

Original Article

Exploring Aesthetic Philosophy in Romantic Poetry: Kantian and Hegelian Ideas in John Keats' Works

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the intersection of Kantian and Hegelian aesthetic philosophies in three major poems by John Keats: *Ode to a Nightingale*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *To Autumn*. Using qualitative-descriptive methods and close reading analysis, this study examines how the poetic imagery, emotional depth, and metaphysical reflections in Keats's poems resonate with Immanuel Kant's concepts of purposiveness without purpose, disinterested pleasure, and the universality of aesthetic judgment, as well as with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's ideas of the unity of the Ideal, the manifestation of Spirit (Geist), and beauty as the sensuous appearance of the Idea. The findings show that *Ode to a Nightingale* manifests Kant's disinterested contemplation, while also embodying the Hegelian notion of self-denial and the longing for unity with the Absolute. *La Belle Dame sans Merci* demonstrates the tension between subjective aesthetic pleasure and the Hegelian tragic conflict of desire, when the harmony between sensuous beauty and rational spirit collapses. In *To Autumn*, Keats presents a synthesis between Kantian harmony and Hegelian concrete universalism through balanced imagery of nature, so that beauty is present as both an experience and a conceptual unity. This study concludes that Keats's Romantic vision does not only favor one aesthetic framework, but rather presents a dynamic interaction between Kant's epistemological detachment and Hegel's metaphysical embodiment, which ultimately enriches the understanding of beauty, truth, and human experience in his works.

KEYWORDS: John Keats's poetry; aesthetic philosophy; Kant; Hegel; beauty; aesthetic experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aesthetics as a branch of the philosophy of art experienced rapid development in the late 18th to early 19th centuries, through many philosophers who contributed their ideas into this philosophical branch. The two influential figures who are highly relevant to understanding aesthetic experience are Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). In the work "Critique of the Power of Judgment," Kant argued that the judgment of beauty is subjective yet demands universality, then beauty arises from "disinterested pleasure" and from the free harmony between imagination and understanding (Kant, 2020). Kant elaborated deeply on aesthetic themes. He positioned aesthetics as an independent science. Furthermore, aesthetics not only aims to study the concept of art as art, but also relates to everyday human ethics and morality.

Meanwhile, a German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) who also provided a strong foundation for the development of modern aesthetics, occupies a central position in this regard. His aesthetic thought, expressed in his Lectures on Fine Art (*Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*), occupies an important

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position because it offers one of the most comprehensive aesthetic systems in the Western philosophical tradition. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is known for his contributions to philosophy, particularly in the development of absolute idealism. For Hegel, beauty is spiritual perfection manifested in the senses. He views art as a manifestation of Spirit (Geist) in sensory form. According to him, art is not merely a visual representation or beautiful form, but is a way for the Spirit to express itself and realize its freedom. Art is the "appearance of ideas," a form of unification between spiritual content (ideas) and material form (Hegel, 1975).

Just as aesthetics appear in various works of art, aesthetics also appear in works of poetry through their physical and inner structures, such as the use of diction, language style, and imagination, which aim to create beauty and meaning for the reader. As in English Romantic poetry (late 18th to early 19th century) has prominent characteristics, which are an emphasis on imagination, individual aesthetic experience, and nature as a means of reflection, as well as the search for deep inner meaning. For example, in the context of romantic English literature, John Keats (1795–1821) is one of the most prominent Romantic poets in articulating the complexity of aesthetic experience. Keats's poems not only present beautiful imagery but also reveal existential struggles, the tension between the sensory and ideal worlds, and the search for meaning through beauty. Keats's notion that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" forms a philosophical thread that both aligns with and challenges Kant's and Hegel's ideas on aesthetics (Keats, 2018).

Keats's three major works *Ode to a Nightingale*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *To Autumn* offer a rich field for exploring the relationship between Kantian and Hegelian aesthetics. *Ode to a Nightingale* demonstrates the pursuit of human transcendence through intense aesthetic experience, echoing Kant's notion of disinterestedness and resonating with Hegel's aesthetic spirituality of the Spirit's movement toward freedom. *La Belle Dame sans Merci* depicts the tension between the illusion of beauty and tragic reality, which can be read as a Hegelian dialectic of the tension between phenomenon and essence. Meanwhile, "*To Autumn*" represents the harmonious union of nature and human consciousness, in accordance with the Kantian principle of cognitive harmony and the Hegelian principle of beauty as the unity of idea and form.

