



ISSN 1829-4820

Филиал МГУ им. М.В. Ломоносова
в г. Ереване

№17(21)

Журнал входит в список
периодических изданий ВАК РА

ՌՈՒՍԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ

ԱՐԴԻ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԸ

Գիտամեթոդական հանդես

ПРОБЛЕМЫ

СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РУСИСТИКИ

Научно-методический журнал

MAIN ISSUES

IN MODERN RUSSIAN STUDIES

Scientific Methodological Journal

«НАУКА ЕСТЬ ЯСНОЕ ПОЗНАНИЕ ИСТИНЫ, ПРОСВЕЩЕНИЕ РАЗУМА»

АЛЕ. ЛОМОНОСОВ, «РИТОРИКА» (1748г.)

2026

Երևան քաղաքում Մոսկվայի Մ.Վ. Լոմոնոսովի անվան պետական
համալսարանի մասնաճյուղ

Филиал Московского государственного университета
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ՌՈՒՍԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱՐԴԻ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԸ

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ЕРЕВАН 2026

YEREVAN 2026

*Երաշխավորվել է տպագրության Երևան քաղաքում Մոսկվայի Մ. Վ. Լոմոնոսովի
անվան պետական համալսարանի մասնաճյուղի գիտական խորհրդի կողմից*

*Печатается по решению Ученого совета филиала Московского государственного
университета им. М.В. Ломоносова в г. Ереване*

*Reprinted by decision of the Academic Council of the branch of the Moscow State Univer-
sity M.V. Lomonosov in Yerevan*

«ՈՒՌՍԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱՐԴԻ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՈՒՐՆԵՐ» գիտամեթոդական հան-
դեսի առաքելությունը ՀՀ-ում ռուսագիտության՝ որպես լեզվաբանության ճյուղի
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յականացումն է, համատեղ ծրագրերի, դրամաշնորհների մշակման հնարավորու-
թյան ընձեռումը, մագիստրոսների ներգրավումը հետազոտական աշխատանքներին:

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ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РУСИСТИКИ // Научно-методический журнал, №17
(21). / Глав. ред. Саркисян И.Р.; сост.: Акопян А.С. – Ереван: Изд-во МГУ, 2026. – 306 с.

ISSN 1829-4820

*Журнал входит в список периодических изданий **BAK PA***



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ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ

СИМУЛЯЦИЯ СПАСЕНИЯ: ПСЕВДОЭСХАТОЛОГИЯ И ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ САКРАЛЬНОГО В ПОЗДНЕЙ ПРОЗЕ ПАЛАНИКА (НА ПРИМЕРЕ РОМАНА «ССУДНЫЙ ДЕНЬ»)

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АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье исследуется трансформация мессианской парадигмы в поздней прозе Чака Паланика на материале романа «Ссудный день», рассматриваемого как предельная форма псевдоэсхатологической модели. Показано, что в условиях поздней современности сакральное не исчезает, а перераспределяется, переходя в сферу дискурса, политики и коллективных практик. На основе герменевтического и сравнитель-

но-типологического подходов прослеживается эволюция мессианской логики и её радикализация в анализируемом тексте. Установлено, что мессианская функция переносится с субъекта на текст, который функционирует как форма квазирелигиозного откровения через повторение, распространение и аффективную мобилизацию. Это приводит к формированию политико-мифологической структуры, в которой насилие легитимируется как условие коллективной идентичности. Роман интерпретируется как модель псевдо-эсхатона, где спасение заменяется его симуляцией.

Ключевые слова: Чак Паланик, «Ссудный день», мессианизм, псевдоэсхатология, сакральное, постсекулярность, перформативность, дискурс, коллективная идентичность, насилие, политический миф.

Introduction

The question regarding the fate of the sacred in the literature of late modernity and postmodernity remains one of the most significant issues for contemporary humanities. Against the backdrop of the crisis of metaphysical foundations, the disintegration of stable value systems, and the weakening of traditional religious institutions, figures associated with chosenness, salvation, prophetic roles, and exceptional missions do not vanish from culture; rather, they continue to exist in new, secular forms. They manifest themselves no longer within the space of revelation and the religious vertical, but rather within the mechanisms of power, the traumatic experience of the subject, the logic of mass influence and manipulation, linguistic discourse, and various scenarios of collective identification. For this reason, addressing messianic issues today requires not a confessional, but a broader – philosophical, culturological, and literary-theoretical – interpretation.

