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## Enhancement of Aesthetics Though *Alamkāras* in Keats's *Lamia*

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### Abstract:

The Present paper aims to study the aesthetic sense in Keats's *Lamia* in the light of Indian poetics. The poetry of Keats is extremely rich in its aesthetic aspect and this paper tries to explore the beauty of the poem by using some *alamkāras*. In fact, we enjoy the narrative poetry with a sense of reader /audience but from the critical point of view we hardly know about it. This paper highlights the grave characteristics of the poem in which the figure of speech is included. Definitely, this will be extent the aesthetic sensibility among the readers of Keats. Here poet's aim to expresses pathetic feelings of Lamia and Lycius through the *preyasalamkāra*. He employs *preyasalamkāra* to unfold the truth and add poetic charm to the expression

Here an attempt has been made to demonstrate the bearing of *preyasalamkāra* on Keats's poem, *Lamia*. The poem portrays the cruel and insensitive attitude of Apollonius, the guide and teacher of Lycius, to Lamia and the disloyal attitude of Nymph to Hermes. Before their attempt is made, it would be in the fitness of things to define *preyasalamkāra*. *Preyasalamkāra* can occur either by itself or as part of a memory of the beloved, that is, through the *vyabhicāribhāva* of *smṛti*. It is not the first direct variety of the *preyas* but the second one occurring through *smṛti* that had to distinguish from *smarana*. *Preyasalamkāra* imbedded in *smṛti* is brought out by *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* etc.

**Keywords:** Keats, poetry, aesthetic sensibility, Lamia.

In terms of *preyasalamkāra*, Lamia is *visyālabana*, she engenders various emotions in the heart of the reader, who can be looked upon as *aśraya*. Keats observes Lamia is a serpent woman and enchantress, hungry for love. Keats's Lamia is a serpent-woman, she falls in love with a young Corinth and starts living with him, after assuming a human shape with the help of the god, Hermes. At their wedding feast the cold-eyed philosopher Apollonius, Lycius's teacher, knowing Lamia to be a fool's delusion,

destroys her by the piercing cognition of his stare and thus their happiness is shattered by the scrutiny of intrusive and cold-bloodedness of wisdom. The scene of the poem is in an enchanted forest on the shore of Crete. As this is a love narrative the poet narrates two love stories, the love affair of Hermes and the Nymph along with that of Lycius and Lamia. Though these are two separate stories yet the poet has narrated the story in such a way that these two stories become one. In fact, the story of Hermes and the Nymph serves as background and also paves way to Lamia's love story. Under the spell of *preyasalamkāra* both Lycius and Lamia celebrate their love.

The poem has two parts also. In part I, the poet, first narrate the mythological story of Hermes and the Nymph, which since its beginning holds the interest of the reader. The narration moves with ease, Hermes (Mercury), having fallen deeply in love with a Nymph who has hidden herself from him, wanders here and there in search of the Nymph. The poet narrates the wanderings of the god, Hermes with great versatility. Here poet expresses pathetic feelings of Lamia and Lycius through the *preyasalamkāra*.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,  
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,  
And wound with many a river to its head  
To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret bed.  
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,  
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,  
Pensive..." (I: 27-33)

The lines clearly show how dearly Hermes loves the Nymph and how lustfully he is looking around for his beloved. His love-passion has maddened him and he is wandering everywhere like a mad person to find his beloved and to satisfy his love feelings. The intensification of his love-passion for the Nymph is well explained by his uncaring attitude towards his physical wounds considering them inferior to his emotional wounds which he got because of his separation with his beloved. Here, the description of Hermes enables the reader to be one with the natural pathetic condition of any lover in the absence of his beloved. These lines generate the feelings of *karuna* (pathos). Keats does not feel satisfied in depicting the external beauty of the object only rather they concentrate on the internal beauty that unfolds the truth. In the next lines when the reader comes to know that all his efforts remained fruitless as he didn't find the Nymph:

The expressions, "In vain" clearly exhibits the failure of the Hermes searching and thus accentuate the reader's sympathy for a heart-broken love. Again his lying on the lonely ground also makes his condition more pathetic for the reader. This paves way to Lamia's love story in which the feelings of *karuna* and *vyābhicharis* but they do not

become *rasa*. Here also the device is used tactfully by the poet to convey the intended meaning of the pathetic cry and helplessness of the speaker i.e.