While numerous studies have discussed Keats within the framework of Romanticism, few have comprehensively integrated two major philosophical frameworks Kant and Hegel to analyze the aesthetic ideas in Keats's major poems. Through this approach, research can reveal how Keats is not merely a poet expressing Romantic aesthetics, but also a thinker who intuitively interacts with universal philosophical ideas about beauty, human experience, and artistic representation. Based on this description, this research is important because it provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between literature and philosophy, enriches interpretations of Keats' work, and develops a more integrative aesthetic analysis through a dialogue between Kantian, Hegelian, and Romantic poetic expression.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Poetry

Poetry is one of most popular literary works nowadays. Inherently, poetry is a literary form that is usually told and learnt by the public. According to Riffaterre, the language of poetry differs from common linguistic usage for these reasons, 1. Poetry often employs words excluded from common usage, and 2. Poetry has its own special grammar, and even the grammar is often invalid or incorrect (not standard). Poetry is a unique form of literature, because it combines and uses words to convey meaning and communicate ideas, feelings, sounds, gesture, rhyme, rhythm signs, figurative language, imagery and symbols (176). The form of a poem is an arrangement of words on a page. It is usually used to differentiate one poetry to another, especially in differentiating the genre of the poem itself. The poetry has genre lyric, narrative, and dramatic. Those genres are common and popular in public. Moreover, each type has its own character that expresses the poet's feelings, thoughts, and imagination. The term genre refers to a mode of writing that follows certain literary rules or conventions that have come down to the poet through custom and use, The term genre is used both broadly and specifically (Miller and Greenberg, 158). In narrative poetry, It includes such types as the epic, romance, and ballad because all primarily tell a story; within the category of dramatic poetry, it classifies plays, such as Hamlet and Oedipus Rex, as well as soliloquies, monologues, and dialogues, to the extent that they represent characters (other than the poet) in conflict. In the most inclusive of the three genres, lyric poetry, it places poems such as hymns, meditations, songs, elegies, odes, and most sonnets, because they tend to have a strongly subjective core and are devoted primarily to the expression of an emotion or thought or of a reflection on experience (159). Reading a poem will enable the readers to interpret or reveal the meaning behind the arranged words. The reader must have tried to correlate the meaning of the poem and its philosophical context inside the poem.

2.2 Aesthetic Philosophy

Literary works are rich in values. This leads people to respond based on their own understanding of the work (Guerin vii). In responding to literary works, people apply one or more approaches depending on the aspect

they focus on. This study applies the ideas of Immanuel Kant and Hegel's Aesthetic Philosophy. Wilbur Scott stated that "art is not created in a vacuum" (646). Likewise, literature cannot be created without the influence of other things. Fundamentally, literature is always influenced by many factors, such as the social environment, the author's experiences, the author's ideology, and the author's memories when creating the literary work. Etymologically, the word "aesthetics" was first widely used through the work of German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten (1735-1954). The root of this word comes from the Greek *αἰσθητικός* (aisthetikos), which refers to sensory perception and experience (Westenberg, 2021:13). Furthermore, Westenberg explains that from this perspective, aesthetics is concerned with the study of something perceived through the senses, in a broader sense, rather than something merely imagined or thought about. The object of aesthetic study must be partly sensory. And of course, aesthetics, in its most fundamental sense, is about human experience of things in the world. Specifically, aesthetics is concerned with the degree of attractiveness or enjoyment of something, for example when asking whether an experience is pleasant or unpleasant.

2.3 Immanuel Kant's Aesthetics Idea

Immanuel Kant's seminal work, *The Critique of Judgement (Kritik der Urteilkraft)*, published in 1790. It is generally regarded as the foundational treatise in modern philosophical aesthetics. Aesthetics is about the study of something sensed, in a broad understanding of that word, rather than something imagined or reasoned. The object of Aesthetics study is at least in part sensorial. Aesthetics in its most fundamental sense is about the experience of things in that world. It is about their level of pleasantness, when asking about whether an experience is pleasant or unpleasant. (Kant, 2020) The theoretical framework in Kant's Aesthetics idea following four "moments" of a "judgment of taste":

- 1) **Disinterested Pleasure.** An aesthetic judgment of beauty is "disinterested," it is independent of any personal desire, utility, or moral interest in the object. The pleasure is purely contemplative, not a desire to possess the object. This contrasts with pleasure in the "agreeable" in other words, it is based on (personal sensation and interest). They are disinterested, which means taking pleasure in something because we judge it beautiful, rather than judging it beautiful because we find it pleasurable. The latter type of judgment would be more like a judgment of the "agreeable"
- 2) **Universal yet Subjective.** Although an aesthetic judgment is based on a subjective feeling of pleasure, it claims universal validity. When someone calls something "beautiful," they expect others to agree, even though this expectation isn't based on an objective concept or rule that can be proven. This shared capacity for judgment is rooted in the idea of a "common sense" (sensus communis) among all human beings.
- 3) **Purposiveness without Purpose.** Beautiful objects appear to be purposive or object designed with a purpose but do not have an actual, determinate purpose or function. The form of the object itself, in its harmony, evokes a feeling of finality, a "purposiveness without purpose". This "free play of the imagination and understanding" in the subject creates the pleasure associated with the beautiful.
- 4) **Necessity.** The next aspect is that a judgment of taste carries a sense of necessity, a "should". This means one feels that others *ought* to experience the same pleasure and agree with the judgment, reinforcing its claim to universal communicability.

