

**Sadaf Suleman¹, Faiza Khurshid¹, Talha Tariq¹**

1. MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Cite This Article: Suleman, S., Khurshid, F. & Tariq, T. (2025). Illness, Mortality, and Psychological Anxiety in the Poetry of John Keats. *Journal of Social Sciences Research & Policy*. 3 (04), 895-906.DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71327/jssrp.34.895.906>**ISSN:** 3006-6557 (Online)**ISSN:** 3006-6549 (Print)**Vol.** 3, **No.** 4 (2025)**Pages:** 895-906**Key Words:**

John Keats; Psychological Anxiety; Death; Illness; Melancholy; Existentialism; Romantic Poetry; Psychological Literary Criticism

Corresponding Author:**Sadaf Suleman**Email: sadafcooki06@gmail.com**License:**

Abstract: *This research paper is an investigation into the themes of illness, death and psychological anxiety in the poetry of John Keats. Tuberculosis, personal tragedy and the pervasive sense of loss in the Keats circle had profound effects on his poetic imagination and emotional sensibilities. This study will examine the poetic images of fear of death, melancholy, emotional instability and human fragility in Keats's choice of poems. The research uses literature analysis in close reading which is qualitative. The emotional and philosophical aspects of Keats's poetry are explored through the lens of psychological literary criticism and existential perspectives. The poems chosen for this are: Ode to a Nightingale, When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be, Ode on Melancholy, To Autumn and Ode on a Grecian Urn. The results of the research indicate that Keats is able to make personal experience of sickness and mental anguish universal art. He's always between beauty and decay, imagination and reality, between death and artistic immortality, and his poetry is all of this. The study concludes that Keats's perception of death was a major influence on his poetic vision and the emotional depth and philosophical richness of his poetry.*

Introduction

English literature, as the Romantic Age developed, was a response to the rationalism and industrialization of the Enlightenment (Abrams, 1999). Romantic poets used to place an emphasis on emotion, imagination, individual experience, beauty and nature. The major Romantic poets include John Keats, who is notable for his sensuous poetry, deep philosophical content and emotional power (Bate, 1963). His poetry is full of a deep sense of beauty, as well as suffering, death, and the fleeting nature of human life. Despite a life span of just 25 years Keats' poetry became a great success and remains a major influence on readers and critics everywhere (Motion, 1997).

Illness, death and emotional anguish profoundly affected Keats's personal life. His family experienced a long history of tuberculosis, a dreadful disease of the nineteenth century, with several members of the family dying of the disease (Ward, 1963). Keats himself ultimately succumbed to the disease, as it slowly undermined his physical health and also had a psychological impact. His everlasting struggle with sickness and death gave the impetus to his poetry and odes (Stillinger, 1998). Poems like "Ode on Melancholy," "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be" and "To Autumn" (Keats, 2009) frequently

mention the themes of mortality, human suffering, psychological anxiety and fear of impermanence. The concept of death in Keats' poems is not only physical, but psychological and existential. Because he knew he would not live long enough to achieve artistic immortality, he began to wrestle with the fact that he would only live a short life on earth (Bloom, 2007). In Keats's poetry, transience is always opposed to the beauty and permanence of art and imagination. His poems show signs of emotional volatility, psychological torment, isolation, sadness, and the fear of losing love, beauty, and creative ability (Garrett, 2011). So, it should be remembered that Keats's work is not just Romantic poetry, but an expression of psychological distress due to sickness and imminent death.

This research paper examines the relationship between disease, death and mental stress, anxiety in the poetry of John Keats. It explores how Keats expressed his own suffering in his poetry and how his sensitivity to death affected his imagination, emotions and philosophy. The psychological aspects of his poetry are also explored, involving the emotions created from fear, uncertainty, sadness and the awareness of death.

Statement of the Problem

The poetry of John Keats has been extensively studied from various Romantic, aesthetic, and philosophical angles, especially on the subjects of beauty, imagination, and nature (Abrams, 1999). But there is not as much attention to the effect of sickness and death on his poetic mind as there should be, according to the comparative scale. The experience of tuberculosis was an important factor in shaping Keats's emotional and mental outlook, and is evident in his poems in the themes of fear, suffering, melancholy and anxiety about death (Ward, 1963). In this study, attention is given to the question of the psychological state of Keats's mind and his expressions of illness and awareness of death. It also explores the role these aspects play in the emotional resonance and tragic sensibility of his poems.

