



# A Study of Deviation in Joyce's *Ulysses*

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**Abstract:** *Ulysses* is a novel written by James Joyce, an Irish writer in the 20th century. It is regarded as the first work of “stream of consciousness” novels. Since its publication, the researches of scholars have widely focused on the value of the art of “stream of consciousness”, but a large number of “deviation” phenomena reflected in the work also have important research significance. This article according to the “deviation theory” put forward by the famous linguist Leach, classifies the use of deviation in *Ulysses*. Combined with examples to analyze its effect and influence in the story, the essay aims at showing the confusion and numbness of two protagonists in the paralysis of Irish society by showing off technique application in the specific case, and reveals Joyce's hatred and disappointment towards the paralyzed Irish society.

**Keywords:** *Ulysses*, James Joyce, deviation

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## 1. Introduction

*Ulysses* is a novel by the Irish author James Joyce. For more than a century, this work has been widely studied by literary critics at home and abroad, and the academic circle has made fruitful achievements in its research. It is worth noting that scholars' research has been widely focused on exploring the value of “stream of consciousness” in the book, while ignoring the use of other artistic techniques in it. According to the author's research, “deviation” is also an artistic technique skillfully used by Joyce in *Ulysses*. Joyce not only uses deviation to describe people and things, but also skillfully combines “deviation of content” and “deviation of theme”. In this way, the use of “deviation” can not only shape the characters and promote the plot, but also further reveal the theme of Joyce's deviation from the paralyzed society in Ireland. The author will classify the deviation phenomenon in the novel according to Geoffrey Leach's stylistic deviation theory and analyze its function and influence in the text with examples, so as to further grasp the use of deviant technique, show the confusion and numbness of the two protagonists in the paralyzed Irish society, and reveal Joyce's hatred and disappointment towards the paralyzed Irish society.

*Ulysses* mainly describes the activities and inner thoughts of two “anti-heroes”: Bloom and Stephen in a day, showing the social reality of Dublin, Ireland and even the whole Europe in the early 20th century. By describing the series of events that took place in one day, Joyce showed people a miniature of Irish society under British colonization. It reveals the “paralysis” of Irish society and the “paralysis” of people's thoughts by elaborating the life and spiritual trend of individual characters.

Deviation and variation are very important stylistic views in the eyes of Chinese and Western stylistic scholars, and they are also applied in *Ulysses*. Semantics icon Anna Wierzbicka argues that deviation is “a bias from a conventional frequency or statistical average.” It can be understood as a writing method that breaks through the average or conventional usage of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and so on in literary writing, so as to avoid sameness and misoneism in the text. British linguist Geoffrey Leach systematically studied eight kinds of poetic language deviations in his book: *The Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. His stylistic deviation theory holds that the existing language deviations are as follows: Lexical Deviation, Grammatical Deviation, Phonological Deviation, Graphological Deviation, Semantic Deviation, Dialectal Deviation, Deviation of Register and Deviation of Historical Period. The author will select the representative “Lexical Deviation” and “Grammatical Deviation” in *Ulysses* to study and appreciate, and put forward the innovative “Deviation of Narrative Angle” to provide a new idea and reference for related research.

## 2. The study and appreciation of deviation in *Ulysses*

### 2.1 A case study of lexical deviation in *Ulysses*

Hu zhuanglin believes that Lexical Deviation can be divided into two categories. One is neologism, which can be used for a long time, such as E-mail, mobile phone, the Internet, etc., listed in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (English edition 1995). The other category is a temporary coinage, only for one-time use. This section will focus on the most typical “improvised words” in *Ulysses*. The author will analyze the temporary coinage in *Ulysses* into “compound coinage”,

“repeated coinage” and “onomatopoeia coinage”.

### 2.1.1 Compound coinage

A common compound coinage formation in *Ulysses* is that Joyce will simply combine several words or phrases from a meaning group into one word. According to the author's analysis, this deviation from the original word formation can not only bring new ideas to the novel, but also can indicate the protagonist's mental disorder, thus reflecting the Irish people's mental “paralysis”, and expressing Joyce's hatred and disappointment to the Irish society. For example:

(1) “outohelloutofthat” is a combination of “out to hell” and “out of that”. The original sentence is “Thentearasunder Death Explos. Knockonthehead. Outohelloutofthat. Humanlife.” The use of compound coinage not only made the word more creative and profound, but also suggested the disaster of faith and spiritual paralysis of people living in Ireland.

(2) “bigdrum” is a combination of “big” and “drum”. The original sentence is “His tuneful whistle sounds again, finely shaded, with rushes of the air, his fists bigdrumming on his padded knees.” Here, the combination of “big” and “drum” is used to describe Stephen's actions. It can vividly reflect Stephen's intense emotion and the chaotic flow of his consciousness by associating the huge sound and movement made by fists with the roar of drums.