In this regard, the prose of Chuck Palahniuk serves as particularly illustrative material. Despite their outward provocativeness, visceral harshness, and consistent orientation toward shock value, his texts are structured much more complexly than a first reading might suggest. Beneath the satire,

grotesque, destruction of social taboos, and emphasized cruelty, stable models of subjectivation constantly emerge, wherein the protagonist is drawn into relationships of subordination, dependency, symbolic violence, and pseudo-chosenness. A Palahniuk character almost never exists as an autonomous «I» freely defining themselves and their place in the world. On the contrary, the character is formed under the pressure of an external impulse – institutional, familial, ideological, linguistic, or medial – which grants their existence a semblance of meaning while simultaneously depriving them of genuine freedom. From this perspective, the messianic line in Palahniuk's prose proves to be not a random motif or a specific plot variation, but a vital method of artistic conceptualization of the contemporary subject.

The relevance of the present study is determined precisely by this dual perspective. On one hand, recent decades in the humanities have seen a surge of interest in post-secular issues and the return of the sacred to cultural forms that are ostensibly distanced from religion. On the other hand, despite sustained academic interest in Palahniuk, his oeuvre is most frequently examined either within the context of transgressive literature or as a social critique of consumer society, the crisis of masculinity, mediality, and corporeality. Meanwhile, the messianic problem in his prose has not been conceptualized in Palahniuk studies as an internal, consistently evolving logic. At the same time, the source material of his works reveals that this is not a matter of isolated episodes, but a recurring model in which the figure of the savior, prophet, chosen one, or bearer of privileged knowledge emerges anew each time, albeit in an altered form.

In «Fight Club», a direct religious framework is not yet present; however, the narrative structure itself is centered around a quasi-messianic figure capable not only of articulating a generation's latent dissatisfaction but also of shaping it into collective action. Tyler Durden functions not merely as a charismatic leader or an ideologue of destruction; he becomes the bearer of a specific type of «revelation» in a world that has lost its previous founda-

tions of meaning: «Tyler Durden the Great and the Powerful. God and father» [14: 199]. It is for this reason that his role cannot be reduced to a purely social or psychological function. He organizes a community around himself based on discipline, the renunciation of prior identity, and a readiness for violence in the name of a new order. Furthermore, Palahniuk demonstrates that such a figure emerges not in spite of the spiritual void of the late-modern world, but precisely because of it. The more radically the disintegration of moral foundations is experienced, the more profound becomes the need for a surrogate figure capable of offering a substitute *modus operandi*.

This thematic trajectory is articulated with particular clarity in the novel «Survivor», where the figure of the designated one emerges not from authentic revelation, but from a complex intersection of religious doctrine, traumatic experience, and subsequent medial construction: «My job is most of the time I work for a housecleaning service. Full-time drudge. Part-time god» [16: 281]. The protagonist is cast into a role prescribed from the outset, subsequently transitioning between discursive regimes: from the hermetic environment of a cult to the sphere of publicity and mass attention. It is significant that within such a structure, the messianic function is divested of its traditional verticality. It no longer emanates from a transcendent source; rather, it is generated as a social effect – an imposed stance sustained by public expectation, the logic of the spectacle, and the societal demand for an exceptional figure. In this sense, the novel establishes a paradigm of vital importance for Palahniuk's entire corpus: here, preordination manifests not as epiphany, but as the output of a marketing campaign designed to manufacture idols for the masses.