When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!  
 When move in a sweet body fit for life,  
 And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife  
 Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me! (Lamia, I: II.38-41)

Lamia, a serpent woman having an incomplete physique, wants to come out of her cursed body-the body of a snake with a beautiful face of a woman. Her desire in the form of cry catches the reader's attention naturally because of the *rūpakaalamkāra* used by the poet here. The use of interjection "Ah!" strengthens the pathetic condition of the speaker as well as the sympathy of the reader for her. The comparison of the cursed body of Lamia to the "wreathed tomb" with the help of *rūpakaalamkāra* accentuates reader's pity and sympathy for Lamia because it helps him in visualizing her tortured condition. The *rūpakaalamkāra* has a musical quality, it shows the poet's intense emotions and also presents a perfect harmony between thought and expression. The expression, "Ah, miserable me!" touches the deepest corner of reader's heart by exhibiting the heart broken and miserable condition of the Lamia.

She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,  
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.  
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire  
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:  
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!  
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:  
 And for her eyes: what could such eyes do there  
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?  
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air. (I. II. 55,59-63)

The sweetness of Lamia's womanly beauty is made bitter because of her serpent head and this fact naturally makes the reader to feel extremely sorry for the bad luck of Lamia and he himself cries "Ah" with a heavy heart. This sorry feeling of the reader converts into sympathy for her as he knows that she has beautiful face of a woman. The description of her beautiful eyes: "what could such eyes do there / but weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?" (I: II. 61-62) aptly brings forth the sympathy of the reader for Lamia through this image and the feeling is accentuated by the *karuna rasa* with *preyasalamkāra*. Keats exceptional poetic skill of using *alamkāra* has played an important role in the selection of appropriate object in accordance with the thoughts and emotions.

The use of interrogation mark at the end of the lines are quite artistic in conveying the intended opposite meaning that though the eyes are so beautiful but their beauty is useless and is destroyed by the horribility of having the serpent head and thus they are meant to shed tears only. This sympathy further deepens into pity as the poet immediately alludes to Proserpine's weeping, "As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air" (I. 63). Lamia, like Proserpine, becomes a figure of innocence and vulnerability.

Lamia's transformation, where Lamia the serpent, undergoes the process of change into a beautiful woman, is quite apt and appropriate as the reader here, visualizes a lot of disgusting scenes.

For so delicious were the words she sung,  
It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long:  
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,  
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,  
And still the cup was full, ... (Lamia, I:II. 249-253)

The poet, after gaining relief from the timely utterance, is in harmony with nature. The ecstatic tone of the expression is self-evident in exhibiting Keats feelings of harmony. The halting repetition of words also expresses a kind of emotional intensity in the poem. The use of adjective "delicious" by the poet makes the description more sensuous and also enables the reader to imagine the effect of the song on Lycius with *bhāvikaalamkāra*. Just as the delicious food naturally makes our mouth watery even by its flavor, enhances our appetite and thus makes us more greedy in the same way the sweetness makes his heart restless by generating a strong desire to have a look of the singer of such melodious words. As soon as he sees the beautiful Lamia, he is quite surprised at such an unearthly beauty which is explained by the poet beautifully through the expression "a bewildering cup". It is unbelievable for Lycius to have such a beauty in front of his eyes that's why he looks at her continuously without any blinking. Keats, by using this *alamkāra* has endeavoured to provide new dimensions in his expression.

The use of *preyasalamkāra* enhances the erotic sense of the situation as this shows immobility and static posture of Lycius because neither he wants to move nor to lose the sight which is giving an immense pleasure to his eyes as well as to his heart. Hence, his impassioned thinking sprinkled with shorter and blither measures, are received by the ear at first with joyful surprise and then with joyful expectancy.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,  
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near  
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,  
Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:

Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,  
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,  
While hurried Lamia trembled: “Ah,” said he,  
“why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?  
Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?”  
“I’m wearied,” said fair Lamia: “tell me who  
Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind  
His features: - Lycius! Wherefore did you blind  
Yourself from his quick eyes?”Lycius replied,  
“Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide  
And good instructor; but to-night he seems  
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.” (I: II. 362-377)

After this violent convulsion, Lamia sheds her snake skin and a beautiful woman is revealed to the reader and now the poem takes a flight to the love-story of Lamia and Lycius though dominated by an emotion like *karuna rasa* with *preyasalamkāra*. After getting a complete body she chooses his way to Corinth to meet her dream boy, Lycius, the young philosopher of whom she had dreamed and whom she had loved. She stands at the side of a road along which she knows Lycius will come on his way to Corinth. When he arrives, she addresses him and asks, “Ah, Lycius bright, / And will you leave me on the hills alone? / Lycius, look back! And be some pity shown” (I: II. 244-246). Lycius does not at first perceive Lamia’s presence, but in the next moment he looks at her as Orpheus looks at Eurydice and is completely captivated by her charms as she appears to him most fascinating in all her warm throbbing beauty. He is spell bound by her beauty and at once falls violently in love with her. Together Lycius and Lamia walk to Corinth where he tries to hide her from everybody’s eyes to save her and to keep her secrecy.

