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CYCLICAL VISION: CANCEL CULTURE AND THE LOSS OF PERSPECTIVE

This article offers a philosophical analysis of cancel culture as a specific regime of public obviousness emerging within digital public space and characterized by a gradual loss of perspective, depth, and the capacity to see otherwise. The central thesis is that contemporary public violence increasingly ceases to appear as a discrete event endowed with procedure, responsibility, and symbolic finality, and instead operates as a regime: continuous, decentralized, and self-reproducing through repetition, archiving, and algorithmic amplification.

Cancel culture is examined not as an isolated moral practice or a mere form of social sanction, but as a symptom of a deeper transformation of publicness itself – a shift from dialogue and argumentation toward a rhetoric of obviousness in which complexity is perceived as a threat and alternative perspectives as a defect of vision. The article introduces the concept of cyclical vision to describe a mode of perception in which repetition replaces understanding, the circle supplants the route, and obviousness takes the place of truth. Within this regime, exclusion is enacted without formal decision or explicit verdict and arises as a side effect of collective consent to “non-intervention”.

Methodologically, the study combines discursive, phenomenological, and conceptual analysis with a structural reading of mythological figures. Homer’s Cyclops (Polyphemus) is interpreted not as an emblem of archaic brutality but as a model of single-perspective vision that admits neither doubt, dialogue, nor return. Opposed to this figure is the politropic navigation embodied by Odysseus – a rhetorical logic of displacement, delay, and refusal of definitive identification (“Nobody”), which preserves meaning and subjectivity in an environment where language functions as an instrument of capture.

The article argues that cancel culture not only produces victims but progressively sacrifices the very possibility of perspective, imagination, and closure. In relinquishing finitude, it transforms violence into a background condition rather than an event. Philosophical analysis of cyclical vision thus emerges as a form of critical resistance aimed at restoring essential distinctions – between obviousness and truth, repetition and understanding, the closed circle and the open route – without which public space loses its capacity to function as a site of shared thinking.

Keywords: *cancel culture, cyclical vision, public obviousness, rhetoric, public violence, algorithmic publicness, Cyclops.*

Publicity rarely goes blind all at once. More often, it loses its sight gradually – not as an organ, but as the capacity to distinguish. First, depth disappears; then perspective; and only at the very end does the question vanish: is it possible to see otherwise? The world remains illuminated, forms remain discernible, figures recognizable. Yet this is no longer vision in the strict sense of the word. It is repetition [Jay, 1993].

The contemporary public sphere is increasingly organized not around dispute, argument, or a shared search for meaning, but around self-evidence. Self-evidence requires no proof and admits no objection. It is closed in upon itself and therefore stable. There is no movement from one perspective to another – only a return to what has already been seen. Thus emerges a regime in which public speech ceases to be an address and becomes an indication: this is how it looks, this is how it must be understood. Everything else becomes either superfluous or dangerous [Bourdieu, 1991].

It is precisely within this regime that what is commonly called cancel culture arises. It does not require a theory and does not rely on an articulated doctrine. On the contrary, its strength lies in the absence of a formulated foundation. Cancellation operates as a self-evident

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gesture: not as a decision, but as recognition; not as a verdict, but as confirmation that “it was already visible”. It does not persuade – it closes the circle [Butler, 1997].

Within this circle, perspective disappears. The possibility of seeing otherwise begins to be perceived not as a right, but as a defect. Complexity – as an attempt at justification. Distance – as coldness or complicity. Publicity increasingly resembles a space in which only one scale, one focus, one angle of vision is permitted. Everything that does not fit this focus is not discussed – it is discarded. Thus emerges vision without depth and speech without return [Chun, 2016].

This form of publicity is neither accidental nor new. It reproduces an ancient type of thinking in which the world is divided not into true and false, but into permissible and impermissible. Yet, unlike archaic forms of exclusion, contemporary cancellation does not present itself as an event. It has no ritual, no moment of completion, and no recognized responsibility. Exclusion is not carried out – it is sustained. Through repetition, recall, and archiving. Thus the circle closes again and again [Girard, 1977].

The problem, however, does not lie in the existence of this circle as such. The circle is an ancient form of order, and human communities have always returned to it in moments of anxiety. The problem is that under conditions of digital publicity, the circle begins to claim completeness of vision. It no longer recognizes itself as a limitation. It presents its closure as self-evidence and repetition as truth. In this sense, publicity loses not only perspective, but also the memory of the very possibility of perspective [Chun, 2016].