Research Questions

1. How are illness and mortality represented in the poetry of John Keats?
2. How does psychological anxiety emerge through Keats's poetic treatment of death and suffering?
3. In what ways does Keats transform personal illness and fear of mortality into artistic and poetic expression?

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the representation of illness and mortality in the poetry of John Keats.
2. To analyze the psychological anxiety reflected in Keats's poems and odes.
3. To examine the relationship between Keats's personal suffering and his poetic imagination.
4. To investigate how Keats transforms fear, melancholy, and mortality into artistic expression.

Significance of the Study

This study is important as it adds to the knowledge of the poetry of John Keats from a psychological and existential point of view. Few studies have investigated the psychological impact of illness and death on Keats's poetic consciousness (Stillinger, 1998), and most studies concentrate on issues of beauty, Romantic imagination, and aesthetics. This study underscores the influence of Keats's experiences with TB and mortality on his emotional and intellectual development. The study also shows the relationship between literature and psychology, through research on the emergence of emotional suffering as a source of artistic creativity. Beyond that, the study also offers some insight into the human experience, that of the universal fear of death, uncertainty, impermanence. It will be useful to students and researchers of Romantic poetry, of psychological literary criticism, and of nineteenth-century literature.

Delimitation of the Study

The study will be limited to selected poems and odes of John Keats, especially those that show symptoms of disease, death, sadness and psychological uncertainty. The main texts are: "*Ode to a Nightingale*," "*Ode on Melancholy*," "*When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be*," and "*To Autumn*." The research is specifically on the psychological and existential aspect of these poems instead of discussing the complete literary works of Keats and wider Romantic literature.

Literature Review

Introduction

In the following chapter, the research literature on illness, death, sadness and psychological unease in the poetry of John Keats is examined. A major Romantic poet, the poetry of Keats is deeply intertwined with beauty, imagination, suffering, death and the ephemeral nature of human existence. Tragic events in his life, his own experience of tuberculosis, and his medical training had a great impact on his poetic imagination. While critics in the past have commented on Keats as a poet of beauty and sensuousness, his poetry also displays a serious awareness of death and psychological distress. It is now necessary to explore previous critical perspectives on Keats's life, Romantic imagination, illness, death, melancholy and anxiety to set the groundwork for the current study.

John Keats and Romantic Poetry

The poet John Keats is considered to be one of the most significant poets of the second generation of English Romanticism. Romantic poetry was imagined, emotive, personal, beautiful, natural and felt (Abrams, 1999). The Romantic characteristics of these themes are evident in Keats's poetry, especially his focus on beauty, art, nature, and emotion. Keats's poetic success, Bate (1963) believes, is his capacity for making his own personal tragedy into art, making his own personal beauty into art. His poetry is not an easy out of feeling; it is an emotional and philosophical statement about life, death, and human shortcomings.

Aesthetic beauty and sensuous imagery are a frequent characteristic of Keats's poems. But all too often this beauty is linked to pain and death. Keats's poetry is consistently concerned, as Bloom (2007) notes, with balance between permanence and transience in humankind. This is particularly evident in his major odes where beauty both comforts and reminds of the transient nature of man. Hence, one cannot divorce Keats's romantic imagination from his perception of the suffering and death.

Illness and Tuberculosis in Keats's Life

Keats' illness had a profound influence on his personal and poetic life. Tuberculosis was a common and deadly disease in the nineteenth century, and Keats's family was deeply affected by it. He lost his mother and brother Tom to tuberculosis and later, Keats became ill with the condition himself. Smith (2004) reports that tuberculosis was very prevalent during Keats's life, and that the Keats family had suffered a number of losses due to the disease. This background led to a formidable sense of fear, grief, and uncertainty surrounding Keats's life.

Keats's medical education also helped him to be conscious of the human body, suffering, and death. Prior to his full focus on poetry, he attended medical school and practiced medicine in settings where he was exposed to sickness and suffering. As a medical student, Keats gained a first-hand perspective of pain and death, as summarized by Motion (1997). His medical knowledge enhanced his poetic writing about sickness, weakness, and mortality. Consequently, in his poetry, Keats frequently depicts the human body as fragile, impermanent, and susceptible to pain and suffering.

