters on the level of discourse, but he is quite internalized in each character's subjectivity on the level of story. He is the frame of reference on the level of discourse, but he is assimilated in the characters' subjectivity. In this sense his existence is beyond such binary oppositions as past-present, subject-object and absent-present, and undermines our sense of frame of reference of character.

The present time and Percival might have functioned as a frame of reference without the interference of internal time or the internalization of Percival by the characters as narrators. Then the failure of the frame of reference could originate in the way of presentation of the internal world. The presentation of consciousness in *The Waves* is at first sight reduced to the verbalization of the internal world of self by the internal point of view, but it relies on the external point of view by which the external world, which

functions as the frame of reference, is focused on. But this frame of reference is deconstructed by the internality itself and the world of *The Waves* is left in want of the frame of reference. Then let us discuss the other frame of reference as the boundary between the inside and the outside.

## II

*The Waves*'s double structure, which is reflected in the italicized sections and the direct-speech sections, implies a third-person context interspersed with quoted monologues. The speeches of the six characters in the direct-speech parts "have more in common with dramatic monologues (or the soliloquies of drama) and with prose poems than with the silent monologues of modern narrative fiction" (Cohn 264). Each of the nine sections consists of an italicized part and a direct-speech part. They are narrated by the omniscient narrator, but if we pay attention to both levels of the text, they have specific features of their own. The spatial structure of this novel created by the points of view of the narrators is the point to be discussed. The external space and the internal space, which are presented by the narrators' points of view, are explained in terms of the external point of view and the internal point of view. The problem is whether the space as the object of the points of view can be determined to be in internal /external space, or not.

The narration in the italicized parts occurs at extradiegetic level,<sup>3</sup> and is narrated by one of the heterodiegetic narrators<sup>4</sup> of this novel. The italicized parts give order to the fragmentary direct-speech parts. But they do not so much make the whole narrative coherent as make it fragmented. The italicized parts are similar to the stage directions in a play. According to Mieke Bal: "The space in which the character is situated, or is precisely not situated, is regarded as the frame" (94). But strictly speaking, the

italicized parts are different from either stage directions or Bal's space as the frame. Bal defines the function of space as follows:

Spaces function in two ways. On the one hand, they are only a frame, a place of action. In this capacity a more or less detailed presentation will lead to a more or less concrete picture of that space. The space can also remain entirely in the background. In many cases however, space is 'thematized': it becomes an object of presentation itself for its own sake. Space thus becomes an 'acting place' rather than the place of action. . . . In both cases, where both frame-space and thematized space are concerned, space can function *steadily* or *dynamically*. (95-96)

The italicized parts are the frame of the story, but they are not "a place of action." They are similar to "an 'acting place'" which can function "dynamically" as an object of presentation. As "A dynamically functioning space is a factor which allows for the movement of characters" (96), the italicized parts, as such a kind of space, function so dynamically that they allow the characters to move entirely freely. To put it more properly, the italicized parts are tangentially connected with the direct-speech parts if we focus on the space.

The heterodiegetic narrator of the italicized parts or another kind of narrator introduces characters' soliloquies by using "Bernard said" or "Neville said" and so on, in the direct-speech parts. In these parts, the narrator's discourse: "X said" seems to occur at an ambiguous level. We cannot decide whether the level of the discourse is extradiegetic or intradiegetic. Thus we call the narrator of "X said" a heterodiegetic narrator. Though the word "said" is used, it is considered to imply a "translator" (Graham 98), and the soliloquy is the verbalization of thought, perception, recollection feeling, etc.<sup>5</sup> In the soliloquies, the heterodiegetic narrator leaves his/her function as a narrator to the characters; in other words, the characters are focalized. The type of the focalization is internal

and multiple. The narrator becomes a covert narrator<sup>6</sup> or plays the role of the implied author, and presents the narration at the intradiegetic level. The narrators as characters, who are intradiegetic and homodiegetic narrators, are limited in their authority. Their discourse is narrated through the technique of the stream-of-consciousness.<sup>7</sup> Each narrator narrates his/her present situation in the living time; his/her authority is limited in space and time. Though each narrator's authority is limited, we can suggest that if the six narrators' narrations are considered wholly, the narrations are omniscient, and each narration represents a facet of omniscient narration. In the case of Bernard's last soliloquy, he becomes similar to the omniscient narrator because he narrates all the facets of narration.