Thus emerges a figure in which these processes converge: the figure of the cyclical, or cyclopean, gaze. This is neither a metaphor of physical defect nor an image of an external enemy. It is a structure of vision for which there exists only a single angle and a single distance. Such a structure knows nothing of binocularity and has no need of dialogue, because it does not conceive of a second perspective. It does not know doubt, because doubt requires depth. Nor does it recognize return, because return presupposes a movement beyond the circle [Jay, 1993].

It is here that cancel culture reaches its limit. In seeking to eliminate danger, it eliminates difference; in attempting to fix the boundary of the permissible, it deprives itself of the ability to see beyond that boundary; in producing the victim, it gradually sacrifices the very possibility of imagination. Publicity continues to function, but does so blindly – by inertia, by the memory of gesture, by the trace of its own gaze [Zuboff, 2019].

The philosophical task in this context is not to issue a moral verdict or to propose an alternative norm. Rather, it involves a more precarious movement: an attempt to restore distinction where it has been declared superfluous. The distinction between self-evidence and truth, between repetition and understanding, between the circle and the route. In this space, the figure of navigation becomes possible once again – not as escape and not as cunning, but as a way of resisting final blindness [Detienne & Vernant, 1978].

It is precisely from this point that the present study begins: from an attempt to see how publicity loses its sight by mistaking the circle for the horizon, and what forms of thought remain capable of preserving perspective where seeing otherwise becomes dangerous.

The relevance of analyzing cyclical vision and the rhetoric of self-evidence is determined not so much by the growth of conflict or the radicalization of the public sphere, as by a transformation in the very form of publicity itself. Contemporary forms of communication function increasingly less as spaces of argumentation, interpretation, and shared meaning-making, and increasingly more as environments of immediate recognition, in which complexity is perceived as a threat and ambiguity as a defect. In this context, publicity ceases to be a site of encounter between perspectives and comes to resemble a closed circle of repeating gestures, images, and evaluations that do not allow for perspectival shift [Jay, 1993].

The urgency of this problem is further intensified by the development of digital forms of publicity. The acceleration of communication, the algorithmic distribution of attention, and the archivability of utterances lead to a situation in which public violence loses its character as an event and becomes a regime. Exclusion here is not framed as an act; it has neither beginning nor end and is therefore not subject to fixation or reflection. It is reproduced through repetition,

recall, and self-evidence, becoming part of the background of public existence [Chun, 2016; Dean, 2010]. Under these conditions, cancel culture appears not as a particular moral practice or a form of social sanction, but as a symptom of a deeper shift – the loss of perspective as a structural element of public thought [Norris, 2023].

The relevance of the study is further reinforced by the fact that contemporary forms of exclusion are increasingly accompanied by a refusal to recognize violence as such. Exclusion is carried out not in spite of rationality, but in its name; not through direct coercion, but through a rhetoric of self-evidence that leaves no room for response. Public speech retains the form of address, yet loses its dialogical symmetry, turning into an act of assignment and fixation [Butler, 1997; Bourdieu, 1991]. As a result, the victim emerges not as the outcome of a collective decision, but as a byproduct of collective agreement “not to intervene” and the assumption that “everything is already clear” [Girard, 1986].

In this situation, a philosophical analysis of cyclical vision acquires fundamental importance. It makes it possible to consider cancel culture not as an anomaly or an excessive reaction, but as a form of a new dogmatics – a dogmatics without doctrines, without an institutional center, and without recognized authority, yet governed by a rigid regime of self-evidence. Identifying the mechanisms through which publicity loses perspective and sacrifices its own imagination becomes a necessary condition for critical thought in an environment where seeing otherwise increasingly entails the risk of exclusion [Jay, 1993; Butler, 1997].

The problematics of public violence, exclusion, and the victim have a long and multilayered tradition of philosophical reflection. Ancient political and legal practices of exile, sacrifice, and judicial violence were extensively analyzed in the context of the formation of the polis, collective responsibility, and the maintenance of social order [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988; Detienne & Vernant, 1978]. These studies made it possible to conceptualize violence as a recognized form of action, endowed with procedure, symbolic articulation, and an event-character [Girard, 1977].