Kant argued his case regarding aesthetics in a series of four "moments" or theses, each of which develops sets of arguments. He summarized the findings of each: First Moment *Taste* is the faculty of judging an object or a method of representing it by an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called *beautiful*. Second Moment The *beautiful* is that which pleases universally without requiring a concept (i.e. a reason). Third Moment Beauty is the form of the *finality* (or *purposiveness*) of an object, so far as this is perceived in it *without any representation of a purpose*. Fourth Moment The *beautiful* is that which without any concept is cognized as the object of a *necessary* (i.e. universal) satisfaction (or delight).

2.4 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Aesthetic theory

In the view of Hegel, aesthetics is the philosophy of art, art as a manifestation of Spirit. He argues that Art is a way for the Spirit to express beauty and truth. The Sensual Radiance of the Idea: Beauty is the sensory manifestation of the "Idea," or spirit, when the spiritual and the material are united. The Evolution of Art: Art is not static, but rather undergoes a dynamic historical process, evolving alongside humanity's understanding of itself and the world. Hegel's concept of aesthetic philosophy is divided into several parts, Art is the expression of ideas; it is not only physical beauty, but also a sensory manifestation of spiritual freedom and rational understanding. Hegel was particularly influenced by Winckelmann, Kant, and Schiller. Hegel's thesis of the "end of art" had already been a focus of attention for Heidegger and Adorno. Hegel's philosophy of art resulted from a broad examination of beauty in art, the historical development of art, and the arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. Hegel classified aspects of nature, animals, and plants as more beautiful than inanimate objects, although the soul of animals is hidden by features, hair, scales, and so on. This ranking influence

aesthetic appreciation; for example, a stone will be less valuable than a statue, regardless of their relative quality (Crawford, 1993). Hegel placed natural beauty in a very low position compared to human art.

In Hegel's view, art as a form of the reality of the "Absolute Spirit" (Geist) is dialectically expressed through various stages. Art is the first stage of the "absolute spirit," followed by religion, and finally, philosophy. Art provides a sensory manifestation or reflection of the Absolute, making the "Idea" or spiritual content accessible to human consciousness through concrete, sensory forms. Furthermore, beauty as the "sensory manifestation of the Idea" differs from Kant's earlier theory, which focused on subjective taste. Hegel introduced an objective conception of beauty. A work of art is considered beautiful when its physical appearance perfectly aligns with the spiritual content it seeks to convey. Furthermore, the "End of Art" Thesis, a controversial thesis, does not mean that art has literally ceased to be produced. Rather, Hegel argued that art, by its very nature as a sensory expression, is no longer the highest means for modern, "mental" humans to comprehend the Absolute. Thus, Hegel divides the historical development of art into three stages of art, with regard to the relationship between spiritual concepts and their physical manifestations: **First, Symbolic art:** Found in ancient Eastern civilizations, this stage displays an imbalance where the concept is too abstract for its form. Examples include pyramids or multi-armed gods, where the form does not fully correspond to the idea it represents. **Second, Classical art:** Exemplified by ancient Greece, this stage is a stage of perfect balance between form and content, with the human form used to represent the divine and spiritual. According to him, this represents the highest point of artistic beauty. **Third, Romantic art:** Emerging with Christianity, this stage reflects an inner change. The unity of form and content is broken as art becomes more focused on the expression of individual consciousness, inner spirituality, and the incomprehensible (Crawford, 1993).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative research, which focuses on deeper understanding of the ideas of aesthetic philosophy on Kantian and Hegelian's view points in John Keats's romantic poems under the lens of Literature and Thought. According to Bogdan and Biklen qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people and observable behavior (23). The philosophical approach is used to examine literary works that try to examine the aesthetic connect literary works with philosophy. The main aim of the research is to explore the meanings in John Keat's works. The romantic period contained poems such as stanza and line. The result is based on the poem interpretation through aesthetic philosophy study. **Source of Data of the research** are the texts of poems consisting of words, phrases or diction, lines and stanzas of the poems. The source of the data of the research are taken from John Keat's selected poems that were written in the romanticism era, some of them are *Ode to a Nightingale*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *To Autumn*. Meanwhile data Collection follow some steps: Steps to collect the data that needed to be examined namely: first, reading and understanding Keat's poems. The second, reading the aesthetic ideas from Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's perspective to know the feeling of love, desire eternity and destiny in King that affect the content of the poems. The third, reading the sources of philosophical approach. The fourth, collecting and categorizing the appearances of the Element of poetry in the poems. The last step is categorizing and analyzing the data based on the topic of the research. The next is **data analysis**, after the researcher collected data from the text of the poems as the main data, then the researcher analyzes those data. According to Miles and Huberman, there are several steps to analyze data such as data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Huberman and Mile 429). Data reduction is the process of reducing the data which have been collected. The data were selected more specifically in order to answer the research problem. In this step, researcher did 2 steps, which were: Collecting the data from: Reading *Ode to a Nightingale*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *To Autumn* by John Keats. Beside that Selecting data will be done by selecting data related to aesthetical philosophy in the poems. Then, Identifying related data about the aesthetics philosophy in *Ode to a Nightingale*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *To Autumn* by John Keats. Meanwhile data display is the process of describing and analyzing data. In this step, the form of data display that the researcher used is the description form. The data that had been selected by the researcher, those data will be analyzed based on the related theories which are presented. In drawing is the process of concluding the data after those had been analyzed. In this last step, after all of the data have been valid and relevant in answering the research questions, then the conclusion will be drawn. Those steps are the processes of describing and analysing data into the analysis. After the analysis is done, then it is necessary to reread carefully what has been written to make this study acceptable research..