Mortality and Death Consciousness in Keats's Poetry

One of the main themes in Keats' poetry is death. A fear of death, a shortness of life, a wish for artistic

immortality are recurring themes in his poems. In "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be," Keats speaks directly of his fear that he will die before he accomplishes his work. "Poor soul! who washes his face twice, / Drops his feet upon the stones, / To seek for flowers that will not be! Poor soul! who washes his face twice / Drops his feet upon the stones / To seek for flowers that will not be! (Keats, 2009). The poem not only describes death as a biological occurrence but as a threat to creativity, love, and identity as well.

In "*Ode to a Nightingale*," Keats depicts human life as full of "weariness," "fever," and "fret" and the nightingale's song as a form of immortality. This poem has been read in many different ways, including as a reflection on death, escape and the finite nature of human life. The poem reflects the speaker's fear of consciousness, loneliness and death, and reveals that the nightingale's song is the only consolation to the human suffering. Likewise, Baker (1988) suggests that "*Ode to a Nightingale*" is a "multi-layered idea of escapism," in which a myriad seeming's of escape from the pain of existence are countered by the speaker's consciousness. So, the poem is a drama of the dilemma between imaginative flight and the terminal limitation of life.

Melancholy and Psychological Anxiety

Melancholy is another significant theme in Keats's poetry. His sadness is not just sadness but a profound psychological realization of the fragility of beauty, joy and human life. Keats proposes in 'Ode on Melancholy' that melancholy cannot be divorced from beauty and pleasure. The poem illustrates that happiness is fleeting and when one becomes aware to it, one experiences emotional agony (Keats, 2009). Beauty and sorrow are at the heart of Keats's poetic vision.

According to Tyson (2006), psychological criticism analyses the emotional conflicts, fears, desires, anxieties found in literary text. Read from this angle, Keats's poetry becomes a document of emotional angst over illness, death and insecurity. His poems frequently offer a voice that is caught between desire and loss, imagination and reality, beauty and decay. Garrett (2011) claims that Keats aesthetic experience is very much related to emotional vulnerability. So, in Keats poetry psychological anxiety is manifested as images of fading, silence, darkness, loneliness, and death.

Beauty, Art and the desire for immortality

In poetry, Keats has often juxtaposed mortality and immortality of art. In "*Ode on a Grecian Urn*" the urn is symbolic of the immortality of art and the impermanence of human life. The figures on the urn are forever frozen in time, in perfect beauty, but also in silence and in lifelessness. This is a tension between the draw of permanence, and the constraints of art, which is the theme of Stillinger's (1998) analysis of Keats's odes.

Immortality is also a theme in "*Ode to a Nightingale*," with the speaker picturing the bird's song as an endless song. This is, however, a conjured immortality and it does not negate the fact of human suffering. The speaker finally comes back to the awareness of himself as his own separate self. According to Bloom (2007), Keats's genius was the capacity to keep two conflicting thoughts in balance, never to simplify them into tidy conclusions. So, Keats doesn't offer art as a cure to life's mortality; he offers art as a quick, yet potent, answer to death and suffering.

Research Gap

Beauty, imagination, Romanticism, sensuousness and aesthetic philosophy have been extensively explored in relation to Keats's poetry. Keats's accomplishment and his handling of beauty and death have been commented on by critics such as Bate (1963), Bloom (2007), and Stillinger (1998). But there is still room for a focused study which will make the connections between illness, death and withering psychological anxiety in Keats' poetry. There are numerous studies on death or beauty, but fewer on

how the illness forces psychological anxiety in Keats and how it affects his treatment of death in his poetry. Thus, the present study will fill the void by examining some of Keats' poems from the perspectives of illness, death, and psychological anxiety.

Conclusion

From the literature examined, it is clear that illness, death, melancholy and the fear of impermanence are all significant factors in the reviewed literature and all have a significant impact on Keats's poetry. His own experience with TB, the loss of loved ones and his medical history gave him a keen understanding of human fragility. Keats has been acknowledged as a poet of beauty and imagination but his beauty is accompanied by suffering and death. The present study continues the work of the past studies by focusing specifically on the psychological anxiety that is created by illness and death consciousness in the selected poems of Keats. This chapter has supplied the background needed to analyze what is developed in the next chapter.

Methodology

Introduction

The present study entitled: Illness, Mortality, and Psychological Anxiety in the Poetry of John Keats presents a research methodology. This chapter aims to explain the research design, theory, research approach, data selection and data analysis methods employed in this study. The study will adopt the qualitative approach with the subject of literary text and psychological interpretation because the study emphasizes on the text itself and the psychologic understanding of the text. Selected poems of Keats are also analyzed to discuss the interrelated themes of illness, death, sadness, and mental fear.

Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. In the field of literary studies, qualitative research is frequently employed as it does not rely on numerical information but instead emphasizes interpretation, meaning, thematic analysis, and subjective analysis (Creswell, 2014). The paper examines the multiple ways in which illness, death, and psychological uneasiness are depicted in the poetry of John Keats and their role in his poetic imagination and emotional expression.

Research type is descriptive and analytical as it describes the selected poetic texts and critically analyzes the thematic and psychological aspect of the text. This study does not aim to gather statistical data, but it is based on discursive analysis of the literary meanings in text.

Research Approach

In this study a qualitative literary approach is used. Qualitative literary research emphasizes on reading and interpreting the text, symbolism, emotion(s), and theme(s) (Greenham, 2019). The study compares and contrasts selected poems by John Keats for signs of the presence of illness, death consciousness, melancholy, emotional suffering, and psychological anxiety.

The study is qualitative in nature because Keats's poems have emotional and philosophical complexities which can be analyzed through the interpretive approach. In this way, the study focuses on how Keats translates his internal agony and terror of death into art.

Theoretical Framework

The study uses psychological literary criticism and existential viewpoints. Psychological criticism focuses on the emotions, anxieties, fears, desires, and mental conflicts which are depicted in literary texts (Tyson, 2006). This framework can be used to examine the psychological aspects of Keats's poetry, such as his anxiety regarding death, his emotional fragility, his melancholy and his anxiety about illness and death.

Existential notions about death and impermanence, suffering and human fragility are also used in the

study. Existential thought focuses on the awareness of death among humans and the feeling of anxiety that arises from the knowledge of limited life (Earnshaw, 2006). Keats's themes often include a sense of mortality and transience, particularly in his exploration of the fragility of the human body and the inevitability of death. Such theoretical approaches are suitable for this study, as it deals with the emotional and psychological effects of disease and death in Keats's poetic imagination.

Method of Analysis

Close reading is the main method of analysis in the current research. Close reading is an intensive analytical process which involves an analysis of language, imagery, symbolism, tone, structure and thematic patterns in literature (Greenham, 2019). This approach allows the researcher the opportunity to investigate the emotional and psychological significance of Keats's poetry.

The analysis focuses on:

- Images related to illness, decay, suffering, and death
- Expressions of fear, melancholy, loneliness, and anxiety
- Symbolic representations of mortality and impermanence
- Contrasts between beauty and death
- The relationship between imagination and reality
- Emotional responses toward illness and human fragility

Through close reading, the study interprets how Keats's personal experiences with tuberculosis and mortality shaped his poetic language and artistic vision.

Data Selection

The main data collected for this study are selected poems and odes of John Keats. The poems are intentionally picked for their strong association with illness, death, suffering, sadness and the psychological anxiety they express.

The selected poems include:

1. *"Ode to a Nightingale"*
2. *"Ode on Melancholy"*
3. *"When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be"*
4. *"To Autumn"*
5. *"Ode on a Grecian Urn"*

These poems chosen are where important mentions of death consciousness, emotional suffering, impermanence and artistic immortality can be found. The chosen texts offer enough material for psychological and existential analysis from a psychological viewpoint.

The secondary data comprises books, journal articles, biographies, literary criticism, and scholarly studies on John Keats, Romantic poetry, psychological criticism, existentialism, illness and mortality.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique is applied for the study. Based on the goals and importance of the study, the text is selected using purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling method (Creswell, 2014). These poems have been chosen because they respond directly to the themes of illness and death, melancholy and psychological anxiety.

Purposive sampling is suitable as it is examining poems that best reflect Keats' emotional and psychological reaction to mortality and suffering.

Importance of Close Reading in the Learning of 4th Grade Learners

Close reading plays a crucial role in the analysis of Keats' poetry, given the packed imagery, symbolic language, emotional depth and philosophical complexity of his work. Keats frequently conveys suffering

psychologically, in metaphor, in sensory imagery, and in symbolism of nature, beauty, darkness and silence.

In "*Ode to a Nightingale*", for instance, fading, weariness, fever and human suffering are all images of death and emotional breakdown. Likewise, "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be" expresses fear of death before reaching creative fulfillment. These emotional and psychological connotations lie beneath the poetic language, and can be revealed through close reading.