In twentieth-century philosophy, significant contributions to understanding the mechanisms of exclusion were made within analyses of power, language, and discourse. Studies of symbolic violence, discursive normalization, and the production of the permissible demonstrated that exclusion can operate without direct coercion – through the distribution of discursive roles, regimes of visibility, and the boundaries of the sayable [Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Foucault, 1977]. In these works, power appears not as an external prohibition or sanction, but as an internal organization of the field of statements, in which some positions become legitimate, while others are rendered invisible or unthinkable. In parallel, theories of the sacrificial mechanism developed, within which the figure of the victim was understood as a structurally necessary element for the discharge of collective tension and the stabilization of social order [Girard, 1977; Girard, 1986].

However, despite the breadth and depth of these approaches, the question of the transformation of the very regime of public vision remains insufficiently clarified. Most existing studies either focus on institutional forms of violence and disciplinary practices [Foucault, 1977], or analyze the rhetoric of exclusion as derivative of ideological, legal, or media structures [Butler, 1997; Brown, 1995]. At the same time, the mechanism of the loss of perspective itself – the transition from dialogue to self-evidence, from argument to repetition, from distinction to a closed circle – generally remains at the periphery of analysis and is not treated as an independent epistemological problem [Jay, 1993].

Equally underdeveloped is the question of how cancel culture functions not only as an instrument of exclusion, but also as a form of self-inflicted damage to publicity, leading to a loss of depth and the blinding of collective imagination. In existing research, the phenomenon of cancellation is most often examined either from a normative-moral perspective or within the context of political conflicts and identity disputes [Norris, 2023; Butler, 2009]. Yet its rhetorical and epistemological foundations – linked to repetition, archiving, algorithmic amplification, and the

regime of self-evidence – point to a deeper transformation affecting the very structure of public perception and the capacity to navigate within the field of meaning [Chun, 2016; Dean, 2010].

The present study seeks to address this gap by proposing to consider cyclical vision as an autonomous analytical object, and cancel culture as a regime of public self-evidence in which the figure of the victim and the loss of perspective are structurally intertwined. The recourse to the mythological figure of the Cyclops does not serve to allegorize the problem, but to articulate the internal logic of a publicity that has lost the capacity to see otherwise. In this sense, the study both continues and reinterprets the existing tradition of analyzing power, violence, and exclusion, shifting the focus from violence as an event to the loss of vision as the condition of its reproduction [Foucault, 1977].

The aim of the present study is a philosophical analysis of cyclical vision as a specific regime of public self-evidence within which the rhetoric of exclusion functions as a form of public violence that does not require institutionalization, formal recognition, or symbolic closure [Girard, 1986].

The study seeks to identify the structural conditions under which cancel culture ceases to be a particular moral practice or an instrument of social critique and becomes a dogmatic regime of publicity, grounded in the loss of perspective, the reduction of complexity, and the reproduction of a closed circle of the self-evident.

Particular attention is given to analyzing how, under conditions of digital publicity, the victim is produced not only as a social figure of exclusion, but also as the result of a more radical process – the self-blinding of the public imagination, which loses the capacity to see otherwise than at a single scale [Chun, 2016].

To achieve this aim, the study focuses on analyzing the transformation of public violence under conditions of contemporary, and above all digital, publicity, where exclusion loses the character of a discrete event and begins to function as a stable rhetorical regime. The concept of cyclical vision is introduced and conceptually elaborated as a form of public self-evidence grounded in repetition, closure, and the refusal of perspectival shift, and its role in the reproduction of cancel culture is demonstrated. Particular attention is devoted to the analysis of the rhetoric of self-evidence as a mechanism through which exclusion is enacted without argumentation, dialogue, or formal verdict, while disagreement is interpreted as a defect of vision or a form of complicity. In this context, cancel culture is understood not only as a mode of producing the victim, but also as a process of the self-blinding of publicity, leading to the loss of collective imagination and the capacity for return. A methodologically significant element of the analysis is the recourse to the mythological figure of the Cyclops as a structural image of publicity deprived of depth of vision, and to the figure of Odysseus as a principle of navigation within a field of rhetorical exclusion, where the preservation of meaning is possible only through a refusal of directness and self-evidence.

The methodological strategy of the study is structured as a polytropic navigation within the field of public forms of visibility and does not presuppose a reduction of analysis to a single explanatory theory. The analytical approaches employed are treated not as universal methods, but as ways of maintaining distinctions within an environment in which publicity tends to erase them.

Hermeneutic analysis is applied primarily to the interpretation of philosophical, mythological, and cultural texts in which forms of collective vision, regimes of self-evidence, and modes of the loss of perspective are articulated. The focus here is not on historical events as such, but on structures of perception and understanding through which publicity organizes the permissible and the impermissible.