In soliloquy we do not notice "those who see" and "those who speak" (Bal 101) because they are the same person. As far as soliloquy is concerned, the heterodiegetic narrator's point of view is internal, but the six narrators' points of view are internal and external because they change their direction from the external space to the internal space or from the internal space to the external space arbitrarily. This arbitrary change of direction often appears to be direction-less transition. This posture extinguishes the distinction between the inside and the outside. The evidence produced by the consideration of both the italicized and the direct-speech parts proves it.

Though Jane Guiguet observes: "Space is even more unrecognizable in *The Waves*, where union and separation are achieved without its aid on every page, in every line" (394), each italicized part and each direct-speech part form a particular space. The space of the characters' action or the novel itself is created by the act of perception, in other words, by the narrators' points of view (Chamberlain 47). The space can be external and internal, and the external space and the internal space are presented by the narrators' points of view. Concerning the distinction between the external

space and the internal space, it is reasonable to borrow the category of Henri Bergson to start our discussion concerning space, though "Virginia Woolf's contacts with Bergsonism were on the one hand indirect, and on the other hand, inconsiderable" (Guiguet 33-34). The external space is what Bergson calls "space." On the contrary, the internal space is a world of consciousness which Bergson calls "duration."<sup>8</sup> The external space and the internal space constitute a dualism: space-duration, quantity-quality, homogeneous-heterogeneous, discontinuous-continuous, matter-memory, perception-conception, and so on.

I intend to begin our discussion with the assumption that the space presented by the points of view in *The Waves* is based on the dualism in which the inside and the outside are differentiated, because Woolf made a conscious effort to represent the internal reality which she contrasted with the external reality in her novels. S. P. Rosenbaum states: "In *The Waves* internal perceptions are no more mere contents of awareness than external perceptions. To be self-conscious is to be aware of something independent of consciousness" (350). We can observe that "there seems to be a distinction between the awareness and what one is aware of" (Rosenbaum 350); in other words, the inside world of subjectivity appears to be distinguished from the outside world of objectivity. But according to Daniel Albright, Virginia Woolf is not necessarily a dualist.<sup>9</sup> My opinion in the discussion of the points of view in this chapter is based on Albright's at the first step. The space in *The Waves* created by the points of view of the narrators appears to take place "inside the eye itself." The space might be basically a solipsistic world. But it is not necessarily reduced to the solipsistic world, nor the subjective world of self, when we take the point of view itself into account. Here we arrive at the next step. When we perceive the point of view apart from the presupposition that *The Waves* is the world of consciousness or the world of pure duration, we can discuss whether the object

of the point of view presents the feature of the external or the internal. To repeat again, as it is an important presupposition of our discussion, first, the space in *The Waves* can be the world of pure duration, but as the next step, the space can be the external space, the internal space or an ambiguous space if we analyze the space focusing on the points of view of the narrators. The two levels I referred to are quite different from each other. They may, in a sense, correspond to the following ideas: first, the idea to consider the six characters as characters; secondly, the idea to consider the six characters as narrators. Our discussion begins from the second step.

The internal space is focused on through the internal point of view and the external space through the external point of view. But the points of view reverse their direction arbitrarily and often intermingle with each other. So we cannot decide whether they are internal or external. Considering these points of view and the space presented by them, the dualism which makes a distinction between the inside and the outside seems to be subverted. In the following discussion in this section, I shall demonstrate how the dualism in *The Waves* which we presuppose is undermined. First, let us examine the discourse of the italicized parts; secondly, the direct-speech parts.

The italicized part preceding each direct-speech part is narrated by the extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator's voice, and offers the celestial image of time from dawn to night by depicting the scenery of the sea, the beach, the garden, the window and the inside of the house. By depicting an almost timeless and eternal scene, the focus of the point of view of the narrator gradually changes from the sun to the inside of the house, keeping a constant direction. However, the direction of the point of view becomes ambiguous around the house. Let us examine the first italicized part in *The Waves*.