In «Choke» the messianic logic finds an even more intricate yet profoundly intimate expression. While in preceding texts it was tethered to collective structures – religious or quasi-religious – here it shifts into the realm of private psychological drama. The status of the chosen becomes embedded within a traumatic maternal projection, functioning as a mode of internal sub-

jective splitting. The sacred role is no longer upheld by an institution or validated by a public community; it transforms into an element of a pathological familial construct wherein the protagonist simultaneously endures a sense of personal insignificance and a dependency on the imposed exceptionality forced upon him: «She's so delusional she truly believes you're the second coming of Christ» [12: 141]. The messianic motif in Choke should not be dismissed as a mere ironic detail or a parodic deconstruction of Christian tropes. It represents a far more profound process: the sacred is privatized, compressed within the boundaries of the individual psyche, and converted into a symptom through which the subject attempts to preserve a fracturing connection to the past, the mother, and the self. This development is particularly salient, as it demonstrates that in Palahniuk's work, chosenness can persist outside institutional frameworks, continuing to operate as a potent internal mechanism for self-definition.

Finally, in «Lullaby» the messianic discourse shifts into yet another fundamentally significant register – the linguistic one. Within this novel, the word itself acquires paramount importance as an instrument of direct impact on reality. Authority no longer belongs to the one who occupies an institutionally exceptional vantage point, but rather to the one who commands the «word». This is corroborated by a remark from the journalist Streator, who provides a significant portion of the narrative: «Sure, everybody wants to play God, but for me it's a full-time job» [15: 100]. Consequently, Palahniuk's prose once again recalibrates its focus: privileged singularity is linked not only to the persona of the protagonist but also to discourse as such – to that form of verbal potency capable of subjugating, obliterating, directing, and redefining human existence. In a broader sense, this implies that the sacred in Palahniuk's work does not vanish; instead, it is dispersed across various strata of the artistic world: it may be embodied in a social role, a psychological construct, a collective affective mobilization, or a word attaining almost ritualistic efficacy.

Thus, across a range of Palahniuk's works, one can discern a stable and intrinsically cohesive messianic configuration. In each instance, it is structured differently; however, behind these variations lies a common principle: the figure of the chosen is no longer guaranteed by a transcendent foundation, yet it does not disappear alongside it. On the contrary, it is perpetually reproduced as a product of institutional pressure, an effect of collective necessity, a traumatic scenario, or a specific regime of speech. It is precisely this recurrence that allows us to characterize the messianic not as a marginal motif in Palahniuk's oeuvre, but as one of the pivotal models organizing his artistic universe.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the fact that messianic issues are treated not as a peripheral semantic layer or an isolated religious code, but as a guiding principle that reveals the internal logic of Palahniuk's writing in its connection to the crisis of the subject, late-modern power regimes, and the post-secular redistribution of the sacred. Such an approach enables a more precise reading of the novel that serves as the primary object of analysis in this article.

The hypothesis of this research posits that in the novel «Adjustment Day» the messianic model finds its most concentrated and radical expression: here, it transcends private psychology and individual crisis, manifesting as a mechanism for shaping the collective imaginary, a means of legitimizing violence, and a form of pseudo-sacred organization for a new order. In other words, the thematic threads that exist separately or in nascent forms in Palahniuk's earlier works converge into a unified construct within this novel.

The objective of this article is to identify the specific functioning of the messianic paradigm in the novel «Adjustment Day» and to demonstrate how it correlates with the depiction of the subject, power, and collective identity in Chuck Palahniuk's late prose. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to fulfill the following tasks: to determine the form in which messianic themes are preliminarily shaped in the author's earlier novels; to establish which elements

of these issues are preserved and intensified in «Adjustment Day»; to trace how the notion of exceptionality is constructed within the text and what functions it performs in the structure of a new social order; and finally, to demonstrate how this model reveals mechanisms of subordination, the justification of violence, and the redistribution of responsibility.

The methodological framework of this article is grounded in the hermeneutic analysis of literary texts, elements of the comparative-typological approach, and concepts developed within contemporary theories of subjectivation, power, and post-secularity. This perspective allows for the examination of Palahniuk's prose not merely as a collection of provocative plots, but as a significant literary discourse on the forms of contemporary collective and individual existence.

This introduction establishes the overarching theoretical, historical, and literary context of the study. The subsequent focus of the article will be directed toward the novel «Adjustment Day», where the aforementioned issues acquire a particularly visceral, politically sharpened, and conceptually finalized expression.