Discursive analysis is used to identify the mechanisms by which the rhetoric of self-evidence operates – recurrent formulas, gestures, and intonations through which public speech ceases to function as argument and begins to act as indication or confirmation of what is “already visible”. Particular attention is paid to the loss of dialogical symmetry and to the transformation of disagreement into a defect of vision or a sign of complicity.

Phenomenologically oriented description serves to register shifts in the structure of public experience: the loss of depth, perspective, and the possibility of response under conditions of accelerated and algorithmically organized digital publicity. The analysis here is focused not on subjective experience, but on the transformation of the very horizon of the visible and the thinkable.

Conceptual analysis is aimed at clarifying and differentiating the key concepts of the study – “self-evidence”, “perspective”, “repetition”, “publicity”, “exclusion”, “victim”, “cyclical vision” – in order to prevent their conflation into an undifferentiated descriptive language that would reproduce the very regime under investigation.

The recourse to the mythological figures of the Cyclops and Odysseus is fundamentally methodological in character. They are employed not as illustrations or allegories, but as structural models of publicity and thought: the Cyclops as a form of cyclical, single-perspective vision that does not allow for displacement or return; Odysseus as a principle of navigation, involving movement between perspectives, delay, detour, and the preservation of perspective under conditions of rhetorical pressure. Such a juxtaposition makes it possible to consider cancel culture not as a collection of discrete practices, but as a specific optical and rhetorical regime of publicity.

In the Homeric tradition, the Cyclops is rarely considered as a figure of vision – he is typically perceived as a figure of brute force, coarseness, and pre-political existence. Yet it is precisely his mode of seeing that proves crucial for understanding a form of publicity structured not around argument, but around self-evidence. The Cyclops’ single eye is not merely a physical defect or a mythological curiosity. It is a structural characteristic of a regime of perception in which vision does not presuppose perspective, differentiation of planes, or shifts of scale [Homer, 1996; Detienne & Vernant, 1978].

The Cyclops’ vision is not “poor” or “deficient” in any quantitative sense. On the contrary, it is absolutely certain of itself. It neither doubts, nor refines, nor relates what is seen to other possible viewpoints. The Cyclops sees at once and definitively. His gaze does not move – it fixes. For this very reason, his world has no need of dialogue: everything that enters the field of vision is already determined. The stranger here is not an interlocutor; he is immediately either prey or obstacle. Such a mode of vision fundamentally excludes perspective. Perspective presupposes at least two viewpoints, as well as the space between them in which doubt, clarification, and translation become possible [Merleau-Ponty, 1964].

The Cyclops is deprived of this “in-between”. His eye is a closed circle of the self-evident, in which the distinction between “seeing” and “knowing” collapses. The visible immediately becomes true, and the true indisputable. In this sense, the Cyclops is not a figure of archaic savagery, but of radical self-evidence. His violence requires no justification, because it is not experienced as violence. It follows directly from the fact that “this is how it is seen”. Here, there is no transition from perception to decision: the decision is already contained within the act of seeing [Foucault, 1977].

In contrast to perspectival vision, which presupposes the possibility of displacement, cyclical vision knows no forward or inward movement. It moves in a circle, constantly returning to what has already been fixed. In this regime, the new is not disclosed – it merely confirms what has already been seen. Every event is interpreted not as rupture, but as repetition; not as a challenge, but as proof [Chun, 2016].

Cyclical vision gives rise to a specific form of public rationality in which arguments lose their significance. If something is already “self-evident”, it does not need to be explained. Moreover, any attempt at explanation begins to appear suspicious: why explain what is already visible to everyone? At this point, rhetoric ceases to be a means of persuasion and becomes a mechanism of identification: it distinguishes not between true and false, but between those who see and the “blind” [Bourdieu, 1991].

It is here that a specific dogmatics of self-evidence emerges. It does not take the form of a doctrine and does not require theoretical assent. Its force lies in repetition. The same statement,

the same formula, the same accusation, circulating in public space, begin to perform the function of seeing on behalf of all. The community ceases to look – someone has already “looked” for it [Dean, 2010; Jay, 1993].

The cycle here plays a dual role. On the one hand, it produces a sense of stability and order: the world appears intelligible, distinctions simple, boundaries clear. On the other hand, it destroys the possibility of exit. Everything that does not fit into the circle of the self-evident is neither refuted nor discussed – it is simply excluded as “invisible” or “indistinguishable” [Chun, 2016].