*The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.*

*As they neared the shore each bar rose, heaped itself, broke and swept a thin veil of white water across the sand. The wave paused, and then drew out again, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously. Gradually the dark bar on the horizon became clear as if the sediment in an old wine-bottle had sunk and left the glass green. . . .*

*The light struck upon the trees in the garden, making one leaf transparent and then another. One bird chirped high up; there was a pause; another chirped lower down. The sun sharpened the walls of the house, and rested like the tip of a fan upon a white blind and made a blue finger-print of shadow under the leaf by the bedroom window. The blind stirred slightly, but all within was dim and unsubstantial. The birds sang their blank melody outside. (1-2)*

The extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator depicts the gradual passing of time in the landscape by changing the point of view. The scenery is ruled by the point of view of the narrator because the space is limited by the sight. The narrator's point of view at first is fixed to a source of light and then it traces the direction of the light from the horizon of the sea to the house. But the point of view from the inside to the outside changes its direction from the outside to the inside around the house or the window. This reversal of direction is remarkable because the point of view which keeps a constant direction from the inside to the outside suddenly change its direction. The narrator, if he/she is supposed to be in the house, cannot see the wall outside of the house. The direction of the point of view is basically from the side of the house to the sun because the narrator observes that the sunlight makes "one leaf transparent." But in the sentence, "*The sun sharpened the walls of the house, rested like the tip of a fan upon a white*

*blind and made a blue finger-print of shadow under the leaf by the bedroom window,*" the direction of the point of view is from the side of the sun to the side of the house at first, and then it seems to reverse its direction when the white blind is brought into focus. If we presuppose that the position of the narrator cannot be determined, the concepts of inside and outside are not determined. But from the fact that the narrator designates his or her position in the house by "*The birds sang their blank melody outside*" and that the point of view rests on a room in every italicized part, we make an assumption that the narrator is in the room. The reversal of this direction is strange because the narrator who is supposed to be in the room cannot see the wall outside of the house. The reversal happens when the narrator focuses on the space around the window between the inside and the outside. The window exists both inside and outside, or it does not exist in either space, so the window represents ambiguous space, where the narrator's point of view also becomes ambiguous. The ambiguous point of view and its object, the boundary space, divide the inside and the outside, but at the same time they may obscure the distinction.

The problem of the point of view of this knid is easily overlooked because it is one of the natural characteristics of the omniscient narrator. But in the narrative where the narrator indicates his/her position to some extent, we can take the direction of the point of view into account. In *The Waves* the reversal of the direction of the point of view contains an important suggestion for the intermingling of the self and the other and the undermining of the frame of reference. The point of view from the other side is sometimes internalized in the narrator. This point of view seems to create the boundary between the inside and the outside, self and the other at first sight. Yet the real situation lies a little deeper.

As the point of view changes its direction again from the inside to the outside, another category of the inside and the outside is found in the

italicized part.

*Now, too, the rising sun came in at the window, touching the red-edged curtain, and began to bring out circles and lines. . . . The real flower on the window-sill was attended by a phantom flower. Yet the phantom was part of the flower, for when a bud broke free the paler flower in the glass opened a bud too.*

*The wind rose. The waves drummed on the shore, like turbaned warriors, like turbaned men with poisoned assegais who, whirling their arms on high, advance upon the feeding flocks, the white sheep. (47-48)*

The other boundary between inside and outside distinguishes the inside world and the outside world of the self. When the point of view of the narrator settles on the house, the former boundary between the inside and the outside is eliminated, and a new boundary between the inside of the self and the outside of the self appears. Here the inside is equivalent to the world of the duration and the outside, to the space. In the above quotation, the narrator's point of view changes from seeing to hearing, and then it seems to be internalized, as the last metaphorical expression shows. This type of internalization will be a proper setting for introducing the direct speech parts. It determines the spatial level of the direct speech parts; we can find a continuity between the italicized parts and the following direct speech parts because the direct speeches can be the characters' internal thoughts. In this sense, the italicized parts, to some extent, function as a spatial frame.

Secondly, in the direct-speech parts, the characters narrate their own stories introduced by the heterodiegetic narrator's voice, "X said." Their points of view basically take a direction from the inside of the self to the outside when they focus on the external space, and they take a direction from the outside to the inside when they focus on the internal space. The boundary between the outside world and the inside world of the self can be

the eye itself.

