

This thesis follows the already traditional approach of M.H. Abrams to romantic aesthetics, tracing the romantic ideal of beauty in relation to Burkean and Kantian notions of the sublime and, to a much smaller extent, also the grotesque. It also uses Umberto Eco’s book *On Beauty*, to set the interpretation in a wider historical context. Evidently, this is a very demanding topic for a BA thesis, yet it must be acknowledged that Kateřina has worked hard to come to terms at least with some inherent problems.

The indisputable contribution of her analyses of the aspects of the beautiful in *Lyrical Ballads*, is showing that Wordsworth and Coleridge do not envisage the ideal as a generally valid synthesis of beautiful features of individual objects, characters of phenomena, but that they pursue Burkean dialectics of the sublime and the beautiful, developing it in specific and dramatic terms. Wordsworth and particularly Coleridge recreate the beautiful in a productive tension with the sublime, but whereas the former mostly uses the sublime for the mere purpose of contrast, in order to highlight the highly individual concepts of beauty (especially that of maternal love), the latter pursues a dialectical synthesis of the beautiful with the sublime, which is especially evident in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”.

The shortcomings of Kateřina’s approach are to a great extent due to her initial incapacity to formulate her topic in a more specific way. “The Ideal of Beauty” is a very general theme indeed, and it will remain so even when restricted to the 23 poems of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* as well as to the 1800 Preface. Perhaps a systematic view of the handling of the beautiful and the sublime both in Wordsworth’s and in Coleridge’s poetry around 1798 would help the interpretation to see the relationship of the sublime and the beautiful in a more complex and adequate way. This is mainly evident in the case of Coleridge, where the space remained only for rather short mentions of “Christabel” and “Kubla Khan” and some important earlier poems, such as “The Aeolian Harp” (seminal for the interpretation of “The Nightingale”) were not discussed at all. Similarly, the interpretations of “The Foster Mother’s Tale” and “The Dungeon” would gain by the discussion of these fragments in a wider context of the use of the sublime in Coleridge’s drama *Osorio* and even in its later version, *Remorse*. Also, Wordsworth’s descriptive and reflexive poetry in *Lyrical Ballads* could be interpreted in the context of the earliest version of his *Prelude* (1799). Finally, apart from dealing with Wordsworth’s poetics in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, it would be useful to dedicate more space to the synthetic nature of Coleridge’s organic aesthetics in *Biographia Literaria*, in order to highlight the differences of both approaches.

In spite of these problems, which are mostly caused by the width and complexity of the topic, I must appreciate Kateřina’s efforts to cope with individual problems arising in the course of her research and her hard work in dealing with some topics she had very little or no knowledge before, such as the development of eighteenth-century aesthetics. I recommend her thesis for the defence and propose to grade it “velmi dobře” (very good).

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