

Sensuousness in John Keats' 'The Eve of St Agnes': -

John Keats is regarded as one of the greatest Romantic poets. He is fundamentally a sensuous poet of repute. We observe that sensuousness lies as a prejudice in his poetic talent. Of course, John Milton quotes, "poetry should be simple and sensuous and impassioned." A great poet and literary critic observes, "No one can question the eminence in Keats' poetry of the quality of sensuousness." Keats, as a poet, is 'enchantingly sensuous.' His perception of beauty has been filled by five senses. He confined himself to the worship of beauty.

Sense of Sight: - There is a great dominance and impact of eyes to perceive beauty. Keats describes the rich colours of the window - panes of quaint device, on which were stains and splendid eyes as the tiger moth's deep-damasked wing, our senses of sight are extremely gratified when the poet describes the wintry moon throwing its light on Madeline's fair breast and the rose bloom falling on her hands. The readers may find a very delightful combination of colours in the following lines of 'The Eve of St. Agnes':

Full on this casement shone the
wintry moon

And threw warm gales on Madeline's
fair breast

As down she knelt for heaven's grace and
boon

Rose bloom fell on her hand
together prest

And on her ² silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a
saint.

Sense of Touch — According to Milton, 'Poetry is a sensuous art. The opening extract of the Eve of St. Agnes is the best illustration of Keats' sense of touch, as follows:

St. Agnes Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!
She drew for all his feathers, was a cold,
She bare limbed trembling through the
frozen grass.'

The very cold touch of the chilly night of January has been described in the language of pure poetry.

Sense of Smell — John Keats enumerates the smell of perfume and delicious pudding and food-stuffs in the Eve of St. Agnes. Porphyrio the hero of the Eve of St. Agnes and her lover put fragrant and tasty food-stuffs on the table. The poet quotes
'while he from forth the closet brought
of candied apple, quince, than a heap
gourd,

with jellies softer than the creamy
Keats further cites the best example of

his sense of smell —
These delicacies he reaped with
on golden dishes and in baskets bright
of wreathed silver, sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume
light.'

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Sense of Hearing :- John Keats also gives importance to the ears as well as to the eyes. He further says that the body of earth is never dead. It is seen that Keats is a poet of perception and contemplation. In the Eve of St. Agnes, sensuousness is permeated between Madeline and Porphyro is worth audible. Their speech in adoration displays their sense of voluptuousness.

Sense of Taste - John Keats has mentioned a sense of taste in the Eve of St. Agnes. Different food stuffs and puddings symbolize taste. Smell and taste are connected together in this romantic sensuous Comedy.

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