"I [Louis] am green as a yew tree in the shade of the hedge. My hair is made of leaves. I am rooted to the middle of the earth. My body is a stalk. I press the stalk. A drop oozes from the hole at the mouth and slowly, thickly, grows larger and larger. Now something pink passes the eyehole. Now an eye-beam is slid through the chink. Its beam strikes me. I am a boy in a gray flannel suit. She has found me. I am struck on the nape of the neck. She has kissed me. All is shattered." (5)

Louis's consciousness is at first in the inside world of the self, but the stimulus from the external world interrupts his internal meditation. As a result, "All is shattered." In this situation the boundary between the inside world and the outside world is Louis's eyehole. The eye, as window, makes a framework of his sight and limits it. It also represents the ambiguous point of view and ambiguous space, because we can not decide the direction of the point of view. For example in the sentences, "an eye-beam is slid through the chink. Its beam strikes me," the direction of the point of view is both from the outside to the inside and from the inside to the outside. In this case the point of view from the outside to the inside is that of Junny. Louis becomes aware of his external situation and comes back to the outside space through Jinny's eye-beam; he perceives not only her eye-beam but also his present situation. So his point of view is ambiguous. The interaction between their eyes also creates an ambiguous space between Louis's outside world and the inside world of self.

The reversal of the direction of point of view may suggest the existence of the other's point of view<sup>10</sup> which exists within the narrator and sees the narrator from the outside. The hidden sight which the narrator cannot see is shown from the perspective of the other. In the italicized parts the existence of the other is not apparent, or it is no problem if we say it is the omniscient narrator. The point of view of the other in italicized parts

appears to focus only on an ambiguous space. We can see the characteristics of the other who has the point of view from the outside to the inside more clearly in the direct-speech parts.

When the characters are conscious of others' gazes, the direction of their points of view becomes ambiguous. Let us see Neville's soliloquy when Neville meets Bernard.

"I do not know myself sometimes, or how to measure and name and count out the grains that make me what I am.

"Something now leaves me; something goes from me to meet that figure who is coming, and assures me that I know him before I see who it is. How curiously one is changed by the addition, even at a distance, of a friend. How useful an office one's friends perform when they recall us. Yet how painful to be recalled, to be mitigated, to have one's self adulterated, mixed up, become part of another. As he approaches I become not myself but Neville mixed with somebody--with whom?--with Bernard? Yes, it is Bernard, and it is to Bernard that I shall put the question, Who am I?" (53)

This is a case where the other's point of view arises from the outside of the narrator's consciousness. The other's point of view is Bernard's. Neville, the narrator of the passage, wants Bernard's point of view in order to recover what he is, and becomes "not myself but Neville mixed with . . . Bernard." As a result of Neville's attention to Bernard's gaze, his point of view becomes Bernard's. It takes a direction from Bernard to Neville, from the outside to the inside. Bernard's point of view, in a sense, recalls what Neville was and determines Neville himself. We can say that Bernard's point of view internalized in Neville is the other's point of view, and it is the point of view which existed in the past for Neville.

In Bernard's last soliloquy, he also internalizes the other person's point of view.

"Oh, but there is your face. I catch your eye. I, who had thinking myself so vast, a temple, a church, a whole universe, unconfined and capable of being everywhere on the verge of things and here too, am now nothing but what you see--an elderly man, rather heavy, grey above the ears, who (I see myself in the glass) leans one elbow on the table, and holds in his left hand a glass of old brandy." (196)