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Aesthetic ideas of Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, On *La Belle Dame San Merci*, *Ode to Nightingale*, and *To Autumn* are explained through the following analysis:

4.1.1 Disinterested Pleasure

Kant asserted that "pure" aesthetic judgment occurs when one experiences beauty without being driven by personal interest or emotional impulses, in *La Belle Dame San Merci* poem, line: "Full beautiful — a faery's child,/Her hair was long, her foot was light..." (Keats: 14-15). The reader can enjoy the illustration of beauty presented in lines 14 to 15 without having to desire the woman, become the knight, or enter into an emotional relationship with him. Keats uses the metaphorical side, namely the woman is compared to "a faery's child" to suggest an otherworldly, or magical beauty. Beauty is presented as something to be enjoyed purely, even though the knight-narrator himself is emotionally entangled. Symbolically "light foot" means *grace, freedom, and a spirit that cannot be captured*. However it can be said that the reader enjoys aesthetic distance, while the knight fails to maintain that distance. This is where aesthetic tension arises. Keats presents the female figure as a faerie creature, an erotic figure, with an aesthetic entity that moves within the realm of imagination. By making this woman a fairy. Keats distances the reader from the aesthetic experience: not out of a desire for possession, or emotional connection, and not for moral value, but rather for visual and atmospheric beauty. The image of the "fairy's child" creates a distance that draws the reader into disinterested contemplation.

4.1.2 Purposiveness Without Purpose

In this lyric, beauty appears to have a purpose or design, but that purpose is not directed toward practical use and function, but rather simply to present a harmony of forms that pleases the imagination and understanding. This beauty arises not from function, but from a harmonious order formed without interest. In the opening lines of *Autumn* poem: *Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,/Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun* (Keats:1-2). A figure of speech is used in autumn personifying the sun as a "friend." This creates the impression that nature seems to have a purpose or goal, even though it does not. Readers may perceive this harmony as an "aesthetic goal," not a biological process. This creates a sense of purposiveness and aimlessness. There is also the personification "conspiring," giving the impression of purpose, without any real purpose. This gives the impression of purpose, but without any real purpose. *Conspiring with him how to load and bless / With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;* (Keats : 3-4). The depiction of nature seemingly "conspiring" to contain and bless the fruit creates a sense of planned order. However, the reader does not understand this as a scientific explanation; but rather as an aesthetic construct that presents beauty. The purpose is apparent, but has no practical function, or it is purely imaginative. The next illustration, showing the perfection of fruit ripeness seems to convey a purpose and design for beauty. *The moss-covered cottage trees bend with apples,/And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;* (5-6) The biological purpose of fruit ripeness is indeed for plant reproduction. However, in the line, ripeness is presented not as a function of nature, but as a visual and sensory perfection that satisfies the reader's imagination. Beauty emerges from the impression of "forming harmony." Kant's concept in the lines:

*And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.* (9-11)

This seems to represent the realm of aesthetic experience; objects appear to have a purpose, pattern, and plan, but are not actually directed toward any practical goal. These goals only "appear" to the imagination, not actual goals. The next, illustration can be found in the following lines:

*Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.* (Keats, 24-34)

Spring songs consist of spontaneous natural sounds such as the humming of gnats, the bleating of sheep, the chirping of crickets, the red-breasted, and the river shallows. These sounds appear organized, as if they were all "arranged" and designed as a natural orchestra. There is harmony, rhythm, and atmosphere, but there is no purpose. Gnats do not sing for people. Crickets do not intend to create music, while lambs bleat because of biological nature. However, human perception interprets and identifies all these sounds as the "music of autumn." In Kant's perspective, this is what is meant by subjective purposiveness, where we perceive order and purpose, but in reality it has no purpose. In addition, the lines show the main elements of Romantic aesthetics are

characterized by: the cult of nature, subjectivity, imagination, sensory sensitivity, and contemplation of time and mortality. For example: nature is personified by clouds "blossoming," the day "dying softly," the light "touching" the fields. Keats views nature not as a physical object, but as a living phenomenon with aesthetic expression.