Main Part

Messianism as Political Myth: Apocalypticism, Exceptionalism, and Violence in Chuck Palahniuk's «Adjustment Day»

While in Palahniuk's early novels the messianic role is still tethered to the crisis of the subject, in «Adjustment Day» it divests itself of singularity, becoming fully collectivized and transforming into a politico-mythic mechanism where salvation is envisioned as a global purging through segregation, exclusion, and extermination.

In «Lullaby» the «culling song» functions as an absolute performative: here, the word does not describe but produces action, collapsing the boundary between speech and ontology. This model aligns with Austin's classical understanding of the performative, according to which such utterances «do not "describe" or "report" or constare anything at all» [3: 5], but instead bring an

action into being through their very articulation, effectively suspending the distinction between constative and performative regimes. This insight is radicalized by Jacques Derrida, who locates the force of the utterance in its iterability: «iterability alters, contaminating parasitically what it identifies and enables it to repeat itself» [7: 8; 4]. In Palahniuk's prose, this logic reaches its limit, as language functions as a technology of immediate intervention in life and death.

In «Adjustment Day» performativity persists, yet the vector of its agency shifts: instead of the spoken word, it is the text that acts, operating through dissemination, repetition, and collective appropriation. The central element is the book by Talbott Reynolds – an object performing the function of a secular revelation. Its potency is derived not from a transcendent source, but from the manipulation of the youth consciousness via an ideologically saturated narrative.

In this respect, the novel correlates with what Benedict Anderson describes as the textual nature of collective identity: «communities are to be distinguished... by the style in which they are imagined» [2: 6]. Reynolds's book does not merely convey ideas – it shapes the community's mode of thinking, creating privileged subjects as an effect of discourse. The materiality of the text is emphasized to the extreme: «With its blue-black cover the book stood out like a shaved head. Too large to be hidden in a pocket. With its title embossed in gold, it badged the men carrying it on the street and reading it on the bus. Branded them heroes. Here was reading as a covert act of revolution carried out in plain sight but recognized as such only by other men with the book» [11: 65]. The book functions as an emblem and a ritualistic object, while the act of carrying it serves as a form of public confession. The restricted access («Only men who'd been invited into a lineage were given copies. Only among such men could it be discussed until all who'd read it knew the words by heart» [11: 65]) transforms it into an instrument of

initiation, which allows for its interpretation within the framework of anthropological models of ritual¹.

However, the sacrality of the text here is deliberately devoid of foundation. The remark «the joy of fiction is that it only needs to smell true» [11: 53] leads us to the logic of ideology, where truth does not precede faith but emerges as its effect. In this sense, the formula of Slavoj Žižek is particularly productive: «they do not know it, but they are doing it» [20: 27]. Ideology functions not through knowledge, but through practice – this is precisely how Reynolds's book operates, shaping behavior independently of reflection.

The repetition of the text plays a pivotal role. The slogans («our new leaders...», «we must create ourselves») function as catchphrases that do not so much convey content as construct affective unity. According to Ernesto Laclau, political unity is formed through signs, which do not have a precise conceptual content but are capable of unifying a plurality of demands [8: 77]. The slogans in Reynolds's book act precisely as such unifying signifiers.

Palahniuk explicitly situates this mechanism within a historical context: «As Dr. Brolly had explained it, every youth bulge had a text. It had a book to justify the actions its men must take. The Conquistadors had the Bible. Mao's army had his book of quotations. The Nazis had *Mein Kampf* just as American radicals had Saul Alinsky» [11: 65]. Thus, Reynolds's book is placed among texts that function as secular revelations, justifying violence and structuring political action.

A significant consequence of this is the transformation of the subject's status. Unlike Palahniuk's earlier novels, where the messianic figure is still linked to an individual trajectory, here the subject dissolves into the text. This aligns with the logic of ideological interpellation: the subject does not precede discourse but is shaped by it. The individual becomes a vessel for the text

¹ The direct connection between anthropological research, specifically the works of Victor Turner and Lewis Hyde, and the author's creative output is further evidenced by the fact that Palahniuk includes their writings in his mandatory reading recommendations (See: [13: 168]).

rather than its source. This is particularly evident in the description of the book's dissemination: «After Adjustment Day, the book was everywhere» [11: 106]. The text turns into an instrument of control and normalization, defining the boundaries of the permissible. The culmination of this process is its transformation into a mantra: «they'd stopped sounding like words» [11: 60]. Language ceases to be a carrier of meaning and becomes a mechanism for affective mobilization. «Adjustment Day» radicalizes the model of performativity established in «Lullaby», shifting it from an individual to a collective register. The word is no longer an event but becomes an algorithm – not a singular act, but a system of repeatable formulas organizing perception and action.

