

Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary: Unveiling the Hidden Wonders in Everyday Life

In the realm of language, poetry stands apart as a transformative force, capable of elevating the ordinary into the extraordinary. Poetic language, with its rich imagery, evocative words, and unconventional syntax, possesses an uncanny ability to reveal the hidden strangeness that lies within the familiar fabric of our everyday lives.



Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary by Marjorie Perloff

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This article delves into the captivating world of poetic language, exploring its unique ability to unlock the unseen wonders in the ordinary. We will uncover how poets, through their mastery of words, shatter conventional perceptions and invite us to experience the commonplace with fresh eyes.

The Alchemy of Poetic Perception

Poetic language operates as a potent alchemist, transforming the mundane into the magical. It achieves this transformation through a combination of literary devices that work together to create evocative and thought-provoking imagery.

1. **Metaphor:** Metaphorical language draws unexpected connections between seemingly unrelated objects or ideas, creating a spark of recognition and insight.
2. **Simile:** Similes compare two things using the words "like" or "as," highlighting unexpected similarities and revealing hidden depths.
3. **Personification:** Personification attributes human qualities to non-human entities, imbuing them with life and agency.
4. **Imagery:** Vivid imagery appeals to the senses, creating a sensory experience that transports readers into the world of the poem.

These literary devices, when skillfully employed, weave a tapestry of language that transcends mere description. They invite us to perceive the world not as it is, but as it could be, revealing the hidden potential and significance in our surroundings.

Unveiling the Hidden Strangeness

One of the most striking qualities of poetic language is its ability to uncover the strangeness that lies hidden within the ordinary. By employing unconventional syntax and disrupting familiar patterns of speech, poets challenge our preconceived notions and force us to re-examine the world around us.

Consider the opening lines of T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock":

*"Let us go then, you and I, When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table"*

The disturbing image of an "etherized" evening personifies the night as a passive object, creating a sense of unease and alienation. This unconventional comparison jolts us out of our complacency and forces us to confront the unsettling strangeness of the ordinary.

Another example can be found in Wallace Stevens' "Sunday Morning":

*"Complacencies of the peignoir, and late Coffee and oranges in a sunny
chair, And the green freedom of a cockatoo Upon a rug mingle to compose
A morning room, or "bower of bone,"*

Stevens juxtaposes the domestic comforts of a Sunday morning with the exotic image of a cockatoo on a rug, creating a surreal and thought-provoking scene. The ordinary trappings of daily life are elevated into something both familiar and strange, inviting us to question the boundaries between the mundane and the extraordinary.

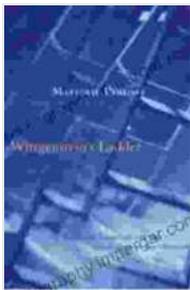
The Transformative Power of Poetic Language

The transformative power of poetic language extends beyond mere perception. It has the ability to shape our thoughts, emotions, and experiences, deepening our connection with the world around us.

By revealing the strangeness of the ordinary, poetic language invites us to embrace the fullness of our existence. It teaches us to appreciate the

beauty in the overlooked, to find wonder in the commonplace, and to question the taken-for-granted.

Through its evocative imagery and unconventional syntax, poetic language disrupts our complacency and forces us to see the world with fresh eyes. It challenges our assumptions, expands our perspectives, and ultimately enriches



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