4.1.3 Universal Yet Subjective

Universal yet Subjective is a term that refers to something that is universally applicable or understandable to many people in various contexts but at the same time remains subjective, that is, influenced by personal point of view, knowledge, experience, or interpretation. In John Keats' "*Ode to a Nightingale*,"

*My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees (1-7)*

Although this experience is subjective, in Kant's aesthetics, judgments of taste still demand universal validity: when someone utters a beautiful or moving expression, they implicitly expect others to experience it as well, including the feeling of fantasy and the forgetting of fatigue, suffering, and pain.

The feeling of melting away, being swept away, numbness, is an emotional experience anyone can feel when faced with something incredibly beautiful or aesthetically intoxicating. The image of sinking *Lethe-wards* (towards the river of forgetfulness) expresses a shift in consciousness that can be universally understood as a metaphor for ecstasy or escape. Keats expresses a deeply personal experience but uses symbols that allow his readers from different backgrounds to share it. This is what Kant called a subjectively grounded yet universally communicable feeling.

4.2 Hegel's Aesthetics Philosophical Ideas

4.2.1 Manifestations of Spirit (Geist)

Hegel's aesthetic philosophy, art and poetry can be considered manifestations of Spirit or Geist, reflecting the spirit and sensory awareness of humankind. The poem "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**" depicts the conflict between idealism and human reality, expressed through feelings of love and suffering. This tells the story of a knight enchanted by La Belle Dame, a beautiful woman who ultimately leaves him in a state of grief. La Belle Dame is a symbol of transcendent yet unattainable beauty. It is a manifestation of a higher idea of the ideal woman in the knight's imagination, which of course remains distant, like the distance between imagination and reality.

*She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four." (Keats, 29-32)*

These lines show how a man, in his attraction, idealizes a woman, but he does not realize that it is only a tentative, ephemeral, and fleeting romantic illusion. The visual imagery of the "elfin grot" can lead the reader's imagination to a temporal place: a small, dark, and mystical cave, with a fairy-world atmosphere, a strange and confusing place. This is the initial form of the Spirit trying to merge with the physical, but ultimately experiencing inner tension and suffering. Furthermore, "Wept and Sigh Full Afternoon" uses hyperbole to create an exaggerated emotional image, as if the elfin woman is experiencing inhuman sadness, a captivating yet frightening charm.

In "*Ode to Nightingale*" poem, Aesthetic Unification, deals with Spirit Achieves Universality Through Art. Hegel saw art as the highest form of Absolute Spirit before religion and philosophy: art produces an experience in which the subject can merge with the universal without losing himself. In Keats's poem, this unification occurs through the song of the nightingale:

*"Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy..." (Keats, 31-33)*

The line "I will fly to thee" presents a metaphor. The word "fly" is not a literal meaning, but a metaphor. The poet's imaginative escape into the nightingale's realm such as the realm of beauty, and artistic ecstasy. "Fly" signifies a shift in consciousness beyond the body into an aesthetic space. Keats is "lifted" into the aesthetic realm not through physical intoxication, but through "poesy" the power of imagination and art. The lines 31-33 align with Hegel's idea of the manifestation of Spirit (Geist). The poet's desire to "fly to thee" is not a physical movement, but

rather a spiritual urge to leave a world filled with pain, anxiety, and mortality, towards a more universal dimension. Keats's rejection of "Bacchus and his pards" is crucial within the Hegelian horizon, as Bacchus symbolizes the flight of the body and the sensual pleasures that Hegel deems incapable of bringing the Spirit true freedom. He chooses a more spiritual medium: "the viewless wings of Poesy." When Keats says that he will fly on the "invisible wings" in the poem, he is stating that art is not only a means of expression, but also a vehicle for transcendence. Through poetry, the poet's subjective spirit seeks to unite with the objective Spirit embodied in poetry, a voice that in the ode appears as a symbol of eternity, continuity, and the universality of nature. In line with Hegel's aesthetics, this passage shows how art functions as a manifestation of spirit that allows humans to experience freedom, wholeness, and reunification with the "universal," represented in this poem by the immortal nightingale.

4.2.2 Beauty as a Unity of Ideas

Beauty is not merely something that pleases the five senses, but rather the unity of idea and form. Beauty is the unity of idea and form. In "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**," the beauty seen in the woman is physical. Ultimately, the knight is trapped in a state of beauty and profound suffering. The beauty of La Belle Dame unites external, physical beauty with an inner beauty that the knight cannot comprehend.