Ethical Considerations

In the present study, all the literary texts and secondary scholarly sources are used. So, the research does not involve any human participants. Academic integrity in the form of appropriate citation and credit of all sources, both primary and secondary, has been maintained.

Delimitation of the Methodology

This study will not employ quantitative methods or reader-response surveys. The study is limited to a particular group of Keats' poems that manifest illness, death, sadness and mental concern in a particularly strong manner. The theoretical approach of the study is also limited to psychological criticism and existential analysis.

Conclusion

The methodology adopted in the present study has been explained in this chapter. The research is qualitative that uses literary approach of close reading and textual analysis. The study is theoretically grounded in the fields of psychological literary criticism and existential perspectives. Selected poems of John Keats are critically investigated to examine the role of illness, death and psychological stresses upon the poet's imagination and artistry. The textual analysis and discussion of the selected poems are presented in the next chapter.

Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents the textual analysis and discussion of selected poems by John Keats. The analysis focuses on the themes of illness, mortality, melancholy, and psychological anxiety reflected in Keats's poetry. Through close reading, the chapter examines how Keats transforms personal suffering, fear of death, and emotional instability into artistic expression. The selected poems reveal Keats's deep awareness of human fragility and the temporary nature of life.

Illness and Human Suffering in "Ode to a Nightingale"

"Ode to a Nightingale" is one of Keats's most significant poems dealing with suffering, mortality, and psychological anxiety. The poem reflects the speaker's emotional exhaustion and desire to escape the painful realities of human life. Keats writes:

"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk" (Keats, 2009, p. 209)

Right away these lines set a tone of physical pain and emotional suffering. "heart aches" and "drowsy numbness" indicate psychological depression and physical weakness. The word "hemlock" alludes to the poisonous plant of death, indicating the speaker's proximity to death. This is an emotional paralysis due to suffering and anxiety expressed in the language of Keats.

The poem also depicts human life as one of suffering and fragility:

"Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies" (Keats, 2009, p.

210)

These lines manifest sickness, aging, weakness and death. It is a striking portrait of young people getting "spectre-thin" which strongly implies tuberculosis, the illness which struck Keats and his family. The poem becomes an allegory for human suffering when it becomes personal. Keats makes life appear as if it will pass and have physical and emotional deterioration.

Mentally, the speaker tries to avoid suffering by imagining and the nightingale's singing that is immortal. This escape is however only temporary. The poem finally returns to the feeling of loneliness and uncertainty:

"Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?" (Keats, 2009, p. 214)

The concluding sentences show signs of mental disorder and disorientation. The speaker loses clarity between reality and imagination and reveals a sense of emotional anxiety that is generated by suffering and death.

Fear of Death in "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be"

"When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be" directly expresses Keats's fear of death and unfulfilled creativity. The sonnet reflects psychological anxiety caused by the awareness of limited time. Keats writes:

"When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain"
(Keats, 2009, p. 134)

The words 'cease to be' refer to death and 'teeming brain', to unexpressed poetic ideas and creative aspirations. Keats is afraid that he will not complete his artistic work before he dies. This is a fear of an existential nature as well as a fear of the self.

The poem also conveys anxiety about the loss of emotions and loneliness:

"And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more" (Keats, 2009, p. 134)

The words 'cease to be' refer to death and 'teeming brain', to unexpressed poetic ideas and creative aspirations. Keats is afraid that he will not complete his artistic work before he dies. This is a fear of an existential nature as well as a fear of the self.

The poem also conveys anxiety about the loss of emotions and loneliness:

"Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink." (Keats, 2009, p. 134)

This line is a statement of hopelessness. When it comes to death, the meaning of love and fame is lost. Keats shows that death is an entity which crushes human wants and aspirations to the ground.

Melancholy and Emotional Anxiety in "Ode on Melancholy"

"Ode on Melancholy" explores the close relationship between beauty, pleasure, and sorrow. The poem suggests that melancholy is an unavoidable part of human existence. Keats writes:

"Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine" (Keats, 2009, p. 217)

It shows that there is joy and there is sadness, in these lines. In Keats' opinion, pleasure is only temporary, and the realization of its potential evanescence induces sadness. Beauty and happiness are fleeting, causing psychological anxiety.

Anambra is also associated with beauty and death and decay in the poem:

"She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die" (Keats, 2009, p. 217)

This line is one of the main concepts of Keats' poetry: Beauty is transient. The inevitability of death – emotional pain, psychological suffering. The sense of impermanence increases Keats's melancholy.