(3) “hundredheaded” is a combination of “hundred” and “headed”. The original sentence is “Beauty is not there. Nor in the stagnant bay of Marsh's library where you read the fading prophecies of Joachim Abbas. For whom? The hundredheaded rabble of the cathedral close.” Here, “rabble” is a group of evil people. The author compares them to demons with hundreds of heads, implying the historical fact that Ireland was covetously eyed by invaders such as Britain.

(4) “Bloohimwhom” is a combination of “Bloom”, “him” and “whom”. The original sentence is “At four she. Winsomely she on Bloohimwhom smiled. Bloo smiqlli go. Ternoon. Think you are the only pebble on the beach? Does that to all. For men.” Here's what Bloom thinks: “Bloom?” “Him?” “Whom?” It depicts the confusion running through Bloom's mind as he is unsure whether the barmaid is looking for him or Boylan. It reflects the empty spiritual world of Irish residents and their confusions about the future of society and themselves.

### 2.1.2 Repeated coinage

A common repeated coinage formation in *Ulysses* is that Joyce repeated a word or part of a word many times to form a new word. According to the author's analysis, repeated coinage formation in lexical deviation can highlight new words that are different from conventional ones, so as to emphasize the special meaning of new word formation, attract readers' attention and trigger readers' imagination. For example:

(1) “Steeeeeeeeephen” is formed by the repetition of “e” in Stephen ten times. The original sentence is “My familiar, after me, calling Steeeeeeeephen.” The “e” is repeated ten times here, reflecting Mulligan's elongated voice in the corridor, allowing the reader to imagine his intonation and echoes, which enhance the pictorial sense.

(2) “wayawayawayawayawayaway” is formed by the repetition of “way/away” 6 times. The original sentence is “His mouth moulded issuing breath, unspeched: ooeehah: roar of cataractic planets, globed, blazing, roaring wayawayawayawayawayaway.” This description is based on Stephen's vision of the planet as a cascade of roaring, spherical, burning planets whizzing away. “Way/away” is repeated six times here, reflecting the continuous echoes of the planets as they shuttle, and also showing the sharp contrast between imagination and reality: he doesn't say a word himself, but in his imagination, a huge planet has come roaring out of his mouth.

(3) “endlessnessnessness” is formed by the repetition of “less/ness” four times. The original sentence is “It soared, a bird, itheld its flight, a swift pure cry...of the high vast ir-radiation everywhere all around about the all the endlessnessnessnessness...” “Less/ness” is repeated four times here, reflecting Simon's singing went down the hall and reflected in the air. Bloom was so absorbed by the singing. It shows his ethereal spiritual world and his mentality of drifting with the tide. It reveals the “paralysis” state of the spiritual emptiness of Irish people under the social background at that time.

### 2.1.3 Onomatopoeia coinage

A common onomatopoeia coinage formation in *Ulysses* is that Joyce pieced together words from syllables similar to the sounds he was describing. This type of word formation sometimes leads to situations where words for a sound have many similar forms. According to the author's analysis, this coinage formation can not only bring new ideas to the novel, attract readers' attention and arouse readers' imagination, but also can indicate the confusion of Irish people's thinking, thus reflecting the “paralysis” of Irish people's spirit. For example:

(1) “Mkgnao”, “Mrkgnao” and “Mrkrgnao” in chapter four are new onomatopoeia words constructed by the author. The original sentences are “The cat walked stiffly round a leg of the table with tail on high.-Mkgnao!”、“-Milk for the pussens, he said. -Mrkgnao! The cat cried.”、“Cruel.Her nature. Curious mice never squeal.Seem to like it.—Mrkrgnao! The cat said loudly.” All the three new constructions are similar in form and denote the meow of cats, whereas the onomatopoeia for the meow of a cat in normal English is “miaow”. Such word deviation reflects that the author wants to avoid the visual fatigue

caused by the repetition of a certain word, so as to attract readers' attention. At the same time, it also subtly shows that the character's inner cognition of meow is constantly changing, and he cannot accurately and clearly recognize things. He is confused in his heart, confused in his thinking, and paralyzed in his mental world.

(2) “Clapclap”, “Clipclap” and “Clappyclap” in chapter eleven are new onomatopoeia words constructed by the author. The original sentences are “When first he saw. Alas! Full tump. Full throb. Wrabbling. Ah, lure! Alluring! Martha! Come! Clapclap! Clipclap! Clappyclap!” The three new constructions are placed together and they all show applause, whereas the onomatopoeia for applause in normal English is “clapping”. Such word deviation not only avoid the visual fatigue caused by the repetition of a certain word, so as to subtly show the speaker's inner understanding of applause is constantly changing. He's unable to accurately and clearly recognize things, confused in heart, confused in thinking, and paralyzed in the spiritual world.