*"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!'" (Keats, 37-40)*

There is a tension between La Belle Dame's physical beauty (form) and the hidden reality (idea). The "pale kings, princes, and warriors" reflected in these lyrics depict a fallen hero, a powerful figure who is initially influenced by the idea of La Belle Dame's love and beauty, but ultimately falls victim to the illusion. Besides, hyperbole is evident in the image of the shadowy king, prince, and great knight, all "death-pale," implying universal decay. This is not a literal condition, Keats exaggerates the Lady's fatal effects to show how destructive her charms are.

In **Ode To Nightingale**, within Hegel's aesthetic framework, beauty is Beauty as a Unity of Ideas, namely the harmonious unity between sensory form and the universal idea embodied within it. So the poet's personal experience is united with a more universal meaning through the medium of the nightingale's voice. It unites subjective and universal experience, nature and spirit, mortality and eternity, and pain and ecstasy. The poem begins with a subjective experience of suffering in the lines "*My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains/My sense...*" (Keats, 1-2) "but is quickly lifted by the presence of the nightingale, which brings spiritual happiness: "*'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, / But being too happy in thine happiness.*" (Keats, 5-6) The poem calls the bird an "immortal Bird!" and asserts that "*No hungry generations tread thee down.*" (Keats, 61). This expression is not intended biologically, but rather as a symbolic creation, as the bird represents the Idea of Eternity. Here, the unity between the individual, the concrete bird and the universal eternity, spirit, and permanence is realized, in accordance with Hegel's idea that art elevates sensory objects to represent something higher. Beauty occurs when natural phenomena become the "glimmer" of Spirit.

The culmination of Hegelian aesthetics is seen when Keats experiences a transcendental encounter with the world of the nightingale, which unites imagination, nature, and spirit. He writes, "*Already with thee! tender is the night...*" (Keats, 29) as if his consciousness has shifted into the spiritual space conveyed by the bird's call. Keats's imagination becomes a bridge through which sensory forms (night, moon, leaves, sound) merge with the universal idea of detachment from the human world filled with "*The weariness, the fever, and the fret...*" so that the aesthetics of the night become a manifestation of the Idea.

In **To Autumn** poem, it can be examined on The Unity of Concrete Nature and the Universal Idea of the Cycle of Life. According to Hegel, beauty arises when sensory objects radiate universal truths. Autumn in this case is not just a season, but a universal idea of maturity, time, and the continuation of life. Keats begins with a very concrete sensory image: "*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,/Close bosom friend of the maturing sun;*" (Keats, 1-2). Here, Keats unites physical phenomena (mist, ripening fruit) with a cosmic relational idea ("close friend of the sun"). For Hegel, this is the ideal form when nature is not a passive object, but the expression of a higher idea: the harmonious relationship between nature and time. Beauty arises because meaning (idea) and form (description of nature) are not separate but interpenetrate. Moreover, Keats personifies inanimate objects as if they had human characteristics. "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness/Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun," seems like that autumn is treated not as a natural phenomenon, but as an entity with a mellow and fruitful character. Meanwhile Autumn is personified as the sun's close friend. This phrase bosom-friend suggests emotional closeness, as if Autumn and the Sun were working together to ripen fruit. This personification transforms the seasons into active figures collaborating with the universe.

4.2.3 Romantic Art and Subjective

La Belle Dame sans merci as a romantic poetry, Hegel explained that Romantic art is a period in which subjectivity, emotion, and individuality are the primary focus. The figure of La Belle Dame and the knight's interaction with her are heavily influenced by the knight's subjective experience, who is captivated by the woman's beauty.

"Full beautiful—a faery's child,"
"Her hair was long, her foot was light,"
"And her eyes were wild." (Keats, 14-16)

Here, the knight sees the woman not simply as an ordinary human being, but as a fantastic creature, "a faery's child" who comes from another world, transcending physical reality. The knight perceives the *full beautiful* woman as a creature from a magical realm, not an ordinary human being. In the Hegelian view, this is the dominant form of spiritual and imaginative expression in Romantic art. The knight's "*Full beautiful—a faery's child*," the meaning beyond La Belle Dame's physical appearance, through "*Her hair was long, her feet were light, and her eyes were wild.*" "*Eyes were wild*" (Keats, 15-16) describes the madness or freedom in the eyes of the knight, who is trapped in his emotional experience. Then, the metaphorical meaning of the line "a faery's child" suggests that the girl is depicted as a fairy-like creature, a metaphor that implies supernatural beauty, purity, and inhuman allure.