If in «Adjustment Day» the text becomes the vessel of the messianic, the subsequent step is the transformation of the very essence of this messianism: from a promise of salvation to a scenario of segregation and exclusion. In this respect, it is telling that the circulation of the text does not remain a neutral process; instead, it gradually assumes a normative and coercive character, determining who belongs to the community and who is subject to expulsion. This logic aligns the novel with what Carl Schmitt defined as the fundamental distinction of the political: the specific political distinction is that «between friend and enemy» [17: 115]. By constituting the community, the text simultaneously produces its boundaries, thereby establishing the possibility of violence as an act of confirming belonging.

On the other hand, this transformation allows for the events of the novel to be viewed through the lens of political theology, where, according to Giorgio Agamben, sovereign power manifests in the ability to define «who may be killed and yet not sacrificed» [1: 12]. In «Adjustment Day», it is the text rather than institutional authority that begins to perform this function, sanctioning exclusion and extermination as elements of a new order. Here, the messianic finally divests itself of its universalist dimension and turns into a mechanism for the distribution of life and death, setting the stage for an ana-

lysis of exclusive status as a form of collective mobilization and violence. In this case, the text ceases to be merely a means of symbolic consolidation and starts functioning as a selection mechanism: membership in the community is determined not by an act of recognition, but by participation in action. It is here that the messianic discourse of «Adjustment Day» is transformed into a form of privileged election assigned to a specific group.

The new community is initially constructed as a closed brotherhood: «Those who carried it, they were tired of being consumers. They wanted to be consumed. In lieu of choosing a vocation they had been chosen» [11: 66]. In this perspective, the novel correlates with Bryan S. Turner's observation that demographic pressure and the marginalization of young men can engender radical forms of collective identity [19]. In Palahniuk's work, this situation finds direct expression: Professor Brolly notes that «At present there were sixty-seven countries with so-called youth bulges, and sixty of them were suffering social upheaval and internal violence» [11: 17–18]. Against this backdrop, the idea of war is presented as a tool for redistributing the surplus: «it was vital to implement the new war and purge the youth bulge» [11: 26]. In this context, Reynolds's book does not so much explain the situation as offer a new role: it translates the fact of redundancy into a state of being chosen. The following imperative is particularly illustrative: «Pain and sickness will always befall men. Choose yours, be it the pain from manual labor or the sickness of overexertion. Schedule it. Savor it. Use your pain so it will not use you» [11: 67]; thus, pain is converted into a resource that directs behavior.

The mode of integration is manifested through a system of clans, where «each of those chosen had invited a single soldier» [11: 63]. Belonging emerges through participation in the expansion of the structure and the construction of a hierarchical pyramid, the collective of which is formed through a unifying affect [8: 77]. In Palahniuk's work, this process is directly linked to violence, with the List serving as its key instrument: «A list on the Internet...

you could post his or her name... If no one agreed... the name would disappear within a few hours... if several people supported... the name would linger... The more votes a person got, the more danger he or she was facing» [11: 48]. A quantitative procedure supplants the legal one, transforming a collective decision into a sanction for extermination. The answer regarding the fate of those included on the list is provided not through explanation, but through action: the scene of Professor Brolly's murder – where a gesture of reverence, the washing and kissing of feet, is immediately followed by a gunshot – demonstrates that violence is framed as a meaningful, sanctioned act confirming one's adherence to the new system: «Keishaun edged forward... knelt at Brolly's feet... reached for the folded towel... dried one pale foot... did the same with the other... brought each foot to his mouth and kissed the cold, wrinkled skin... Having done that... he produced a snub-nosed revolver and fired a single shot into the professor's slack-jawed expression» [11: 51–52]. This logic is further codified at the level of rules: «Only people who'd harvested targets on the list would get to vote» [11: 103]. Individual election ceases to be a symbolic category and acquires a corporeal dimension: it must be literally «earned» through participation in homicide, while one's position within the community is defined by committed actions rather than convictions. Such a redistribution of the right to life and death allows the novel to be read in the terms of Achille Mbembe, for whom sovereignty manifests in the capacity to dictate «who may live and who must die» [9: 11]. In «Adjustment Day», this function does not belong to a singular center of power but is distributed within the community itself, rendering violence the norm of its existence. The text that forms the community simultaneously dictates the mechanism of its maintenance, realized through exclusion and destruction.

