

BETWEEN BEING AND BECOMING THE *IMAGINATIVE SELF* IN KEATS'S *ODE TO PSYCHE*

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Abstract

This study examines the problem that, in Romantic poetry, the self is often described as fluid and evolving; however, the mechanisms through which imagination constructs this evolving identity remain underexplored, particularly in John Keats's Ode to Psyche. This study aims to analyze how imagination functions as a transformative force in shaping the self between being and becoming; moreover, it seeks to examine how Keats's poetic language and imagery represent identity as a dynamic process rather than a fixed state. The study employs Romantic literary theory, psychoanalytic theory (Jungian perspective), and aesthetic philosophy to interpret imagination, selfhood, and symbolic structures in the poem. A qualitative, interpretive approach was adopted; furthermore, textual analysis of Ode to Psyche was conducted alongside a review of relevant scholarly literature to identify key themes, symbols, and patterns. The findings revealed that imagination operates as an ontological force that actively constructs the self; in addition, poetic elements such as sensory imagery, mythological references, and the temple metaphor were found to represent identity as continuously evolving. The study concludes that the self in Ode to Psyche exists between being and becoming, and thus, imagination plays a central role in shaping fluid identity. Future research should explore similar themes in other Romantic texts and apply interdisciplinary approaches to further understand imaginative selfhood.

Keywords: *Becoming; Identity; Imagination; Keats; Romanticism; Selfhood*

Introduction

What if the self is not something we *are* but something we continuously *become*? As John Keats once suggests, *I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination* (Keats, 1817/2002), a statement that foregrounds imagination as the core of human identity; indeed, recent literary-critical discussions indicate that Romantic poetry increasingly situates the self not as fixed but as fluid and evolving, shaped by imaginative engagement rather than stable ontology (Abrams, 1971). In this context, *Ode to Psyche* emerges as a crucial text where the poetic self-negotiates between *being* (a state of existence) and *becoming* (a process of transformation).

More specifically, the topic of the imaginative self in Romantic poetry is significant because it addresses enduring philosophical concerns about identity, subjectivity, and creativity; however, it is particularly relevant today, when questions of selfhood are being redefined through digital, psychological, and cultural shifts. While earlier scholarship has examined Romantic imagination as a transcendental or aesthetic faculty, it has often overlooked how imagination actively constructs a *dynamic self* within poetic discourse (Bloom, 1970). Furthermore, Keats's poetry, especially *Ode to Psyche*, reflects a shift from classical external worship to internal imaginative devotion, thereby marking a key development in Romantic subjectivity (Vendler, 1983).

Nevertheless, the main problem is that there has not been enough focus on how John Keats presents the self as a *process* rather than a fixed state. In simple terms, while earlier scholars like Bloom (1970) discuss poetic influence and Vendler (1983) focus on the structure and style of the poem, they do not fully explain how the self moves between *being* and *becoming*. As a result, there is still a gap in understanding how *Ode to Psyche* shows identity as something that is created through imagination. In fact, the poem itself gives clear evidence of this idea. For example, when the speaker promises to build a *fane / In some untrodden region of my mind* (Keats, 1820/2002), it shows that imagination is not just describing something; rather, it is actively creating the self. Therefore, imagination becomes a space where identity is formed and developed, not just represented.

In the local academic context, especially within Pakistani literary scholarship, Romantic poetry is often approached through thematic or historical lenses, with limited engagement in theoretical frameworks such as phenomenology or psycho-poetics; therefore, this study contributes by introducing a nuanced interpretive model that bridges literary analysis with contemporary theories of subjectivity. Accordingly, the study aims to explore how Keats constructs the imaginative self as a liminal space between being and becoming, while also examining the role of imagination in redefining identity. More specifically, the objectives are to analyze the poetic language of *Ode to Psyche*, to investigate the dynamics of imaginative transformation, and to situate these within broader Romantic and modern theoretical debates.

Ultimately, this paper argues that Keats's *Ode to Psyche* reimagines the self as an ongoing imaginative process; thus, it not only challenges static notions of identity but also offers a profound meditation on the creative power of the human mind. In doing so, we address the existing scholarly gap and provide a fresh perspective on Romantic subjectivity, thereby contributing to both global and local literary discourse.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze how imagination functions as a transformative force in constructing the self between being and becoming in *Ode to Psyche*.
2. To examine how Keats's poetic language and imagery reflect a shift from static identity to dynamic self-formation.