(3) “Imperthnthnthnthnthn” in chapter eleven is a new onomatopoeia word constructed by the author. The original sentence is “Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steelyringing Imperthnthnthnthnthn.” Here Duse is laughed at by a shoeshine waiter. She feels humiliated and threatens to prosecute him if he continues to treat her so rudely. “imperthnthnthnthnthn” is the voice of the waiter deliberately provoking her. This word is created according to the needs of the plot development, which not only makes the description more innovative, but also makes the plot more vivid, so as to arouse the imagination of the reader, let the reader feel the emotion of characters, and have a sense of empathy when reading.

## 2.2 A case study of grammatical deviation in *Ulysses*

Instead of organizing sentences according to the traditional standards and basic rules of English grammar, Joyce used free, flexible and even unconventional ways of organizing words and sentences. Such grammatical deviation can not only bring new ideas to the language of the novel, but also can vividly reflect the flow of people's consciousness ---- their vivid scene, feelings and frequent language conversion on the paper. *Ulysses* is characterized by an unstructured single sentence. Such language can be intermittent, floating, or flowing, so that can truly reflect the thinking activities of characters. The deviation of *Ulysses'* syntax is mainly reflected in the confusion of syntax, and the author will analyze it into three parts: reversed word order, repeated sentence elements and scattered sentences.

### 2.2.1 Reversed word order

In general, the word order in a sentence is fixed, and the change of the word order will change the meaning of the sentence, and even make the sentence become a sick sentence. However, Joyce cleverly took advantage of this point by changing the word order to change the emphasis of the sentence, thus changing the emphasis object of the sentence. Such syntactic deviation will make sentence look strange and alienation, not only bring the novel a new idea, but also suggests that character's psychological activity, emotional state and the chaos of their consciousness, thus revealing the spiritual “paralysis” of Irish people. For example:

(1) “Would to God that foresight had, but remembered me to take my cloak along.” Stephen said this when he and Bloom went to a brothel and got drunk. The author thinks that the author's arrangement of such a reversal of word order not only reflects Stephen's drunkness and confusion of consciousness flow, but also reflects the Irish people's questioning of God and wavering of religious belief, subtly revealing the spiritual drift of Irish people.

(2) “She bows her old head to a voice that speaks to her loudly, her bonesetter, her medicine man: me she slights.” Here is a monologue of Stephen observing the old milkman. He found that the old woman was respectful to all the others, but disdainful and persistent to him. For “me she sights”, the use of this inverted word order emphasizes the crone's contempt for me, vividly reflected the feeling flow of Stephan's consciousness and reproduced Stephan's depressed mood at that time. It reflects the snobbishness of Irish citizens and reveals the “paralysis” of Irish society.

### 2.2.2 Repeated sentence elements

The main purpose of using sentence elements repetition is to enhance the reader's or listener's impression of the repeated emphasis elements and to give the language a poetic rhythm through the repetition of homophonic elements. Joyce cleverly took advantage of this point by repeating sentence elements to change the emphasis of the sentence, so as to change the emphasis object of the sentence. Such syntactic deviation will make the sentence look strange and alienated, which can not only bring new meaning to the novel and make the novel language more rhythmical, but also can highlight the details that the author wants to highlight, so that readers can perceive the real character, psychological activities, emotional states and chaotic flow of consciousness of the characters. It can reflect the drifting faith and spiritual paralysis of Irish people. For example:

(1) “My head it simply... your head it simply swirls.” Here Bloom is sitting in a bar, recalling the first time he met his wife Molly. The author adds confusion and randomness to Bloom's thinking while repeating sentence elements at random. The sameness and repetition of sentence elements not only add new meaning to the article and show Bloom's drunkness, but

also reflect the chaotic flow of Bloom's consciousness and complex psychological state, reflecting the disorganization of the protagonist's sentence structure, reflecting the confusion of his thoughts and the paralysis of his spiritual world.

(2) "He thought that he thought that he was a Jew, whereas he knew that he knew that he knew that he was not" Here comes the moment when Bloom and Stephen finally find what matters most to each other. In this part, Stephen finds his spiritual father, and Bloom finds her spiritual son. "Thought that he" is repeated twice in the sentence. This is to emphasize Bloom's inner doubts. Bloom's personal views are exactly contrary to the existing facts he knows, suggesting his ideological contradictions and confusion, doubt about his own judgment, doubt about himself. The repetition of such sentence elements not only adds new meaning to the article, but also reflects the contradictions and confusion in Bloom's thoughts, the chaotic flow of consciousness, and the complex psychological state, reflecting the confusion of his thoughts and the paralysis of his spiritual world.