The logic of sanctioned exceptionalism, secured through violence, directly defines the form of the future order, presented in the novel as the result of a global restructuring. However, this order is initially constructed not as a universal space of salvation, but as a system of segregation. The very formu-

lations of the book establish a drive toward the rejection of the previous social structure [11: 53], where simplification serves as a prerequisite for controllability. Furthermore, the new arrangement does not conceal its exclusionary nature. On the contrary, it is explicitly based on the idea that stability is only possible after the elimination of the «superfluous»: «As per the Talbott book people were kept confused, living on the brink of chaos for so long that they'd be grateful to accept the terms of any new governing body» [11: 112]. Thus, chaos is utilized as an argument for radical reorganization, and consent is conceived as the result of exhaustion and fear rather than choice.

It is telling that in this new world, social reality rapidly takes the form of decay: «People were hungry... drinking water was getting scarce... whispers of people eating... even people eating people» [11: 125]. These details demonstrate that the promise of order devolves into disorganization, and the proclaimed liberation into the destruction of basic living conditions. In this way, the novel undermines its own messianic narrative from within, exposing it as a fiction that fails to withstand contact with reality.

The principle of spatial fragmentation into new entities, where belonging is dictated by clan and racial logic, also plays a distinctive role. In this context, the thesis of «identity exhaustion» («People were living too long to retain a single self. ... Men were becoming women. Whites were becoming blacks» [11: 258]) serves as a justification for a regressive movement: the rigid fixation of identities and their segregation: «Caucasia is at war with Gaysia. Caucasia has always been at war with Gaysia» [11: 53].

Here, one might argue that the novel reproduces the structure of a pseudo-utopia, in which the «healing» of the world is achieved not through integration, but through separation. This logic correlates with what Zygmunt Bauman describes as modernity's drive toward «ordering through exclusion»: «the production of waste ... is as modern as classification and order-designing» [5: 15]. In «Adjustment Day», such «waste» consists of those who do not fit into the new schema. Meanwhile, the very procedure of estab-

lishing order retains the hallmarks of performative violence. «Sixty days out the list was frozen... Once Adjustment Day commenced the list would be taken down» [11: 60] – the deletion of the list does not abolish violence; rather, it concludes its symbolic phase, translating it into a new norm. The repetition of the formula «Adjustment Day is upon us» [11: 60] indicates that this is not merely an event, but the consolidation of a permanent state.

Consequently, the new order in the novel functions as a pseudo-eschaton: it mimics the final resolution of history, yet instead of concluding it, it preserves violence as a perpetual mechanism. Messianism is definitively stripped of its telos (τέλος)² of salvation and is transformed into a mode of governance through fear and separation. In this sense, «Adjustment Day» can be read not only as a standalone novel but also as a text with pronounced metatextual reflection. This is indicated, in particular, by Francisco Collado-Rodríguez's analysis in the article «Echoes from “Fight Club”» [6], where the novel is examined in the context of the legacy of «Fight Club» as a work that establishes a model for radicalization and the formation of the political subject through violence. Within the novel itself, this connection is articulated directly, and it is framed as an initial yet now insufficient model³. Thus, «Fight Club» serves as an archetypal text in which the crisis of masculinity and the quest for identity still retain an individual dimension, whereas «Adjustment Day» shifts this logic into a collective-political register. In the later

² An Aristotelian term denoting the goal or final cause of an action.