In this context, cancel culture appears not so much as a moral reaction or a form of social correction, but as a practice of cyclical vision. Its effectiveness is grounded neither in evidence nor in procedure, but in its capacity to reproduce self-evidence. The subject being cancelled is not so much recognized as guilty as declared to be already visible as such [Butler, 1997].

What becomes decisive here is not the content of the accusation, but its repeatability. Each new act of repetition adds no information, yet intensifies the visual effect. The image is fixed, deepened, and ultimately closed in upon itself. Any attempt to break this cycle – to provide context, introduce distinction, or offer an alternative perspective – is interpreted as a refusal to see what is self-evident [Dean, 2010].

Thus, cancel culture does not merely produce the victim. It produces a regime of vision in which the victim becomes a necessary element for sustaining self-evidence. Moreover, this regime gradually sacrifices the very possibility of seeing otherwise. Perspective is lost as something dangerous, complex, and potentially disruptive to consensus. The community does not go blind because it has been deprived of sight, but because it has voluntarily renounced depth [Jay, 1993].

The decisive moment in the episode with Polyphemos is not the physical blinding, but the operation of naming. Before losing his eye, the Cyclops is already struck at a deeper level – the level of language. Odysseus’ answer “Nobody” (οὐδείς) is not a mask in any trivial sense and cannot be reduced to cunning. It is a rhetorical act directed against the very structure of cyclopean vision [Homer, 1996; Detienne & Vernant, 1978].

The Cyclops thinks in a mode of immediate identification: to see is to know, to name is to fix. In this regime, the name functions as the final stabilization of being. It does not open a space for dialogue, but brings it to a close. For this reason, Polyphemos’ question “Who are you?” is not an invitation to communication – it is a procedure of capture [Bourdieu, 1991].

The answer “Nobody” disrupts this procedure at the level of form. It neither denies the question nor evades it, but shifts it into a different logical register. A name that fixes nothing becomes unusable within the cycle of self-evidence. “Nobody” cannot be seen as a figure, cannot be held in view, and, crucially, cannot be transmitted further without the disintegration of meaning.

The rhetorical force of this operation lies in the fact that it does not directly oppose truth to violence. Odysseus does not prove his innocence and does not demand justice. He deprives violence of its instrument. The Cyclops may cry out, but his cry becomes devoid of content: “Nobody is killing me” – a formula which, within the regime of cyclical vision, nullifies the very possibility of collective response [Foucault, 1977].

Polyphemos’ response to the other Cyclopes reveals a key vulnerability of the regime of self-evidence. Collective vision functions only so long as it relies on recognizable figures and repeatable designations. As soon as the name ceases to indicate and the designation to fix, the cycle breaks.

It is important to emphasize: this is not a victory of truth over falsehood. It is a breakdown of the procedure. The other Cyclopes do not doubt the reality of Polyphemos’ pain, yet they are unable to translate it into collective action. Their vision remains one-eyed, but the object is lost. Violence encounters not resistance, but a void in which it can no longer reproduce itself [Girard, 1986].

In this sense, the blinding of Polyphemos is secondary. It merely consolidates a disruption that has already taken place at the structural level. The Cyclops loses his eye because he has already lost the capacity to distinguish. His gaze no longer holds the world, and his cry no

longer gathers the community. Self-evidence ceases to be self-evident – and therefore ceases to be effective.

The name “Nobody” does not destroy the enemy and does not abolish violence as such. It creates a temporal gap – a space of delay in which movement becomes possible. This is precisely what polytropic navigation entails: not a breakthrough and not a frontal collision, but a turn that makes it possible to exit the field of direct capture [Detienne & Vernant, 1978; Montiglio, 2005].

In contrast to cancel culture, which strives for definitive naming and fixation, Odysseus’ rhetorical operation demonstrates an inverse logic. It does not produce a victim, but disrupts the very possibility of their immediate production. “Nobody” is a name that cannot be cancelled, because it cannot be fixed within the archive of self-evidence. Here, a fundamental distinction emerges between a rhetoric of capture and a rhetoric of navigation. The former requires transparency, immediate visibility, and a determinate name. The latter operates through displacement, delay, and the refusal of final identification. It does not seek to be understood at once – and precisely for this reason preserves the possibility of return.