### 2.2.3 Scattered sentences

In *Ulysses*, there are many instances of successive short sentences. These phrases can be simple subject-verb-object structures, or just a new word. There is very little information in a single short sentence. Only by combining these sentences and analyzing them can we get the meaning the author wants to express. The author calls this kind of writing method scattered sentences. According to the author, there are two kinds of scattered sentences in *Ulysses*:

(1) Scattered sentences emphasize the role of each short sentence in a group, which means that the author places more important and deeper information, feelings and themes in such sentences. For example, "The tears under Death Explos. Knock on the head. Out of hell out of that. Human life." This part is a philosophical account of the life of the Irish people. These sentences are composed of one or several long words pieced together, and each sentence gives us a feeling of heavy and profound, so it can be seen that this sentence shows the pain of Irish people's life ---- they go back and forth again, numbly shuttling between earth and hell. It reflects Joyce's hatred and disappointment for the paralyzed Irish society.

(2) Scattered sentences merely describe the characters' incomplete thoughts and spirits as a running list. For example, "He came nearer. Their Eldorado. Poor jugginses. Damn all they know or care about anything... Good poor brutes they look."

This part comes from Bloom's psychological description of feeding oats to horses during a day of wandering.

## 2.3 A case study of deviation of narrative angle in *Ulysses*

"Deviation of Narrative Angle" is a new deviation idea proposed by the author on the basis of Leach's deviation theory, which refers to the alienation of narrative perspective. In *Ulysses*, through the use of stream of consciousness and deviation of narrative perspective, Joyce skillfully shortens the distance between the readers and the story, so that readers can directly enter the subjective world of the characters, directly feel the character's thoughts, emotions, and ways of thinking — more abundant information can be passed to the readers. Through the deviation of narrative perspective, readers can better see the character and thoughts of the characters, so as to perceive the Irish people's inner confusion, wandering soul and spiritual paralysis under the background of that time, as well as Joyce's hatred and disappointment for the paralyzed Irish society. For example:

(1) "His hands plunged and rummaged in his trunk while he called for a clean handkerchief. God, we'll simply have to dress the character. I want puce gloves and green boots. Contradiction. Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself." This part is from the first chapter of the novel when Mulligan is going out with Stephen and thinking about what to wear. This part begins from an unfocused angle of view, with Mulligan rummaging through clothes. After that, it switches to the internal focus narrative perspective, which narrows the distance between readers and characters and allows readers to get close to the inner world of characters. "Contradiction. Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself." shows Mulligan's contradiction in thinking, confusion in thinking, confusion in mind, inability to make a judgment and paralysis in the spiritual world.

(2) "He had come nearer the edge of the sea and wet sand slapped his boots. The new air greeted him, harping in wild nerves, wind of wild air of seeds of brightness. Here, I am not walking out to the Kish lightship, am I? He stood suddenly, his feet beginning to sink slowly in the quaking soil. Turn back." This part is from the third chapter of the novel when Stephen returned from his uncle's house. Stephen was lost when he realized he might be heading in a certain direction as he walked across the beach. This part also switches from an unfocused perspective to an in-focus perspective, which narrows the distance between the reader and the character and enables the reader to better understand the inner world of the character. "... am I?" reflects the confusion of Stephen's consciousness and his doubts about his existing state, and reveals his incomplete and paralyzed inner world.

## 3. Discussion

In this study, the author chooses three kinds of deviation: Lexical Deviation, Grammar Deviation and Deviation of

Narrative Angle to study the deviation phenomenon in *Ulysses*, and analyzes the classic deviation cases in the novel with examples. It is found that deviant art is also an important means of revealing or hinting at the inner world of characters and expressing the author's attitude and emotion in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The ingenious combination of stream of consciousness and deviant art will produce unexpected effects.

However, there are some limitations to this study. The author's analysis of deviation cannot be applied to all the alienation in *Ulysses*. For example, "dewsilky" is a combination of "dew" and "silky". Such compound coinage seems to be simply connecting two words, and the effect of "deviation theory" appears to be reluctant in such cases. In addition, due to the limitation of cultural knowledge and space of the paper, the author only studied some cases of Lexical Deviation, Grammatical Deviation and Deviation of Narrative Perspective, which is not comprehensive enough. There is still room for further research in this direction.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on Leach's deviation theory, this paper classifies and explores the deviation phenomenon in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Through the analysis of three typical kinds of deviation from vocabulary, grammar and narrative perspective, the author systematically summarizes the skills and functions of deviation in *Ulysses*. However, due to the author's lack of experience, writing skills and limited space, the examples given in this paper are not comprehensive enough, and there is room for improvement in the classification of deviating art.

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