³ Direct references to «Fight Club» indicate the metatextual principle of the novel's construction: «The most inventive aspect of Fight Club was how it collapsed all three of the archetypes. By killing himself, the martyr murders the rebel and by doing so creates an integrated passive/active voice that recounts the story as a new self-aware narrator» [11: 108], «first make yourself despicable, then indispensable» [11: 132]. Another reference to «Fight Club» occurs when Talbott dictates the book to Walter; he says: «Adjustment Day was about men joining forces... “So this is like Fight Club?”... “Fight Club was about empowering each man through a series of exercises... taught each man that he had capacity beyond his greatest concept of himself...” ... “Palahniuk. All of his work is about castration. Castration or abortion”» [11: 142].

novel, the internal dynamics inherent in the phenomenon of multiple personality («By killing himself, the martyr murders the rebel...» [11: 108]) are externalized and become the structure of mass action.

If «Fight Club» can be viewed as an archetype-text, then John Steinbeck's «The Grapes of Wrath», where collective suffering becomes the foundation for solidarity and ethical unification, stands as an antithesis-text. In Palahniuk's work, the same material is repurposed into a resource for division and violence. Thus, «Adjustment Day» demonstrates not merely a crisis of the social, but an inversion of the humanistic model of collectivity.

This shift allows for a clarification of the nature of the messianic within the novel through a distinction between apocalyptic and prophetic imagination. As Mikael Svenungsson demonstrates in the article «Prophetic Political Theology: Daniel Bensaïd's Alternative Radicalism» [18], the prophetic tradition maintains an ethical orientation, whereas the apocalyptic is focused on the destruction of order as such. In «Adjustment Day», it is precisely the second scenario that is realized: «The first casualty of any war is God» [11: 60] – a statement that codifies the rejection of any transcendent foundation and the translation of violence into an autonomous principle.

In this context, the novel also correlates with the analysis of populism as a quasi-sacred form of politics by DeHanas and Shterin in the article «The Spirit of Populism: Sacred, Charismatic, Redemptive and Ecstatic Dimensions» [10], which emphasizes that contemporary political discourse increasingly borrows religious structures. Reynolds's book functions exactly as such a quasi-sacred center; however, its redemptive dimension is devoid of positive content and is reduced to a procedure of purging through extermination. «Adjustment Day» implements a model in which messianism definitively loses both its subjective and ethical substance. It is no longer linked to personal transformation or the possibility of universal salvation, but exists as a political myth organizing collective action through simplification, affect, and violence. The novel pushes the trajectory outlined in Palahniuk's earlier texts to

its limit: from the crisis of the subject to the crisis of the very idea of salvation, which has been transformed into a tool of governance and destruction. For this reason, «Adjustment Day» proves to be not an event in the strict sense, but a repeatable structure in which the apocalyptic imagination does not conclude history, but fixes it in a state of permanent rupture.

Here, the messianic is simulated, functioning as a form of legitimizing violence and, simultaneously, as a symptom of the impossibility of any other exit from the crisis of the contemporary world.

Conclusion

The analysis conducted allows for the assertion that in the novel «Adjustment Day», the messianic model reaches its ultimate transformation, transcending individual experience and becoming embedded within the structure of the collective imaginary. Unlike the earlier works of Chuck Palahniuk, where election maintains a connection to the crisis of the subject and internal traumatic dynamics, in this text it definitively divests itself of its personal character and functions as a politico-mythic mechanism.

It has been demonstrated that the key vessel of the messianic is no longer the subject, but the text, which performs the function of a secular revelation. Its performative nature ensures not only the production of meaning but also the formation of a community within which new criteria of belonging are established, based on repetition, affective mobilization, and participation in violence. Thus, the messianic function is redefined: it is no longer associated with the possibility of salvation, but instead acts as an instrument for legitimizing exclusion and redistributing the right to life and death.

The analysis has revealed that the novel implements a model of a pseudo-eschaton, in which the apocalyptic imagination does not conclude the historical process but fixes it in a state of permanent rupture. The new social structure is formed as a system of segregation, where order is achieved through the elimination of «superfluous» elements, and the universalist logic of messianism gives way to a mechanism of selection and force.