The poem illustrates that suffering and beauty are not two unrelated entities but are intertwined. Here Keats uses melancholy to show a philosophical understanding of human life, and pleasure has the capacity to be as painful as loss.

Mortality and Impermanence in "To Autumn"

While "To Autumn" is not as frenetic as some of Keats's earlier poems, it is still a poem of mortality and transience. Fall is a season of maturity, decay and even death. Keats writes:

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" (Keats, 2009, p. 319)

The autumn season is rich and as well as being a sign of fulfillment and completion, it also indicates the end of life's cycle. Ripeness suggests a predictable decay and death after growth and beauty.

In the next line of the poem Keats states:

"Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too" (Keats, 2009, p. 320)

These lines express surrender to change, impermanence, Spring is the season of youth and vitality, Autumn is the season of old age and near death. In previous poems, the reader is charged with emotion and panic at the prospect of death; in "To Autumn", this is not the case. The sense of time passing, though, is integral.

The poem is psychologically mature because the tone of the speaker is no longer to try to run away from death altogether. Instead, He embraces the natural process of life and death.

Artistic Immortality in "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Keats juxtaposes human mortality and eternity in his poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The urn is a symbol of artistic immortality, as its beauty never ends. Keats writes:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." (Keats, 2009, p. 224)

The poem seems to imply that art lives on after man. The figures on the urn do not grow old or die like humans do. But their immortality is also lifeless, static. For Keats, artistic permanence is attractive and limited.

The lovers on the urn will not ever find the fulfillment that they are seeking:

"Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss" (Keats, 2009, p. 223)

The paradox of immortality is presented in this line. The figures are always beautiful but they can never have actual human life. Keats therefore describes art as a way to escape death in the short term, not in the long.

Metaphorically, the poem demonstrates Keats' wish to save beauty from death. But the poem also admits that art can't truly replicate the human condition and emotion.

Discussion

As seen through the poems selected, disease, death, and mental anguish are key themes of Keats's poetry. The tragic experience of tuberculosis and his family's repeated exposure to death, strongly shaped his emotional and artistic awareness. Fear, loneliness, melancholy, and uncertainty are psychological reactions to death that are repeated throughout the poems.

In "Ode to a Nightingale" she speaks about emotional breakdown and the escape from suffering through imagination. In the poem "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be", she expresses her fear of dying without reaching success as a poet. The poem "Ode on Melancholy" shows the beauty and the sadness of this life, and the poem, "To Autumn" shows a more peaceful admission of death. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn", the conflict between the ephemeral nature of human existence and the enduring nature of art is explored.

The poems explore Keats's attempt to comprehend suffering and impermanence in a psychological and existential manner. His poems, in their intensely personal ways, become universal reflections on the fragility of us all and emotional anxiety. Keats, ultimately, sees mortality not as a physical death but as a psychological state that affects human experience, imagination and artistic expression.

Conclusion and Findings

Introduction

This chapter concludes the study entitled, *Illness, Mortality, and Psychological Anxiety in the Poetry of John Keats*. The chapter draws out the core conclusions of the research and explores the ways in which sickness, death and emotional stress affect Keats's poetic imagination. It also points out the importance of the study, its constraints and suggestions for further studies.

The results of the study are summarized below.

The above study was an exploration of the themes of illness, death and psychological anxiety that occur in selected poetry of John Keats. The study focused on the effects that TB, family loss, emotional anguish and the threat of impermanence had on Keats' poetry. The research examined some of the selected poems using qualitative textual analysis and close reading methods, namely "*Ode on a Nightingale*," "*When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be*," "*Ode on Melancholy*," "*To Autumn*" and "*Ode on a Grecian Urn*."

This research work was conducted using the psychological literary criticism and existential approach. These theories were useful in the analysis of the emotional struggles, the fear of death, the sadness, and the anxiety of existence that are found in Keats's poetry. The analysis proved that Keats was able to convert his personal suffering and death into art and philosophy.

Key Findings of the Study

The results of the study show that the theme of illness and death is a recurring theme in the poetry of John Keats. His personal experience with tuberculosis greatly influenced his emotional and poetic consciousness. The poet Keats shows fear, uncertainty, melancholy, loneliness and emotional suffering due to knowledge of death in his poetry again and again.