It is "your eye" that makes Bernard "an elderly man," and makes him tell his own story. Bernard narrates by himself, but the point of view of the story belongs to both Bernard and "you." Bernard's final soliloquy not only makes the boundary between the self and the other obscure, but also intermingles the outer structure and the inner structure by acting as both the heterodiegetic narrator and the extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator. "You" as a narratee defines Bernard as a narrator, a character and a narratee in Bernard's own narration. Bernard often narrates about himself by using the mediating expression "I said." The "I" is differentiated from Bernard as the narrator and makes himself the object of the narration: "How can I proceed now, I said, without a self, weightless and visionless, through a world weightless, without illusion?" (191). Not only is the "I said" similar to the heterodiegetic narrator's mediating phrase "X said" but also Bernard's discourse is almost identical with the discourse in the italicized part in the ending (196). Bernard as the narrator is restricted by the narratee's point of view. He internalizes the narratee's point of view and oscillates between the point of view of the narrator and the narratee in relation to "you." "You"'s point of view internalized in Bernard can be that of the narrator when he acts as a narratee. As a result, he may become a character in front of "you" and the function of "you" and that of Bernard as a narrator are reversible. Furthermore, the relation between Bernard and the other who sees him is reversible when we focus on "the lady writing" sitting between the two long windows (8) who is pointed out in Bernard's narration. Bernard does not function as a single unified authorial

consciousness, but as “a narrator who ‘converses’ with his/her characters and who becomes a plurality of centers of consciousness irreducible to a common denominator” in the polyphonic novel (Ricoeur 96).

From this examination, we may conclude that the other's point of view which takes a direction from the other's side to the self causes the creation of the ambiguous points of view. The points of view of the narrators' discourse can be external and internal or centrifugal and centripetal at the same time. It is not proper to use such terms as “direction,” “the inside” and “the outside” here because the category to distinguish “the inside” from “the outside” does not function effectively in the analysis of the point of view. The external space is presented as being ceaselessly connected with such elements as heterogeneity, memory and recollection which are the characteristics of “duration”. Here Bergsonian dualism is subverted.<sup>11</sup>

We had better reconsider the categories of the internal point of view and the external point of view because sometimes to divide the internal and the external does not function effectively as far as the space of *The Waves* is concerned. We might merely be able to say that something is in a foreground or in a background for the reader who perceives it. The relationship between the internal and the external worlds can be reduced to that of foreground and background; when one world becomes the object of the point of view and is in a foreground, the other world withdraws into a background.<sup>12</sup> The categories of foreground and background include the viewpoint of the reader. We can say that the point of view can focus on only a facet of a totality which includes the inside and the outside, and as the point of view shifts, the reader can recognize several facets.<sup>13</sup> In the case of the ambiguous space, we can only say that a facet of a totality is grasped as a foreground; but may not discuss further whether the facet is internal or external. It is indeterminable.

We have reached a suggestion that when we consider the space

created by the points of view, we might as well discharge the Bergsonian distinction between the inside and the outside in the direction-less and de-centered narrative space of *The Waves*. The points of view are multifaceted without discernible origin or direction. The space is diffused by the multifaceted points of view. For the reader the inside and the outside of the characters' consciousness have the relation of foreground and background. Either the inside or the outside is presented in the foreground, and at the same time the other is withdrawn into the background. The indeterminacy of the points of view toward the boundary between the inside and the outside makes the characters' consciousness de-centered; we cannot presuppose the origin and the direction of each point of view. The boundary between the extradiegetic level and the intradiegetic level is also ambiguous. Even the heterodiegetic narrator's consciousness may be de-centered, because "Virginia Woolf . . . slices it [the self of a single being] into six sections which personify, on a varying number of levels, the conscious and unconscious selves and drives within the human personality" (Richter 120). The reader is:

constantly torn between assigning individuality to the six voices and accepting the notion that each is "all of them" at once, between imagining the entire novel as an emanation of a single subjectivity . . . or as a set of artificial modulations within a fundamentally disembodied consciousness. (Ryan 202)

The narrator's point of view is multifaceted and each character's soliloquy is a facet of the narrator's multifaceted points of view. In this sense, the external structure of *The Waves*, that is, the discourse of this novel, is also diffused. A facet of the narrator's points of view is sometimes in the foreground and sometimes in the background.

The frame of reference to divide the inside and the outside, and self and the other is subverted because of the subtle representation of the



boundary space between the inside and the outside. Here we have to reconsider Genette's terminology of focalization, because to analyze the narrative by dividing the focalization between the internal focalization and the external focalization does not fit to the narrative of *The Waves*. Moreover the presented inside world depends much on the external points of view. The extreme case of this inside world may be the narration by the external point of view in the italicized parts whose duration is closely connected with the stream-of-consciousness technique.

