

English summary

This dissertation focuses on the apocalyptic fiction of Thomas Pynchon and analyses various representations of the apocalypse as “revelation” or “unveiling of truth” in its various aspects and manifestations (i.e. paranoia, angels, etc.) in the novels *V.*, *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*. The theme of apocalypse as a revelation concerning the true nature of the world has a key role to play in the above mentioned novels as well as significance for Pynchon's protagonists. This is so despite the fact that such revelation is depicted as illusory and mostly unattainable, since these novels are all based on the premise that there is no ultimate truth, and therefore, there is nothing that can be revealed. Pynchon's characters get only a revelation of individual truth, and thus theirs is a private apocalypse.

When analysing the role of the apocalypse in Western culture, it is also important to analyse the role of millenarian expectations as well as the supposed communication process between God and people, a process depicted as being mediated by angels. The interpretation of God's message can never be precise and perfect, since its meaning is distorted during the communication process. On the rhetorical level, this distortion is equal to metaphor, which in turn causes feelings of paranoia because of metaphor's inherent ambiguity. However, paranoia in Pynchon's novels is elevated to the status of a creative principle. Due to the fact that there is no universal truth, Pynchon's characters have to create their own world and find their own way through the text.

The second part of this dissertation deals with the apocalyptic elements of 9/11 in American culture. It offers a historical outline of fiction that thematizes 9/11. It also includes an analyses of selected novels (by Don DeLillo, Jonathan Safran Foer, Ken Kalfus, Paul Auster and John Updike) dealing with this topic. The aim here is to explore to what extent 9/11 can be considered an apocalyptic event in these novels, and whether or not 9/11 serves as an agent for revelation of truth, even if this revelation may be of only an individual interpretation.