If Odysseus’ rhetorical operation disrupts the procedure of capture by refusing a fixable name, then cancel culture can be described as the systematic elimination of the very possibility of such refusal. Cancel culture functions as a regime in which naming becomes obligatory, and anonymity becomes suspect. Here, it is impossible not to be named, impossible to remain “nobody”, impossible to withdraw from the field of visibility without being immediately interpreted as evasive, guilty, or concealing.

Cancel culture does not tolerate emptiness in the place of the subject. Wherever a gap appears – an absence of response, a delay, a complexity – it seeks to fill it immediately with a name, a biography, an archive of statements, a set of attributes. The name ceases to function as a means of address and becomes an instrument of retention. It fixes the figure within the field of visibility, making it available for endless repetition, citation, and reproduction of accusation [Butler, 1997; Dean, 2010].

In this sense, cancel culture is structurally incompatible with the figure of “Nobody”. Odysseus’ response would, within its logic, be interpreted not as a rhetorical operation, but as an additional ground for accusation: the refusal of a name is read as a form of guilt. The question “why are you hiding?” already contains the verdict. Anonymity here does not protect – it aggravates [Brown, 1995].

It is crucial that cancel culture does not merely produce a victim – it requires a victim in the form of a name. The victim must be named in order to be effective. Without a name, neither collective outrage, nor the distribution of responsibility, nor the maintenance of the cycle of repetition is possible. This is why cancellation always operates through a concrete figure, even when it formally claims to be directed against a “phenomenon”, a “structure”, or a “problem” [Girard, 1986].

Within this regime, the name performs a dual function. On the one hand, it renders the victim visible and available for collective action. On the other, it itself becomes an object of destruction. The name of the cancelled subject loses its capacity to function as an address and begins to operate as a label. It no longer designates a speaker – it designates a violation. In this sense, the victim’s name no longer belongs to them: it is appropriated and incorporated into the circulation of public self-evidence [Bourdieu, 1991].

Thus emerges a paradoxical form of self-sacrifice within cancel culture. In striving for maximal visibility and moral clarity, it sacrifices the very possibility of distinguishing between the name as address and the name as verdict. The name becomes irreversible. It can no longer be reinterpreted, reclaimed, or “said otherwise”. The archive does not forget – but neither does it understand [Chun, 2016].

Cancel culture demands one-eyed vision not in a metaphorical, but in a structural sense. It is capable of seeing only at a single scale – the scale of the evident violation. Everything that does not fit this scale – context, change, temporal distance, irony, rhetorical complexity – is declared noise, justification, or manipulation [Jay, 1993].

Thus a regime of cyclical vision takes shape. Cancellation reproduces itself through the repetition of the same gaze, the same utterance, the same accusatory gesture. Each new act adds no information – it merely confirms self-evidence. The cycle closes, and it is precisely in this closure that cancel culture derives its force [Dean, 2010].

Yet here its limit also emerges. One-eyed vision is incapable of perspective. It does not distinguish distances, does not perceive depth, and does not recognize movement. For this reason, cancel culture struggles with return, change, and forgiveness. These phenomena require at least a form of binocularity – the capacity to hold contradictory images simultaneously [Merleau-Ponty, 1964].

As in the case of Polyphemus, one-eyedness is not a final stage. It leads to blindness. The constant reproduction of self-evidence exhausts the very capacity to see. When each new case is already inscribed within a ready-made schema, reality ceases to resist interpretation – and therefore ceases to be visible [Han, 2017].

Cancel culture gradually loses the distinction between violation and accusation, between action and reputation, between event and archive. It begins to see not the world, but its own repetitions. In this sense, it indeed sacrifices the possibility of seeing – sacrifices perspective for the sake of immediate clarity. It is here that the figure of Polyphemus ceases to be merely a metaphor of an external enemy. He becomes a structure of publicity itself – a publicity that first demands univocal vision, then loses depth, and ultimately is left with a cry that can no longer be heard as a signal, but only as noise [Detienne & Vernant, 1978].

If in the classical sacrificial mechanism the victim is offered in order to restore order, then in cancel culture a fundamental shift occurs: the victim becomes the very mechanism that secures the visibility of order. Cancel culture does not merely produce a victim – in the process of its own reproduction, it sacrifices the very possibility of seeing, distinguishing, and bringing closure. This sacrifice is neither recognized nor reflected upon, yet it is precisely what renders the mechanism stable [Girard, 1977].