Keats, through *Ode to a Nightingale*, demonstrates the form of romantic art as understood by Hegel: art that explores inner depths, longing, suffering, and the desire to transcend the material world. Escape from the Sensual World is a Characteristic of Hegelian Romantic Art. This is described Romantic art as art that withdraws from the sensory world and seeks escape into the spirit. Keats demonstrates this through his desire to leave the material world:

"That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim." (Keats, 19-20)

The aesthetic experience is no longer a direct connection with nature, but a desire to transcend reality into the world of imagination and spirit. The word "drink" contains metaphors, not only in its literal sense (drinking wine), but also as a metaphor to express a form of escape from reality, a search for poetic ecstasy, and a desire to enter a transcendental state. In Keats's context, "drink" refers to wine, but also symbolizes aesthetic pleasure and a momentary forgetting of worldly concerns. Besides, the nightingale becomes a symbol of spiritual immortality, while Keats finds himself in the world of mortal human suffering. Hegel called this phenomenon: "*The withdrawal of the spirit into its own inwardness.*" Nature as a medium for the Subjective Spirit in Romantic art, nature is no longer seen as a beautiful external object, but rather as a mirror of the subject's inner being, onto which the spirit projects its feelings. Keats combines descriptions of nature with inner moods, not just physical observations, as in the lines:

"Season of mist and gentle fertility,
Close bosom-friend of the ripening sun;"
"Close bosom-friend" (Keats, 1-2)

Romantic Art and Subjectivity in Hegel's aesthetics, where art's inner subjectivity, spirituality, and profound feelings become the center of the experience of beauty. Beauty is no longer centered on external physical forms as in classical art, but on subjective human experience, deepest feelings, and immaterial spiritual relationships. This line presents the nature of Romantic aesthetics through the depiction of the intimate relationship between the seasons and the sun.

4.2.4 Aesthetic Dialectical Movement

In Hegel's view, Thesis is a seductive and alluring beauty, symbolized by *La Belle San Dame*. The woman's beauty captivates the man, drawing him into an idealized world filled with romantic desire and fantasy:

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four." (Keats, 21-24)

In relation to Hegel's Aesthetic Dialectical Movement, the aesthetic dialectic in Hegel's Romantic art encompasses three processes: First, the Thesis, which represents sensual beauty and mysterious attraction. In the lines, the fairy-woman is represented as a beautiful and enchanting figure, with gentle actions and intimate relationships, as well as with her supernatural world. All of these are moments of attraction, the beginning of the

aesthetic dialectic. Next, the Antithesis, which shows suffering, threat, and imbalance. The beauty displayed is immediately shaken by contrasting elements or things. "She wept and sighed full of soreness," while "wild, wild eyes" indicated danger and restlessness. Furthermore, the elfin grot is a dark, unfamiliar place, full of potential threats. Hegel calls this the moment of negation, when external beauty is insufficient to support inner depth. Meanwhile, Synthesis, the pseudo-human-supernatural Union "With kisses four," represents a moment of temporary union: the knight touches, closes the fairy's eyes, the human and supernatural worlds momentarily merge, but this leads to subsequent destruction. This Synthesis is unstable, as part of an aesthetic dialectic that then leads to collapse, namely the fact that the knight is abandoned and destroyed.

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side." (Keats, 41-44)

The man awakens from the illusion to find himself wounded and neglected, left weak and lonely. This antithesis shows that the initially beautiful charm has become a source of destruction for the man, who now feels only despair. Meanwhile, synthesis or Awareness of Finitude and Impermanence, is a new understanding that arises from the contradiction between beauty and destruction. The man, after going through this experience, finally realizes that beauty is inseparable from suffering and impermanence. This captivating beauty brings awareness to a world full of contradictions and limitations.

4.3 Discussion

In this section, the researcher moves on to the discussion chapter. The researcher discusses the research findings in depth by connecting them to the aesthetic theoretical frameworks of Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, as well as the characteristics of Romantic aesthetics in John Keats's poetry. Overall, the research findings indicate that Keats's three poems, namely *Ode to a Nightingale*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *To Autumn*, not only showcase the beauty of nature and imagination but also function as a philosophical space where Kantian and Hegelian ideas interact dynamically. Keats embodies Romantic aesthetics, such as subjectivity, imagination, and closeness to nature, as a philosophical reflection on humanity's relationship to beauty, truth, and existential experience. Furthermore, Kant's aesthetics demonstrates that the author presents an aesthetic experience aligned with the four "moments" in the judgment of taste. First, the concept of disinterested pleasure is evident in *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, where readers can appreciate the beauty of the female figure without having to engage emotionally or pragmatically like the knight in the story. Second, purposiveness without purpose is strongly present in *To Autumn*, particularly through the personification of nature, which seems to create harmony and order without any practical purpose. The phenomenon of fog, the colors of dusk, the sounds of insects, and the depiction of the ripening seasons demonstrate how readers perceive aesthetic "purposes" that actually serve no function other than to satisfy the imagination. Third, Keats also demonstrates universal yet subjective validity in *Ode to a Nightingale*, particularly through the poet's emotional experiences, which are individual yet universally understandable to readers. The experiences of ecstasy, forgetfulness, melancholia, and the contemplation of beauty exemplify how subjective feelings can still be universally communicated, in accordance with Kant's concept of (*sensus communis*).