I... there they reposed,  
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,  
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,  
That they might see each other while they almost slept; (II: II. 22-25)

These lines describing the night scene are filled with erotic emotions in the heart of the reader. It is because of this fear that they make their abode in a mansion at the outskirts of the city and live together as man and wife, avoiding the company of others. They live happily in the blisses of love in a fairy palace which is invisible to everyone in the city and at this juncture the reader gets the exemplification of *preyasalamkāra* in the description when Lycius and Lamia enjoy the pleasures of love-making in the mansion. Keats employs *preyasalamkāra* for saying something, for the purpose of clarification.

But in the story, this romantic bliss remains short living and the reader is again taken back to the harsh realities of life and society explained through *karuna rasa*. A blast of trumpets piercing the secluded magical retreat of Lycius and Lamia, prompts Lycius to think of the world outside and he realizes that they both are isolated from the outside real world and this isolation can't impart them permanent pleasure, so he intends to merge into the outside noisy and real world. Realizing his intention Lamia, who always remains fearful and alert about this fact, expresses her sorrow and pain in the following words:

You have deserted me; - where am I now?  
Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:  
No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go  
From your breast houseless: ay, it must be so. (II: II. 42-45)

Lamia's heart-breaking pain, generated because of her fear of separation with Lycius, is clearly reflected in these pathetic words and makes the reader to share her pain. When she notices that Lycius is being diverted towards the outside world she becomes pathetic imaging her loneliness without him. The rising accent of the initial question, "where am I now?" is quite enough to explain the pain of being homeless as the question clearly conveys the meaning that the person who doesn't have any place or status is expressing her pain and helplessness in these words. The situation is further explained in the next lines that her pain is quite apt as she feels that Lycius's attraction towards the outside world has snatched away her place from his heart. The repetition of negatives also expresses the extremity of her pathetic feeling that she is nowhere now and the reader gets sympathized with her for her pain.

The poet exhibit Lycius's as well as Lamia's fear in their future and the reader is clearly indicated with the help of *bhāvikaalamkāra* that their future in Corinth is not safe at all. By the employment of this device, he delineates the bombastic introduction of Apollonius, the sage and guide of Lycius, "with curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown" and "slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown", creates a feeling of fear in the heart of reader which later in the story proves to be right as it is he who performs the role of a villain in the love-story of Lycius and Lamia. The reaction of Lycius, at the appearance of Apollonius, exhibited in the words "Her fingers he press'd hard", directly indicates his *bhaya* (fear) and the reader who was lost in the erotic feelings till now also becomes fearful and wondered and starts thinking why Lycius has reacted in such a strange manner. The reader's wonder is further accentuated by the reaction of Lamia who starts to tremble and becomes nervous at his appearance. Here *bhāvikaalamkāra* enhance the beauty, exhibit objective, depict scene, characterize spontaneous movements and put thoughts in tune with feelings.

In his amorous pursuit of the Nymph, Hermes listens to a pathetic voice complaining of being imprisoned in a snake's body. The words uttered by the unseen voice are so miserable that after listening them, he forgets his own pain and rises to see the singer of the pathetic words.

The poem expresses its mood effectively by the verbal effect of *preyasalamkāra*. The simple inquiry into the sources is made skillfully in the poem. It is worth-noting how Keats after expressing the fact that he is moved with *bhāvikaalamkāra* by the snake's body, allows the emotion its own life and delights in new accesses of thought and feeling.