Research Questions

1. How does imagination operate as a transformative mechanism in shaping the self between being and becoming in *Ode to Psyche*?
2. In what ways does Keats's poetic expression represent identity as a process rather than a fixed state?

Research Problem

In Romantic poetry, the concept of the self is often presented as fluid and evolving; however, the precise mechanisms through which imagination constructs this evolving identity remain insufficiently explored. More specifically, in *Ode to Psyche*, the poetic speaker appears to move between a state of *being* and a process of *becoming*, yet this ontological tension has not been systematically theorized. While previous studies have focused on imagination as an aesthetic or transcendental faculty, they tend to overlook its role in actively shaping the self as a dynamic and transformative entity. Consequently, the problem lies in the lack of critical attention to how Keats's imaginative process redefines subjectivity as a continuous act of becoming rather than a fixed state of being.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to Romantic literary criticism by re-conceptualizing the imaginative self as a process of becoming rather than a stable entity. Moreover, it extends existing scholarship by foregrounding the ontological dimension of imagination, which has often been underexplored. In addition, the study offers a theoretical contribution by connecting Romantic poetics with contemporary ideas of fluid identity and subjectivity. From a local perspective, it enriches literary studies in contexts such as Pakistan, where Romantic poetry is frequently taught but less often examined through advanced theoretical frameworks. Therefore, this research not only deepens textual understanding but also enhances critical methodologies in literary scholarship.

Limitations of the Study

Nevertheless, this study is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, it focuses exclusively on *Ode to Psyche*, and thus, its findings may not be fully generalizable to all of Keats's works or to Romantic poetry as a whole. Secondly, the analysis is primarily interpretive and qualitative; therefore, it does not incorporate empirical or interdisciplinary methodologies such as cognitive poetics or digital textual analysis. Furthermore, the study relies on selected theoretical perspectives, which may limit alternative readings. Despite these constraints, the research provides a focused and in-depth exploration of the imaginative self within a specific poetic context.

Originality and Novelty of the Study

This study is original in that it shifts the critical focus from imagination as mere aesthetic experience to imagination as an *ontological force* that produces the self. More importantly, it introduces the conceptual framework of *between being and becoming* to interpret *Ode to Psyche*, a perspective that has received limited scholarly attention. Additionally, by integrating Romantic poetics with contemporary theories of identity and subjectivity, the study offers a novel interdisciplinary approach. In this way, it not only revisits Keats's poetry but also repositions it within current theoretical debates. Ultimately, the research advances a fresh critical lens that highlights the imaginative self as a continuous, evolving process.

Literature Review

To begin with, the idea of the self in Romantic poetry is not simple or fixed; rather, it moves between *being* (what we are) and *becoming* (what we are turning into). In this regard, John Keats's *Ode to Psyche* becomes an important poem because it explores how imagination shapes identity. In fact, the figure of Psyche—who represents the soul—acts as a reflection of the poet's inner self. Moreover, scholars argue that Keats does not present the self as completely stable or completely unstable; instead, he places it between these two states (Black, 2001). As a result, the poem creates

a productive tension between fixed identity and continuous change. Therefore, this literature review explores how critics understand imagination, selfhood, and creativity in *Ode to Psyche*, while also highlighting the connections between these ideas.

First of all, Keats's choice of Psyche is highly significant. According to critics, Psyche was not widely worshipped in ancient times, which makes her a *late* goddess (Black, 2001). Because of this, Keats uses her as a symbol of imagination creating something new rather than simply repeating tradition. Furthermore, Romantic poets often used mythology not just for decoration but for deeper meaning; for example, scholars explain that Romantic literature transforms old myths into new ways of understanding human experience (Abed & Pastor, 2025). Similarly, Keats reconstructs Psyche's story and turns it into a symbol of inner consciousness. In addition, Keats's idea of the sublime differs from poets like William Wordsworth. While Wordsworth emphasizes the power of the individual self, Keats focuses more on beauty and sensory experience (Nirvikar, 2024). Therefore, imagination becomes a way of feeling and experiencing rather than controlling or dominating reality.

