Abstract

The thesis presents R. M. Rilke’s attempt to rehabilitate human speech, which can be found in Duino Elegies and Sonnets to Orpheus. Starting with implicit questions, such as whether our sensual world is a product of our arrangement, or in what way the inner experience corresponds to external knowledge (i.e., he deals with the relation of the experiencing person and the experienced object), he eventually focuses on the relation between knowledge and language.

The examined author could provide a new point of view on the theory of knowledge, namely on the certainty of knowledge, which is permanent, contrasted to the value of experience, which is ephemeral. His view on the problem of knowledge is based on the analysis of language, which he examines from the perspective of a poet who does not, nevertheless, consider verses for emotions but for experience.

The poet analysed the relation between knowledge, experience and language already in his early poems, the so-called Dinggedichte in a relationship their realization. In his late and the most famous two anthologies (Duino Elegies and Sonnets to Orpheus), Rilke tries to introduce the world of an artist who could adopt a new attitude to language. When seeking this new perspective, R. M. Rilke makes effort to deal with the duplicity of speech – authentic speech, in which action occurs, and secondary speech (casual, empirical), in which nothing has been or will be actually expressed, although the vocabulary is equally rich. The new attitude of the artist should be reflected in the fact that the secondary speech is transformed in the authentic speech, so that the thing which the artist depicts (in the case of a poet by language) becomes permanent and capable of being eternal. The thing thus treated should mediate between the ephemeral experience and the permanent knowledge.