Left to herself, the serpent now began  
 To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,  
 Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,  
 With'd at dew so sweet and virulent;  
 Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,  
 Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,  
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.  
 The colours all inflame'd throughout her train,  
 She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain:  
 A deep volcanian yellow took the place  
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;  
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,  
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede;  
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,  
 Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars:  
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest  
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,  
 And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,  
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left. (I: II.146-64)

In this whole imaginative process of the change and final destruction which seems to take a long time, each depiction fully presents the painful and repulsive transformation which Lamia is undertaking. Though the process is full of pain and suffering, yet the description generates a feeling of hate and disgust. The each succeeding stage suggests more anguish, deformity and disgust also. For example, Lamia "writh'd [writhes] about, convuls'd with scarlet pain" as her train is "all inflame'd" and her agony does not stop here but "a deep volcanian yellow" follows and it destroys her former grace evoked by the image of a "beauteous wreath" (I. 84). The effect of the poisonous foam exited by Lamia on the grass, "the grass, therewith besprent, wither'd" and the comparison of this foam to volcano and the destruction of lava creates the feeling of horribility assisted with disgust in the reader as he visualizes the withered grass and the loss of Lamia's beauty as



the nearby meads losses its beauty because of volcanic lava. The whole process of transformation is pictures with the help of *bhāvikaalamkāra* enhance the beauty, exhibit objective, depict scene, characterize spontaneous movements and put thoughts in tune with feelings. He uses them also to underline integral part of a literal meaning; to nourish the literal meaning to its climax; to beautify the expression and give a different meaning to achieve excellence by its own splendor; and to express some impossible meaning.

The many heard, and the loud revelry  
Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;  
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.  
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;  
A deadly silence step by step increased,  
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,  
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.  
“Lamia!” he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek  
With its sad echo did the silence break.  
“Begone, foul dream!” he cried, gazing again  
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein  
Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom  
Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine  
The deep-recessed vision – all was blight;  
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white. (Lamia, II: II.262-276)

In this destruction of Lamia and Lycius's love story the initial expression, “The many heard, and the loud revelry / Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;” hatches the fear in the heart of the reader by conveying the meaning that something abnormal has made the grand and impressive music to cease and the cheerful moment is converted into silence. The same feeling is further intensified in the next line, “By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased; / A deadly silence step by step increased” and “and nothing but the shriek/ with its sad echo did the silence break”. Besides intensifying the fear of the reader these lines also force the reader to ponder over the reason of such a sudden change. And then the climax and maturity of the *preyasalamkāra* is exhibited through the ending terminology “Begone, foul dream!”, “gazing again/in the bride's face, where the cheek; no passion to illumine” and “the deep-recessed vision – all was blight;/ Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.” Here the reader is revealed the reason of the horrid changes which occurred instantly and made him horrified. He is now face to face with the disastrous incident of Lamia's death and all this is exhibited with the help of emotion like *bhayānaka* with *preyasalamkāra*.

Lycius, being a true and genuine lover also understands Lamia's pain and he consoles her by exposing his plan about their future that he simply desires to marry her

and make their love known to the world. But the revelation of this plan converts Lamia's pain into fear because of her fear she strongly opposes to his plan and pleads him to change his mind with *bhāvikaalamkāra*.

The lady's cheek  
Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,  
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain  
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain  
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,  
To change his purpose. (II: II. 64-69)

The effect of Lycius's plan on Lamia is clearly exhibited in these lines. The trembling in her cheeks, being speechless and the change in her colour, all these reactions conveyed through these words, "the lady's cheek trembled, she nothing said", "but, pale and meek, arouse and knelt before him" and "wept a rain of sorrows at his words", enable the reader to feel that there is some danger in their wedding which makes Lamia to react in such ways. Her fear results in the outburst of tears and in extreme pain she pleads Lycius to change his decision. Though Lamia makes piteous request to Lycius to change his mind yet she fails to dissuade him from his determination with *bhāvikaalamkāra*. Here the past or future action in the present produces charm and beauty in his expression. One point is worth-noting here that propriety is strictly to be observed in the employment of the tense. The persistence of Lycius at last wins her reluctant consent. She submits to him on the condition that he will not invite the philosopher Apollonius to the marriage feast. The wedding feast starts and the poet keeps the suspense of the reader maintained. Having this feeling of suspense in mind and heart the reader participates in the wedding feast. The feast goes on smoothly in the starting but at the height of the wedding feast, the suspense of the reader converts into fear when Apollonius begins to stare fixedly at Lamia. The continuous gazing of Apollonius makes Lamia uncomfortable. She grows pale and exhibits extreme discomfort as she does not answer to Lycius's agonized questions when he asks what ails her, "Lamia, what means this?", "wherefore does thou start?" and "know's thou that man?" (II: II.254-255). These questions hint the reader that whatever has happened, is because of one person only and that is undoubtedly Apollonius. That's why after seeing Lamia turning pale; Lycius's fear converts into anger and disgust for the great philosopher and his trusty guide Apollonius, because now he realizes very well that he is the only person who has destroyed his world of love before the settlement.

Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!  
Turn them aside, wretch! Or the righteous ban  
Of all the gods, whose dreadful images  
Here represent their shadowy presences,

May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn  
Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,  
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright  
Of conscience, for their long offended might,  
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,  
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.  
Corinthians! Look upon that gray-beard wretch!  
Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch  
Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!  
My sweet bride withers at their potency. (II:II.277-290)

Having generated the sentiments of fear, anger and disgust with the help of the constituents of *bhayānaka rasa*, the poet now turns towards the climax of the poem and forces the reader to shed his tears by the employing the essentialities of *karuna*. The intensity of pathos, arising out of *bhayānaka* is illustrated in the final and most shocking scene of the poem, where the “bald-headed philosopher” (II: I. 245). Apollonius destroys the wedding of young Lycius and hides his bride Lamia by gazing at her intensely and by revealing the fact that she is not the woman she seems to be, actually she is a serpent. Looking at lamia he utters two words: “A serpent!” and with the utterance Lamia vanishes and at the very moment of her disappearance, he also dies:

... no!

“A Serpent!” echoed he; no sooner said,

Than with a frightful scream she vanished:

And lycius' arms were empty of delight,

As were his limbs of life, from that same night.

On the high couch he lay! – his friends came round –

Supported him – no pules, or breath they found,

And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound. (II:II. 304-311)

In the poem *karuna rasa* is intensified but does not achieve the state of *rasa niśpatti*. The shocking exposure of Lamia's reality as “A Serpent!” by Apollonius, not only destroys the wedding ceremony of Lycius and Lamia, but also proves to be fatal for Lycius who dies of the shock that his beloved is not a human being and the lovers separate forever before being united at the very day of their union. The situation created by Apollonius is unbearable for the lovers and proved to be fatal for them. To see the

dreadful and tragic end of Lamia as well as of Lycius's life, all the guests and his friends as well as the reader experience extreme pathos and pity expressed by *preyasalamkāra* enhance the beauty, exhibit objective, depict scene, characterize spontaneous movements and put thoughts in tune with feelings.

What acts as sort of *uddipan* of the protagonist's woe-begone is her misfortune because of curse of having a beautiful human face with a serpent body, and Apollonius's use of magic to bring her back to serpent life, again. The *anubhāvas* flesh out a picture of one driven in estrangement, one that has not a soul to speak. Her pale complexion with trembling body is indicative of her helplessness. Lycius's and her future plan of happiness and freedom increases Lamia's dejected situation. *Moh* (attachment) *utsukta* (eagerness), *smṛti* (memory), *santras* (mental agony), *marans* (death) are *vyabhicāribhāvas* which arises emotions to the level of *karuna* rasa in accordance with *preyasalamkāra*.

This device has been employed in Keats's poetry to enhance the beauty of expression. Keats uses *salamkāras* in such a way that they added unique charm to the ordinary every-day speech and convey meanings in a more vivid and impressive manner. He uses *salamkāra* to convey and emphasize unusual and vivid images which changes the mode of thought and adds variation, embellishment and adornment. The strikingness caused by the *bhāvikaalamkāra* finds a due scope and is quite discernible in Keats's poetry. He employs *preyasalamkāra* to unfold the truth and add poetic charm to the expression. He employs *preyasalamkāra* for saying something, for the purpose of clarification. Thereafter in the events in Corinth the appearance of Apollonius in the feast, the horror of Lamia and the terror of Lycius the *sthāyibhāva* of *bhaya* culminates and the readers experience *bhayānaka rasa*. So, the later part of the poem illustrates *alamkāras* prominently whereas the end of the poem presenting a pathetic outburst with the death of Lamia and also that of Lycius respectively underlines the features of *śabdalamkāra* and *arthalamkāra*. The poetic expression is generally speaking, heightened or made striking by an out of the wayness, which is called the use of *alamkāra*. It is evident now that Keats's bears a striking beauty in his expression. His exceptional poetic skill plays an important role in the selection of appropriate words in accordance with the thoughts and emotions. He hears and feels closely the vibration and suggestive note infused in the words. This is the reason that his composition attains excellence.

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