Cancellation functions as a system incapable of stopping without losing its own legitimacy. Each act of exclusion requires confirmation by the next. Each gesture of condemnation demands repetition; otherwise, it loses its status as self-evident. Thus, cancellation does not so much resolve tension as translate it into a regime of continuous circulation. Collective excitation is not discharged – it is sustained [Zuboff, 2019].

In this sense, cancel culture sacrifices finality. It refuses the possibility of saying “enough”, since any closure would appear as a betrayal of self-evidence. The victim no longer dies symbolically – they remain within an endless present of accusation. Along with this, the very possibility of sacrifice as an event disappears: violence loses its form and becomes background [Girard, 1977; Girard, 1986].

A decisive role in this process is played by the algorithmic logic of digital publicity. The algorithm is not a subject of violence and does not deliver verdicts. It merely amplifies what is already being reproduced. Yet it is precisely this formal neutrality that makes it the functional equivalent of a priest without an altar or ritual [Dean, 2010; Zuboff, 2019].

The tag, the repetition, the trend – these are not instruments of communication, but elements of cyclical movement. The tag does not explain or argue; it connects. Repetition does not clarify; it fixes. The trend does not evaluate; it normalizes. Together, they form a *kyklos* – a closed circle of visibility in which meaning moves not forward, but along a circumference [Chun, 2016].

The algorithm does not distinguish between true and false, just and unjust, completed and requiring interruption. It distinguishes only intensity. This is precisely why cancel culture proves especially compatible with the algorithmic environment: an accusation devoid of finality is ideally suited for endless amplification. Each repetition adds no new content, but increases the weight of what has already been said [Dean, 2010].

Here a decisive shift occurs. Whereas one-eyedness once secured self-evidence, it now becomes superfluous. Algorithmic publicity no longer requires even a single eye. Vision is

replaced by correlation. Reality by statistics. The event by pattern. In this regime, cancel culture goes blind not because it is deprived of sight, but because it ceases to need it [Jay, 1993].

It no longer looks – it counts. It does not distinguish, but correlates. It does not remember, but retrieves. Memory here is not narrative; it is flat. Cancel culture sacrifices imagination: the capacity to envisage an alternative development, a different outcome, another interpretation is lost as inefficient. The imagined reality of the community – the space in which return, change, and difference remain possible – is replaced by a model in which only the repetition of what has already been fixed is permissible [Anderson, 2006; Chun, 2016].

The cycle becomes the norm. Return becomes suspicion. Interruption becomes a threat. Within this logic, anyone who attempts to step outside the circle is perceived as a violator of order, even when that order leads nowhere but to its own reproduction. Thus, *kyklos* becomes the embodiment of dogmatism without doctrine, belief without creed, violence without a name. Its force lies not in asserting truth, but in eliminating alternative trajectories [Foucault, 1977].

It is here that cancel culture ultimately becomes a victim of itself – a sacrifice offered for the stability of a mechanism that can no longer stop without losing its own legitimacy (Kafka!).

Within this space, the figure of Odysseus once again becomes significant – but no longer as a trickster, nor as a savior. He appears as a reminder that there exists a movement that does not coincide with the cycle; a path that does not close upon repetition; a departure that is not equivalent to defeat [Detienne & Vernant, 1978; Montiglio, 2005]. Yet this exit is no longer guaranteed. In algorithmic publicity, any maneuver risks being immediately transformed into a new pattern, any withdrawal into yet another tag. Polytopy here becomes not a strategy of success, but a form of risk. It is precisely this risk that marks the limit of cancel culture. Where the circle begins to demand ever greater acceleration, where repetition becomes an end in itself, where visibility definitively replaces vision – there arises the possibility of interruption. Not as a decision, but as a breakdown. Not as a gesture, but as a pause.

A pause that the algorithm cannot process.

Conclusion: After the Circle. The analysis of cancel culture as a rhetorical and algorithmic regime makes it possible to understand it not merely as a form of public condemnation or moral regulation, but as a specific configuration of visibility in which violence loses its event-character while retaining its effectiveness. Within this regime, exclusion no longer requires recognition or completion; it is reproduced as a circular movement in which repetition replaces argumentation and self-evidence replaces distinction.

Cancel culture appears not so much as a mechanism for producing victims, but as a process in which the victim loses the status of an event, while the community loses the capacity for perspective. The striving for maximal clarity and immediate moral reaction leads to a paradoxical result: publicity loses depth, time loses direction, and responsibility loses localization. Violence ceases to be something that is carried out and becomes something that happens by itself – as an effect of the circulation of speech, attention, and tacit consent.