Meanwhile, findings on Hegelian aesthetics demonstrate that Keats established a close relationship between sensory forms and universal ideas, so that beauty emerges as the union of idea and form. In *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, the depiction of the woman's beauty serves not only as a physical description but also as a representation of transcendental ideas of attraction, danger, and illusion. Furthermore, the image of the knight lost in the woman's charm reflects Hegel's dialectical tension between phenomenon and essence. In *Ode to a Nightingale*, Hegel's idea of art as a manifestation of Spirit (*Geist*) is seen through the poet's experience of transcendence into a universal dimension through the song of birds. Keats not only describes sensations but also shows an inner journey to a higher spiritual realm, in accordance with Hegel's concept of Romantic art. *To Autumn* also demonstrates the union between the concrete forms of nature and universal ideas of the cycle of life, maturity, and time. Through personification and imagination, Keats elevates natural phenomena as a medium for the expression of universal ideas, a key characteristic of beauty within Hegel's aesthetic framework. It is also interesting that Keats displays characteristics of Romantic aesthetics in all three of his poems. Romanticism emphasizes subjectivity, emotional intensity, a spiritual connection with nature, and the search for transcendence. The experience of escapism, the struggle between reality and ideality, and the search for meaning through beauty are all part of the aesthetic dialectic as formulated by Hegel.

In *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, for example, the dialectic between charm (thesis), suffering (antithesis), and new awareness (synthesis) demonstrates a distinctive aesthetic movement within Hegel's framework. This reinforces the interpretation that Keats, through poetic language, intuitively brings to life the dialectical flow between beauty, illusion, and self-awareness. Therefore, this discussion demonstrates that Keats not only presents

descriptive Romantic beauty but also elevates beauty as a complex philosophical experience. Keats's poetry serves as a meeting ground between Romantic subjectivity and the universal notions of beauty proposed by Kant and Hegel. Compared to previous studies, this research has a different focus and fills a gap in research that has not been widely explored. For example, Chang Zheng's study focuses more on Kantian readings of Keats's poetry, particularly emphasizing the concepts of disinterestedness and negative capability, thus tending to straddle the analysis solely through Kant's perspective. Meanwhile, Andrzej Warminski's study focuses on the relationship between Hegelian aesthetics and Keats's poetry, particularly in the poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn," focusing on the concept of Geist, art history, and the form-content relationship. Şebnem Nazlı Karalı's study contributes through a comparison between Kant and Hegel, but her study is limited to a single poem and fails to demonstrate how the two aesthetic frameworks operate simultaneously within Keats's overall aesthetic development.

Therefore, this study fills this gap in previous research in several ways: First, it does not choose a single philosophical framework but rather combines both Kantian and Hegelian aesthetic approaches in an integrative way to interpret three of Keats's major poems. This dual approach can broaden insights for a more comprehensive reading of Keats's works, revealing the dynamics of Keats's aesthetics, from the tension of Kantian subjectivity to the unification of ideas and forms in Hegelian aesthetics. Second, this study broadens the object of analysis to three poems: *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, and *To Autumn*, resulting in a more comprehensive aesthetic mapping, less partial than previous research. Third, this study not only compares theories but also shows how both aesthetic theories emerge progressively and dialectically within Keats's poetic structure, from the experience of ecstasy and escape, illusion and suffering, to spiritual harmony in nature. Thus, the research gap filled by this study lies in its attempt to unite two major aesthetic traditions (Kantian and Hegelian) in a broad and contextual poetic analysis, proving that Keats not only reflects Romanticism but also presents a philosophical space that allows for dialogue between aesthetic subjectivity and the manifestation of ideas. Such an approach has not been attempted in previous research, making this study an important contribution to enriching the study of literary aesthetics and philosophical criticism in Romantic poetry.

5. CONCLUSION

This research shows that John Keats's poetry contains a strong blend of Romantic aesthetics with the philosophical ideas of Kant and Hegel, particularly regarding aesthetic experience, subject-object relations, and the dialectic between reality and ideality. Through a reading of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, and *To Autumn*, it can be concluded that Keats not only creates images of natural beauty and imagination, but also transforms them into philosophical reflections on human limitations, transcendence, and the process of self-union with the world. First, the influence of Kantian aesthetics is evident through Keats's emphasis on aesthetic experience as "disinterestedness" and the search for beauty as a form of pure pleasure that remains within the boundaries of human consciousness. In *Ode to a Nightingale*, the poet's experience of listening to a nightingale demonstrates a contemplative moment in which imagination is carried beyond its limits but is ultimately brought back by reason. The poem *To Autumn* presents the clearest example of Kantian "pure beauty": an aesthetic that celebrates objects for themselves without any practical purpose. Poetry, in Hegelian aesthetics, is the art form closest to the spirit because its medium is language not solid matter like sculpture or color like painting. Language is a light body for ideas, making poetry the most "spiritual" of the arts, the one most capable of revealing the depths of Geist.

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