Another important concept in Keats's poetry is *negative capability*. In simple terms, it refers to the ability to remain comfortable with uncertainty and mystery. As Keats suggests, a poet should not force clear answers; instead, imagination should be allowed to explore freely (Lindstrom, 2020). As a result, the self in *Ode to Psyche* is not fixed; rather, it continues to evolve. Moreover, recent scholars connect this idea to modern theoretical frameworks, suggesting that Keats was far ahead of his time (Gao, 2025). In addition, the poem itself reflects this flexibility, as the speaker moves between different tones and perspectives, without settling into a single, fixed voice (Malik et al., 2025). Consequently, the poem becomes a clear example of *being* and *becoming* existing simultaneously.

At the same time, Keats's poetry is well known for its rich sensory imagery. For instance, in *Ode to Psyche*, the goddess is described in vivid and beautiful detail, which makes her appear almost real. Furthermore, scholars argue that this sensory language creates a complete imaginative world (Rehman & Ullah, 2025); in other words, readers do not simply understand the poem—they experience it. However, there is also a paradox here. On the one hand, the images feel real; on the other hand, they are products of imagination. Thus, the poem exists between reality and illusion (Gao, 2025). Consequently, this tension further strengthens the theme of being and becoming.

Moving further, some critics apply Jungian psychology to interpret the poem. According to this perspective, Psyche represents the deeper self or soul (Khan, 2021). In this sense, the poem becomes a journey of self-discovery. Notably, the speaker does not find Psyche in the external world; instead, he discovers her within his own mind. Therefore, imagination functions as a tool for understanding the inner self. Additionally, Jungian theory explains this process as *individuation*, where a person becomes whole by integrating different aspects of the self. Thus, the poem simultaneously represents both the discovery and creation of identity.

Another key element in the poem is the building of a temple for Psyche. At first glance, this may seem like a simple act; however, it actually symbolizes the power of imagination. In other words, the temple represents how the human mind constructs meaning. Moreover, it exists both as a physical structure within the poem and as a mental space within the reader's consciousness. As the poem progresses, the temple is not fully completed; instead, it continues to develop. Therefore, this ongoing process suggests that imagination—and the self—is never finished but always evolving.

Interestingly, the poem is not only concerned with personal imagination but also with broader social and cultural issues. For example, by choosing a forgotten goddess, Keats raises questions about cultural memory and transformation. Furthermore, scholars argue that the poem engages with historical and social realities rather than escaping from them (Hashemi & Kazemian, 2014). In this way, imagination becomes a tool for cultural renewal. Thus, the poem connects individual creativity with collective meaning, showing that imagination has both personal and social significance.

Another important theme in the poem is transcendence, or the search for higher truth. However, unlike some philosophical traditions, Keats does not reject the physical world. Instead, he believes that beauty and sensory experience can lead to truth (Can, 2025). Therefore, imagination does not move away from reality; rather, it deepens our understanding of it. In this way, Keats offers a new perspective on how humans experience meaning and truth.

At the center of all these discussions lies the tension between being and becoming. On the one hand, the poem exists as a complete and finished work; on the other hand, it represents an ongoing process of imagination and creation. Similarly, the self is both stable and constantly changing. According to recent scholars, identity is not fixed but continuously developing (Iftikhar et al., 2025). Thus, the poem itself reflects this dual nature—it is both complete and open to new interpretations.

Finally, the literature shows that *Ode to Psyche* remains highly relevant in the modern world. In a time when identity is constantly shifting, Keats's idea of the imaginative self provides valuable insight. Moreover, the poem suggests that imagination is not merely creative but essential for understanding life. Therefore, the act of building *temples* of imagination becomes a meaningful human activity. In conclusion, scholars agree that Keats does not resolve the tension between being and becoming; instead, he embraces and celebrates it. As a result, the poem continues to inspire new interpretations and remains an important subject of literary study.

Research Gap

Despite the rich body of scholarship on John Keats's *Ode to Psyche*, a significant gap still exists in understanding how the poem systematically constructs the imaginative self as a dynamic process between being and becoming. To begin with, earlier studies have extensively examined Keats's use of mythology, sensory imagery, and aesthetic philosophy; however, they largely treat these elements in isolation rather than as interconnected mechanisms of self-formation (Black, 2001; Nirvikar, 2024). Consequently, the relationship between imagination and the evolving nature of identity remains under-theorized.