The figure of the Cyclops, in this context, is no longer merely a metaphor of unilateral vision, but an indication of the limit of the very logic of self-evidence. Algorithmic publicity no longer requires even a single eye: it functions without vision, replacing it with correlation, calculation, and repetition. Thus, cancel culture sacrifices not only particular subjects, but the very possibility of imagination and return – the capacity to see otherwise, without which the public sphere becomes a closed circuit of self-confirmation.

Yet the limit of the circle is not a point of resolution. It rather marks a zone of breakdown in which the previous metaphors – vision, blindness, self-evidence – prove insufficient. Where cancellation ceases to see and even ceases to require sight, a different kind of vulnerability emerges: the loss of control, a false proximity to the goal, the breakdown of the very means of movement.

At this point, the next analytical step requires a shift in optics. If in this article cancel culture has been examined as a regime of cyclical reproduction and loss of perspective, further

analysis will turn to situations in which danger arises not from closure, but from a false return; not from repetition, but from the error of proximity.

The figure of Aeolus will point to the problem of control and trust: to how the loss of control occurs not far from the goal, but at the very threshold of Ithaca. The Laestrygonians will allow us to fix the moment of irreversible loss – not symbolic, but material – when the cost of error becomes disproportionate. Circe, in turn, will lead the analysis toward the transformation of the subject, where the loss of human form occurs not through exclusion, but through voluntary entry into a regime that deprives one of speech and distinction.

If the Cyclops marked the limit of vision, then these subsequent figures will mark the limits of navigation, form, and selfhood. Where publicity is no longer blind, but disoriented; where the path is open, yet the means of movement are undermined; where danger lies not in the verdict, but in transformation.

This will no longer be an analysis of the circle, but an analysis of regression. Not the moment of capture, but the moment of losing one's course. And perhaps it is here that another form of resistance becomes discernible – not through distinguishing the self-evident, but through preserving the capacity not to rush toward return.

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ЦИКЛІЧНЕ БАЧЕННЯ: КУЛЬТУРА СКАСУВАННЯ ТА ВТРАТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті здійснюється філософський аналіз культури скасування (cancel culture) як специфічного режиму публічної очевидності, що формується в умовах цифрової публічності й характеризується поступовою втратою перспективи, глибини й здатності бачити інакше. Вихідна теза дослідження полягає в тому, що сучасне публічне насильство дедалі рідше постає як подія з чіткою процедурою, відповідальністю й символічною фінальністю, і дедалі частіше функціонує як режим: безперервний, децентралізований і самовідтворюваний через повтор, архівування й алгоритмічне посилення.

Культура скасування розглядається не як окрема моральна практика чи форма соціальної санкції, а як симптом глибшого зсуву публічності: переходу від діалогу та аргументації до риторики очевидності, у якій складність сприймається як загроза, а альтернативна перспектива – як дефект зору. Центральним аналітичним поняттям виступає «циклічний зір» – режим сприйняття, в якому повтор заміщує розуміння, коло – маршрут, а очевидність – істину. У такому режимі виключення

здійснюється без формального рішення чи проголошеного вироку й виникає як побічний ефект колективної згоди «не втручатися».

Методологічно дослідження спирається на поєднання дискурсивного, феноменологічного й концептуального аналізу, а також на структурне прочитання міфологічних фігур. Гомерівський Кіклоп (Поліфем) інтерпретується не як образ архаїчної дикості, а як модель одноперспективного бачення, що не допускає сумніву, діалогу й повернення. Йому протиставляється політропна навігація Одиссея – риторична логіка зсуву, затримки й відмови від остаточної ідентифікації («Ніхто»), яка дозволяє зберігати смисл і суб'єктність у середовищі риторичного захоплення.

У висновку обґрунтовується, що культура скасування не лише виробляє жертву, але й поступово жертвує самою можливістю перспективи, уяви й завершення. Філософський аналіз циклічного зору постає як форма критичного спротиву, спрямована на відновлення розрізень між очевидністю й істиною, повтором і розумінням, колом і шляхом, без яких публічність втрачає здатність бути простором спільного мислення.

Ключові слова: культура скасування, циклічний зір, публічна очевидність, риторика, публічне насильство, алгоритмічна публічність, Кіклоп.

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