We are bewildered in the world of *The Waves* because we cannot determine the spatial level of the discourse. The direction-less transition of the points of view subverts the spatial frame of reference in several levels: space does not function as a frame in Bal's sense, and what is in the foreground in the space as an object of presentation is often the space itself and the things themselves; the italicized parts are not strictly a spatial frame of reference of the direct-speech parts; "X said" produces the ambiguous level of the discourse in the direct-speech parts; in the direct speeches, the boundary between the inside world and the outside world is ambiguous.

Though "modernism basically negates outward reality, and equates man's inwardness with an abstract subjectivity" (Eysteinnsson 26), what is presented in *The Waves* does not necessarily negate outward reality. Man's inwardness and outward reality are conglomerated and present an ambiguous feature of space in this novel. The ambiguity of space and the de-centered situation can be observed in the space presented by the narrators' points of view. The inside and the outside or self and the other are homogenized by the narrators' interspersed points of view. The de-centered situation can also be seen in the external structure of the discourse, and on the level of the story. The diffused space of *The Waves* is created on several levels of the narrative.

## III

The narrators of *The Waves* are highly conscious of the outward reality. But we cannot determine whether the narrators' points of view are internal or external. As a result the boundary between the inside and the outside becomes obscure. We also doubt the existence of the fixed origin of the points of view, because they have been proved to internalize the other's point of view which is the reference of the outside world. The problem of the subversion of the frame of reference lies in the representation of the boundary space. The external points of view which indicate, for example, the present time, and the objective presentation of Percival could be the frame of reference which distinguishes the external world from the internal world. But they are not the fixed frame of reference because they are represented by the unstable points of view of the characters. The external point of view and the internal point of view intrude with each other, and interrupt the sequence of the narrative. The interplay between them subverts the frame of reference. We might say that spatial frame of reference is lacking. As a result the self or the narrator cannot define himself or herself by the frame of reference. This situation reminds us of Jean-Paul Sartre's account of the "poetic crisis."

The crisis of language which broke out at the beginning of this century is a poetic crisis. Whatever the social and historical factors, it showed itself in an attack of depersonalization when the writer was confronted by words. He no longer knew how to use them. . . . He approached them with a completely fruitful feeling of strangeness. They were no longer his; they were no longer he; but in those strange mirrors the sky, the earth, and his own life were reflected. And, finally, they became things themselves, or rather the black heart of things. (*What is Literature* 8)

Like Bernard, who "sit [s] . . . for ever with bare things, this coffee-cup, this

knife, this fork, things in themselves, myself being myself" (198) without "you" in front of him, the narrators may become the words as "things themselves" in the narrative space as an object of presentation.

### Notes

- 1 "Style *indirect libre* was the name given by Charles Bally in 1912 to a form of narrative where the usual narratorial third person and preterite tense continue without use of introductory verb ('he thought that . . .', 'she felt that . . .'), but where we sense that the language represents the thoughts or speech of a character" (Segal 97).
- 2 Sebeok defines "index": "*A sign is said to be indexical insofar as its signifier is contiguous with its signified, or is a sample of it*" (131).
- 3 Extradiegetic narrative is "a (literary) act carried out at a first level" and the intradiegetic narrative is inside the extradiegetic narrative (Genette 228).
- 4 According to Genette, "We will . . . distinguish here two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he tells . . . the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells . . . I call the first type . . . *heterodiegetic*, and the second type *homodiegetic*" (244-45).
- 5 Segal states the characteristics of the direct-speech parts, especially, of the first section: "First, that here and elsewhere the use of 'said' and inverted commas is not to be taken literally: the thoughts are not uttered. Second, that this is no reproduction of speech-without-voice but imitative of some other 'level' of thought" (110).
- 6 According to Chatman, "In covert narration we hear a voice speaking of events, characters, and setting, but its owner remains hidden in the discursive shadows. Unlike the "nonnarrated" story, the covertly narrated one can express a character's speech or thoughts in indirect form" (197).
- 7 Humphrey states: "These novels [*The Waves*, *As I Lay Dying* and *Ulysses*]

using soliloquy represent a successful combination of interior stream of consciousness with exterior action. In other words, both internal and external character is depicted in them" (38).