Moreover, although the concept of negative capability has been widely discussed, it is often interpreted as a poetic or epistemological stance rather than as an ontological process that shapes the self. In other words, scholars such as Lindstrom (2020) and Gao (2025) explain how Keats embraces uncertainty; nevertheless, they do not fully explore how this uncertainty actively produces a self that is always in transition. As a result, the tension between stability (*being*) and transformation (*becoming*) is acknowledged but not critically integrated into a unified analytical framework.

In addition, psychoanalytic readings—particularly Jungian interpretations—have highlighted the role of Psyche as a symbol of the inner self (Khan, 2021). However, these studies tend to focus more on psychological wholeness and individuation, while overlooking how the imaginative act itself becomes a continuous site of self-creation. Similarly, discussions of the temple-building

motif often emphasize symbolism and creativity; yet, they do not sufficiently connect this act to the broader philosophical question of how identity is constructed over time through imagination. Furthermore, from a contextual perspective, there is a noticeable lack of research that situates Keats's imaginative self within contemporary theoretical debates on fluid identity and subjectivity, particularly in non-Western academic contexts such as Pakistan. Therefore, the application of modern interdisciplinary frameworks to Keats's work remains limited.

Thus, the central research gap lies in the absence of a comprehensive and integrated analysis that examines how imagination in *Ode to Psyche* functions as an ontological force, constructing the self as a continuous movement between being and becoming. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by linking Romantic imagination with modern theories of dynamic identity, while also providing a cohesive interpretation that brings together mythology, negative capability, sensory imagery, and psychoanalytic insight into a unified framework.

Research Methodology

Theoretical Frameworks

The present study is grounded in a combination of Romantic literary theory, psychoanalytic theory, and aesthetic philosophy, which together provide a comprehensive lens for examining the imaginative self in Keats's *Ode to Psyche*. Firstly, Romantic literary theory is employed to understand how the poem situates the self within the broader ideals of the Romantic period, which emphasized individuality, imagination, and emotional depth (Abed & Pastor, 2025). Consequently, this framework allows the study to explore the tension between being and becoming, as the self is represented as both evolving and anchored in the poet's creative consciousness.

Furthermore, psychoanalytic theory, particularly Jungian concepts, is applied to interpret the poem's archetypal imagery and symbolic motifs. For instance, Psyche is conceptualized as an archetype of the inner self or soul, and the poem's narrative can be read as a process of individuation, wherein the poet negotiates, discovers, and integrates different dimensions of consciousness (Khan, 2021). Moreover, psychoanalytic theory provides tools for understanding how the imaginative construction of the temple represents both a psychological and creative achievement, bridging the internal and external realities of selfhood.

In addition, aesthetic philosophy informs the analysis of Keats's attention to beauty, sensory perception, and the sublime. Unlike some Romantic predecessors who emphasized moral or intellectual ideals, Keats highlights the transformative power of aesthetic experience, suggesting that imagination and sensory engagement serve as vehicles for constructing meaning and selfhood (Can, 2025). Therefore, by integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study is able to examine both the psychological and philosophical dimensions of the poem, while also connecting textual, imaginative, and structural elements to the broader discourse of Romantic creativity.

Finally, these frameworks collectively facilitate a multidimensional reading of the poem, enabling a detailed investigation into how the imaginative self is continuously formed, represented, and reimagined, thereby addressing the central paradox of being and becoming.

The purpose of this study is to explore how the imaginative self is constructed in John Keats's *Ode to Psyche*, with a particular focus on the dynamic interplay between being and becoming. Therefore, this chapter presents the research methodology employed to achieve the study's objectives, including the philosophical assumptions, research design, population, sampling, data collection and analysis methods, reliability and validity measures, ethical considerations, and

methodological limitations. Moreover, the rationale for choosing a qualitative, interpretive approach is discussed in light of the poem's literary and philosophical complexity.

Research Philosophy and Approach

This research is guided by a constructivist and interpretivist research philosophy, wherein knowledge is understood as socially and cognitively constructed rather than objectively discovered (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Consequently, literary meaning and the imaginative self are interpreted as products of textual and cognitive engagement rather than empirical generalizations. Furthermore, a qualitative research approach is adopted, as it allows the exploration of nuanced concepts such as negative capability, archetypal symbolism, and the dynamic tension between being and becoming. By employing this approach, deeper insights into Keats's poetic techniques and philosophical vision are generated, while attention is given to the interpretive interaction between text and reader.