In the analysis of "*Ode to a Nightingale*" was found that the poem is a reflection of the state of psychological exhaustion and the need to flee from the hardships of man by imagination. The images of pain, weakness, and death stem from Keats' emotional tension and sense of fragility of the body. The poem also illustrates that imaginative escape is not lasting, however, since the speaker does end up returning to the reality of death.

Another finding in the study was that "*When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be*" explicitly addresses anxiety about death prior to the artist's success. The poem is a reflection of Keats's anxieties about loss of creativity, love and identity due to the expiration of time and imminent death.

Likewise, "*Ode on Melancholy*" showed that Keats considers beauty and sadness to be two intertwined aspects of human life. The poem proposes that the psychological anxiety is born of the knowledge that beauty, pleasure and happiness are fleeting.

Analysis of '*To Autumn*' showed a greater mature and a peaceful acceptance of death. This poem is different because it does not express emotional panic and anxiety, but rather completely naturalises death as part of the natural cycle of life. In this study, the researcher concluded that Keats slowly progresses from resistance to the acceptance of impermanence.

Moreover, Keats's poem, "*Ode on a Grecian Urn*" showed his effort to juxtapose the fleeting human existence with the lastingness of art. The poem talks about artistic immortality that appears appealing but is still incomplete as art cannot offer a full human experience.

In general, the study concluded that Keats' poetry was a way of presenting personal illness and emotional suffering in the universal language of reflections on the nature of death, human fragility and existential fear.

Conclusion

The present study has found that three aspects of illness, death and psychological anxiety are very interconnected in John Keats's poetry. The emotional sensitivity and poetic imagination he developed were affected by his own experiences with tuberculosis and repeated contact with death. Keats's poetry is not only about death as physical death, but as a psychological or even an existential situation that influences human feelings, communication, creativity and awareness.

The study also finds Keats' answer to suffering and death as temporary: beauty, imagination, nature and art. But these factors do not end emotional unease, for the consciousness of impermanence still plays a key role in his poetry. There is always a conflict between fragility and permanency, between artistic immortality and emotional completion that is present in his poems again and again.

Furthermore, the research shows how Keats's greatness as a poet is his capacity to bring personal suffering to universal art. The human themes that underpin his poetry – fears of death, emotional anguish, solitude and the meaning of life in a fleeting existence – remain relevant to readers today.

Limitations of the Study

This study is only based on selected poems and odes of Keats which clearly exhibit the themes of illness, death, and mental tension. The research does not examine the complete poetic work, letters or prose writings of Keats in detail. In addition, only qualitative textual analysis is used and quantitative and reader-response approaches are not used. Theoretical frame is also restricted to psychological criticism and existential view.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further studies of Keats's poetry can be done from a psychoanalytical, trauma, ecological, or cognitive poetic lens. It is also possible to compare Keats with another Romantic poet, for example, Shelley, Wordsworth or Byron, in order to find out how they had reacted to mortality and suffering.

The connection between the medical history of Keats and his poetic imagery can be explored further. Further research is also warranted regarding Keats' letters, in order to gain insight into his psychological state and philosophical thinking on topics such as death, sickness and artistic immortality.

Final Remarks

Keats' supreme ability to make the poetry beautiful out of the suffering and death of his subjects makes him one of the most moving poets in the English language. The knowledge of sickness and death and impermanence sparked psychological anxiety, but heightened his artistic imagination. The beauty of Keats's poetry lies in its ability to evoke the complexities of human experience and the shared human experience of mortality, making it a timeless and relevant work for all readers and scholars.

References

- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition*. Oxford University Press.
- Baker, J. (1988). Dialectics and reduction: Keats criticism and the "Ode to a Nightingale." *Studies in Romanticism*, 27(1), 109–122.
- Bate, W. J. (1963). *John Keats*. Harvard University Press.
- Bloom, H. (2007). *John Keats: Bloom's modern critical views*. Chelsea House Publishers.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

- Earnshaw, S. (2006). *Existentialism: A guide for the perplexed*. Continuum.
- Garrett, M. (2011). *Aesthetic experience and Keats's poetry*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Greenham, D. (2019). *Close reading: The basics*. Routledge.
- Keats, J. (2009). *The complete poems of John Keats*. Modern Library.
- Motion, A. (1997). *Keats*. University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, H. (2004). The strange case of Mr. Keats's tuberculosis. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 38(7), 991–993.
- Stillinger, J. (1998). *The Cambridge companion to Keats*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Ward, A. (1963). *John Keats and the background of his poetry*. Routledge.