Abstract
The aim of this diploma thesis is to explore the possible influence of the idea of the end of the world on the process of conquest and colonization of America. The author tries to answer this question through the study of selected images of the Last Judgment. The purpose aim of this thesis is not to describe or stylistically classify given works of art, but to interpret them using the methodology based on the semiotic conception of culture as public symbolical system that allows to interpret the culture and its expressions in their social connections. As the topic of this work is related to the question of death and finality, the chosen works of art are interpreted also in connection with A. van Gennep’s idea of „rites of passage“, which enables to pass from one life stage to another. The main source for analysis is the photographic material, which illustrates images and reliefs of the Last Judgment in their natural environment.