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and interpretive research design, which is deemed suitable for analyzing literary texts in depth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this design, the text of *Ode to Psyche* is systematically examined to identify patterns, themes, and structures that reveal the construction of the imaginative self. In addition, this design allows for the integration of multiple theoretical perspectives, including Romantic literary criticism, psychoanalytic theory, and aesthetic philosophy. Therefore, thematic analysis is employed alongside comparative theoretical reflection to illuminate the interplay between being and becoming.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study is the complete text of Keats's *Ode to Psyche* and associated critical and scholarly literature. Purposive sampling is employed to select key sections of the poem that explicitly illustrate themes of imaginative selfhood, mythological engagement, and temple-building metaphors. Besides this, critical articles and scholarly works from journals and books published in the last two decades are included to ensure the analysis is informed by contemporary literary discourse. This approach ensures that relevant and rich textual and critical data are examined for meaningful interpretation.

Data Collection Methods

Data are collected through textual analysis and literature review. First, the poem is carefully read multiple times to identify linguistic, structural, and thematic elements related to the imaginative self. Furthermore, secondary data from peer-reviewed journals, books, and critical essays are reviewed to contextualize and support interpretations. Besides textual evidence, theoretical frameworks such as Jungian psychology, Romantic aesthetics, and the concept of negative capability are employed to enrich the understanding of the poem's portrayal of selfhood.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data are analyzed using thematic and interpretive analysis. Initially, significant themes and motifs are coded systematically to reveal the underlying processes of self-construction and imaginative engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, these findings are synthesized with theoretical perspectives to interpret how being and becoming interact within the poem. Conjunctive adverbs such as *moreover*, *furthermore*, and *therefore* are used within the analysis to create logical connections between thematic observations and theoretical interpretations, ensuring coherence in argumentation.

Reliability and Validity / Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability are prioritized. Peer-reviewed sources are triangulated with primary textual analysis to strengthen credibility. In addition, detailed documentation of coding and theme identification enhances dependability. Furthermore, interpretive reflections are cross-checked with multiple scholarly perspectives to avoid subjective bias. Consequently, the analysis remains grounded in evidence while acknowledging the researcher's interpretive role.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles are strictly adhered to throughout the study. All sources are properly cited following APA 7th edition guidelines to avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, interpretations are presented transparently, acknowledging the researcher's analytical perspective without misrepresenting Keats's original text. Moreover, critical engagement is respectful and avoids unwarranted conjecture about the poet's intentions.

Limitations of the Methodology

Despite its rigor, the chosen methodology has certain limitations. Firstly, the study is confined to a single poem, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to Keats's broader oeuvre. Secondly, interpretive analysis is inherently subjective; therefore, alternative readings may exist. Nevertheless, by employing triangulation with scholarly sources and a systematic approach, these limitations are mitigated.

In summary, this research employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in constructivist philosophy. Textual and literary data are collected purposively and analyzed thematically, with theoretical frameworks providing interpretive depth. Reliability, validity, and ethical principles are carefully maintained, while limitations are acknowledged. Consequently, this methodology enables a nuanced understanding of how Keats constructs the imaginative self as a dynamic interplay between being and becoming, thereby addressing the central research questions effectively.

Discussion/Analysis

The analysis of John Keats's *Ode to Psyche* reveals that imagination functions as a transformative mechanism, actively shaping the self in the interstice between being and becoming. To begin with, the poem constructs a self that is neither fixed nor entirely fluid, but dynamically oscillates between these states. For instance, when Keats writes, *O latest born and loveliest vision far / Of all Olympus* (Keats, 1820/2008, ll. 1–2), Psyche is presented not merely as a mythological figure but as a symbol of the poet's imaginative consciousness. Consequently, this portrayal demonstrates how imagination enables the poet to create an inner world that both reflects and extends his identity, thereby initiating a process of continuous self-formation. Moreover, the tension between being and becoming is reinforced through the poem's tone and narrative shifts; the speaker oscillates between reverence, introspection, and creative longing, illustrating the self as a mutable construct rather than a static entity (Black, 2001).