- 8 According to Bergson: "in consciousness we find states which succeed, without being distinguished from one another; and in space simultaneities which, without succeeding, are distinguished from one another, in the sense that one has ceased to exist when the other appears. Outside us, mutual externality without succession; within us, succession without mutual externality" (227).
- 9 Albright states; "In fact the eye's own motility throws into doubt the whole solidity and objectivity of the real world. Usually Virginia Woolf behaves, as have been suggested, like a good dualist; but she makes no final affirmations, and it is possible that what the eye sees takes place, not in any external world, but inside the eye itself" (100).
- 10 This kind of narrator's existence is analogous to Sartre's "being-for-others." He states: "[the] relation, in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me, is the fundamental relation, the very type of my being-for-others" (*Being and Nothingness* 229).
- 11 This point is argued by Deleuze: "If things endure, or if there is duration in things, the question of space will need to be reassessed on new foundations. For space will no longer simply be a form of exteriority, a sort of screen that denatures duration, an impurity that comes to disturb the pure, a relative that is opposed to the absolute: Space itself will need to be based in things, in relations between things and between durations, to belong itself to the absolute, to have its own "purity"" (49).
- 12 "Spatial relations between objects are seconded by relations between characters to create a social structure. Again, it is the reader's perception that will move to meet the strategies of type, reliability, role, and privilege of the characters. Narrative World is the space mediating and separating the objects

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in foreground-background presentaion. . . ." (Chamberlain 137).

- 13 Chamberlain states in his discussion of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and phenomenology of perception: "What is available is the object selected as a foreground from a background and the particular facets of that foreground facing the perceiver at a paritcular moment. These facets are figured to create an integrated totality that can be grasped an object by the particular perspective in keeping with its tradition. No object is totally available to our senses from any standpoint. These are always aspects hidden from our senses. There is, therefore, an ipseity or presence of the object as well as an aseity or absence of the object inherent in all objects perceived. The aseity or absence of facets guarantees the unavailability of a total perception of knowing of any object" (37).

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### Synopsis

The Diffused Narrative Space: Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*

By Yuko Ito

This paper is an analysis of the spatiality in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. It is intended as an re-exploration of the inside and the outside of the consciousness represented on the level of the discourse by the internal and the external points of view, and as a reconsideration of the frame of reference which the narrative consciously or unconsciously complies with. I shall prove the lack of the spatial frame of reference that is one of the central problems of the narrating self in this novel.

As a beginning two types of frame of reference concerning plot and character are examined. It is difficult for the reader to pursue them in *The Waves* because they are transposed to such slippery elements as the present time and Percival's existence. The present time and Percival might have functioned as a frame of reference without the interference of internal time or the internalization of Percival by the characters as the narrators.

As a main discussion, I shall look into the spatial frame of reference as the boundary between the inside and the outside focusing on the discourse

of the italicized part and the direct-speech part. As a dynamically functioning space, the italicized parts are tangentially connected with the direct-speech parts, and the space presented in these parts becomes an object of presentation. The direction of the point of view of the narrator in the italicized part which keeps a constant direction becomes undecidable around the window which is in the boundary between the outside and the inside of the house. The direction which presupposes the center or origin of it determines the position of the narrator to some extent in such a simultaneous narration as *The Waves*. But the ambiguous direction makes not only the position of the narrator but also the boundary between the inside and the outside obscure. This phenomenon is rationalized by the characteristics of the points of view of the narrators in the direct-speech parts. The reversal of the direction of the point of view is due to the other's point of view internalized in the narrator, and it undermines the spatial frame of reference by de-centering the subject. The spatial frame of reference no longer functions to restrict the narrator or the self. We cannot analyze the spatiality by using the external/internal point of view because the boundary between the external and the internal is undecidable. Instead of the external/internal point of view, we had better say something is in the foreground/background of the reader's perception. Consequently, what *The Waves* wants to present in front of our perception may be the words as things themselves in the narrative space as an object of presentation.

The failure of the frame of reference could originate in the way of presentation of the internal world. Though the presentation of consciousness in *The Waves* is at first sight reduced to the verbalization of the internal world of self by the internal point of view, it relies on the externality. But the external point of view is deconstructed by the internality itself, and the world of *The Waves* is left in want of the frame of reference.