In this manner, «Adjustment Day» can be interpreted as the terminal point in the evolution of messianic themes in Palahniuk's prose: from individual crisis to a collective ideological construct, from the internal splitting of the subject to the external organization of violence, and from the possibility of salvation to its simulation. This allows the novel to be viewed as a significant artistic discourse on the transformation of the sacred under the conditions of late modernity and on the forms, it assumes within the sphere of contemporary political and cultural experience. Ultimately, the work demonstrates that chosenness can persist even in a desacredized world, continuing to operate as a potent, albeit destructive, mechanism for self-definition.

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ԱՐՁԱԿՈՒՄ («ՎԵՐՋՆԱՀԱՇՎԱՐԿԻ ՕՐ» ՎԵՊԻ ՕՐԻՆԱԿՈՎ)

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ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

Հոդվածում ուսումնասիրվում է մեսիական պարադիգմայի փոխակերպումը Չակ Պալանիկի ուշ արձակում՝ կենտրոնանալով «Վերջնահաշվարկի օր» վեպի վրա՝ որպես կեղծ վախճանաբանության առավել ռադիկալ ձև: Ցույց է տրվում, որ ուշ արդիականության պայմաններում սակավալը չի անհետանում, այլ վերադասավորվում է՝ տեղափոխվելով դիսկուրսիվ, քաղաքական և կոլեկտիվ հարթություններ: Հերմենևտիկ և համեմատական մոտեցումների հիման վրա բացահայտվում է մեսիական տրամաբանության զարգացումն ու դրա ռադիկալացումը տվյալ վեպում: Պարզվում է, որ մեսիական գործառույթը տեղափոխվում է սուբյեկտից դեպի տեքստ, որը գործում է որպես կվազիկրոնական «հայտնություն»՝ կրկնության, տարածման և աֆեկտիվ մոբիլիզացիայի միջոցով: Արդյունքում ձևավորվում է քաղաքական-առասպելաբանական

կառուցվածք, որտեղ բնությունը լեզվատիմացվում է որպես կոլեկտիվ ինքնության պայման: Վեպը մեկնաբանվում է իբրև կեղծ էսխատոնի մոդել, որտեղ փրկությունը փոխարինվում է դրա սիմուլյացիայով:

Բանալի բառեր՝ Չակ Պալանիկ, «Վերջնահաշվարկի օր», մեսիականություն, կեղծ վախճանաբանություն, սակրալ, հետսեկուլյարություն, պերֆորմատիվություն, դիսկուրս, կոլեկտիվ ինքնություն, բնություն, քաղաքական միֆ:

SIMULATION OF SALVATION: PSEUDO-ESCHATOLOGY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SACRED IN PALAHNIUK'S LATE FICTION (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE NOVEL «ADJUSTMENT DAY»)

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the transformation of the messianic paradigm in Chuck Palahniuk's late prose, focusing on «Adjustment Day» as a culmination of pseudo-eschatological structures. It ar-

gues that under conditions of late modernity the sacred does not disappear but is redistributed into discursive, political, and collective forms. Using hermeneutic and comparative-typological approaches, the study traces the reconfiguration of messianic logic from earlier novels to its radicalization in «Adjustment Day». The analysis demonstrates that the messianic function shifts from the individual to the text, which operates as a quasi-religious revelation through repetition, dissemination, and affective mobilization. This results in a politico-mythic structure where violence is legitimized as a condition of collective identity. The novel is thus interpreted as a model of pseudo-eschaton, in which salvation is replaced by its simulation and the sacred becomes an instrument of control and exclusion.

Keywords: Chuck Palahniuk, «Adjustment Day», messianism, pseudo-eschatology, the sacred, post-secularity, performativity, discourse, collective identity, violence, political myth.

Информация о статье:

*статья поступила в редакцию 21 апреля 2026 г.,
подписана к печати в номер 17 (21) / 2026 – 25.06.2026 г.*

ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РУСИСТИКИ

Научно-методический журнал

Главный редактор



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Корректоры:

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Филиала Московского государственного университета
им. М.В. Ломоносова в г. Ереване:
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Заказ № 25

Подписано к печати – 28.06.2026 г.
Формат 60х84¹/₁₆. Бумага офсетная № 1.
Объем – 19,125 печ. л. Тираж 250 экз.