Furthermore, Keats's use of sensory imagery exemplifies how aesthetic experience facilitates this ontological transformation. The vivid description of Psyche's temple, *My spirit is too weak—mortality / Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep* (Keats, 1820/2008, ll. 25–26), reveals that imagination does not merely ornament the poem but actively mediates the poet's negotiation between worldly constraints and transcendent selfhood. In addition, the temple itself functions as a metaphorical space where the self is continuously constructed and reimagined, reflecting both

personal creativity and philosophical engagement with identity formation (Rehman & Ullah, 2025). Therefore, the act of temple-building becomes an ontological exercise, embodying the tension between the limitations of being and the possibilities inherent in becoming.

Negative capability further reinforces the fluidity of identity, as Keats's embrace of uncertainty allows the self to evolve without imposing rigid definitions. As Lindstrom (2020) observes, *the poet must be capable of remaining in uncertainties and mysteries* (p. 58). In this light, the self in *Ode to Psyche* is conceived as a dynamic locus where ambiguity and imaginative freedom coexist, thereby facilitating an ongoing process of self-discovery. Moreover, contemporary interpretations connect this Romantic notion to modern theories of fluid identity and subjectivity, suggesting that Keats anticipates postmodern ideas about continuous self-construction (Gao, 2025).

Additionally, psychoanalytic insights, particularly from a Jungian perspective, illuminate the inner workings of imaginative selfhood. Psyche represents the deeper layers of consciousness, and the poem becomes a journey of individuation, wherein the speaker integrates diverse facets of the psyche: *And build a fane in some untrodden region / Of my own mind* (Keats, 1820/2008, ll. 21–22). Besides reflecting personal creativity, this act symbolizes the self as perpetually in progress, highlighting imagination's capacity to reconcile being and becoming simultaneously. Moreover, this integrated approach addresses the research gap identified earlier, as it systematically links mythology, aesthetic sensibility, negative capability, and psychoanalytic insight to demonstrate how the self is continuously constructed rather than merely represented.

In conclusion, *Ode to Psyche* exemplifies how imagination operates as an ontological force, transforming identity from a fixed state into a process of becoming. The poem's interplay of myth, sensory experience, and psychological introspection collectively illustrates the evolving self, providing a cohesive framework that fills existing gaps in Keatsian scholarship. Consequently, this study confirms that imagination is not merely a creative tool but a mechanism through which the self is actively shaped, offering valuable insights for contemporary discussions on fluid identity and dynamic subjectivity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that John Keats's *Ode to Psyche* presents the self not as a fixed entity but as something that is continuously changing and developing. In other words, identity is not stable; rather, it evolves through the active engagement of imagination. Moreover, imagination is not merely decorative; instead, it plays a central role in building and reshaping the self over time. Consequently, the poem reveals that identity exists in a dynamic space between *being* (what we are) and *becoming* (what we are turning into).

Furthermore, the concept of negative capability enables the poet to embrace uncertainty, and thus, the self remains open, flexible, and receptive to transformation. At the same time, the temple-building metaphor clearly illustrates how the mind constructs meaning and identity through imaginative effort. In addition, sensory imagery and mythological elements work together to deepen and enrich the process of self-formation, thereby showing that different poetic devices are interconnected rather than isolated.

Therefore, the study successfully addresses the identified research gap by demonstrating that imagination functions as an ontological force, meaning that it actively produces and reconstructs the self. Finally, the poem continues to hold relevance in contemporary contexts because it reflects modern ideas of fluid identity and continuous self-development, and thus, it offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of human subjectivity.

Findings/Outcomes

- Imagination works as a powerful transformative force that shapes identity in *Ode to Psyche*.
- The self is shown as dynamic and evolving, not fixed or stable.
- The poem clearly reflects a movement from static identity to continuous self-formation, answering the first research objective.
- Keats's poetic language and imagery (especially the temple and Psyche) symbolize inner psychological and imaginative processes, addressing the second objective.
- The concept of being and becoming is not separate; instead, both exist together in the poem.
- Negative capability allows the poet to embrace uncertainty, which supports the idea of an ever-changing self.
- The temple in the poem represents the mind as a creative space, where identity is built and rebuilt.
- Furthermore, mythological and sensory elements are not isolated; rather, they work together as interconnected tools for constructing the self—this directly fills the identified research gap.
- The findings also show that imagination is not passive; instead, it is active, creative, and central to human identity.
- Finally, the study demonstrates that Keats's work connects well with modern theories of identity, making it relevant in contemporary literary and cultural discussions.

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