

<https://doi.org/10.26565/2226-0994-2026-74-30>
УДК 1:17.03

Kateryna Kuznetsova, Volodymyr Panov

THE RHETORIC OF TRAGIC CHOICE: WHEN NAVIGATION DEMANDS SACRIFICE

This article provides a philosophical analysis of tragic choice as a specific mode of navigation within contemporary publicity, where forward movement becomes possible only at the cost of a pre-acknowledged loss. Unlike situations of disorientation or information scarcity, tragic choice emerges under conditions of extreme clarity: all options are known, all consequences are foreseeable, yet no decision can be "correct" in a normative sense. In this mode, navigation ceases to be a search for the optimal path and transforms into the management of inevitable damage.

The analysis centers on the mythological episode of Scylla and Charybdis, treated not as an allegory of danger but as a model for public decision-making in the absence of acceptable alternatives. Scylla is interpreted as a figure of guaranteed, localized sacrifice that allows for the preservation of elective agency and the assumption of responsibility for the trajectory. Conversely, Charybdis represents the logic of total risk, where responsibility dissolves into the scale of potential catastrophe. Odysseus's choice of Scylla is conceptualized as a rejection of the "catastrophe alibi" and an acceptance of tragic responsibility. The subsequent analysis focuses on the episode of Thrinacia, where tragic choice is no longer exercised but delegated. The violation of the taboo on the Island of the Sun is interpreted as the collapse of the decision-making structure itself: knowledge no longer restrains action, and sacrifice is produced automatically, without a subject to claim it. In this context, Thrinacia serves as a model for contemporary cancel culture, where violence is enacted not through a conscious act, but through procedures, repetition, and collective reaction devoid of addressed responsibility. The article demonstrates that tragic choice does not vanish in modern publicity but is radically transformed: from recognized sacrifice to delegated violence without a subject. This shift destroys navigation as a collective movement, leaving only a solitary continuation of the path for those capable of not delegating responsibility even in a situation of irreversibility.

Keywords: *tragic choice; navigation; sacrifice; responsibility; Scylla and Charybdis; Thrinacia; cancel culture; publicity; rhetoric of necessity; violence; mythological models.*

Tragedy does not begin where a mistake is made, nor where the path suddenly breaks off. It begins at the point where the path continues – but any of its variants requires loss. Not error, not delusion, not blindness, but a conscious sacrifice. Where choice ceases to be a means of salvation and becomes a form of calculating damage [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988].

It is precisely in this zone – between the monster and the whirlpool – that navigation changes its ontological status. It is no longer tied to the search for the correct direction, nor does it rely on the distinction between true and false. Here, navigation means accepting that movement is possible only at the cost of destruction – of someone's life, someone's body, someone's possibility of return. The course is preserved not despite sacrifice, but because of it [Agamben, 1998; Girard, 1986].

Contemporary publicity increasingly finds itself in such a configuration. This is not about catastrophes as exceptional events, but about structural situations in which any decision is already marked as incomplete, unjust, and irreversible. Political crises, wars, states of emergency, managed collapses – all reproduce the same logic: there is no choice without loss, yet refusal to choose is equated with an even greater catastrophe. In this sense, the tragic ceases to be a literary genre and becomes a mode of public governance [Arendt, 2003; Virilio, 2006].

The philosophical difficulty here lies in the fact that familiar ethical and rhetorical frameworks prove inapplicable. Appeals to correctness, humanity, or the universal good do not

© Kuznetsova K. Y., Panov V. Y., 2026.



This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0.

function in a situation where the good cannot be preserved in its entirety. In tragic choice, there are no innocents – but guilt also ceases to be individual. It is distributed, diffused, delegated, becoming a structure [Butler, 2004].

For this reason, the figure of the victim inevitably emerges in such situations. Not as moral compensation and not as an act of redemption, but as a functional condition for the continuation of the path. The victim here does not restore order – it makes movement itself possible. Without it, navigation halts completely, dissolving either into paralysis or into the whirlpool of total destruction [Girard, 1986; Benjamin, 1978].

The mythological episode between Scylla and Charybdis captures this logic. Before Odysseus there is no “correct” decision. There are two evils, incommensurable and incomparable in ethical terms. The choice between them cannot be justified – it can only be accepted. And this is what makes it tragic: responsibility does not disappear, yet it cannot be discharged either by argument or by appeal to necessity [Homer, 1996; Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988].

Unlike earlier stages of the journey, it is no longer possible here to delegate freedom, dissolve into comfort, or come to rest in truth. The archive has already been opened, illusions have been lost, the voice has already spoken. Navigation returns – but in the form of heavy, ungrateful labor, where every decision leaves behind the dead. This is neither heroism nor feat. It is the management of catastrophe, in which maintaining the trajectory is purchased at the cost of losses that are foreknown and therefore all the more unbearable [Blanchot, 1995; Agamben, 1998].

Contemporary cancel culture and practices of public exclusion reveal a deep structural affinity with this logic. Exclusion here is increasingly framed as a “necessary sacrifice” for the sake of preserving integrity, security, or course. The rhetoric of tragic choice makes it possible to present destruction as compelled, and responsibility as impersonal. In this regime, the victim ceases to be a scandal and becomes a procedure [Brown, 1995; Butler, 2009; Norris, 2023].

Thus, the problem addressed by this article lies not in the moral evaluation of tragic decisions, nor in the search for justifications of violence. Rather, it concerns the clarification of the rhetorical and navigational conditions under which publicity begins to conceive of sacrifice as an acceptable cost of movement, and of choice as a form of inevitable loss [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988]. Between Scylla of guaranteed loss and Charybdis of total disappearance, a space opens in which navigation is possible only through the acceptance of the tragic – and where every preserved course already bears within it the shadow of the sacrifice made.

The relevance of addressing the rhetoric of tragic choice is determined by the transformation of contemporary public space, in which the very possibility of a “correct” decision increasingly disappears. Political, military, social, and media crises produce situations in which any action entails irreversible loss, while refusal to act is equated with even more destructive consequences [Arendt, 2003]. Under such conditions, publicity ceases to function as a space for discussing alternatives and increasingly operates as a mechanism for distributing damage.

Contemporary culture is becoming less oriented toward preventing catastrophes and more toward managing them. Navigation in such conditions means not the search for an optimal path, but a choice between forms of evil that are incommensurable in moral terms, yet comparable in pragmatic ones [Virilio, 2006]. It is precisely here that a specific rhetoric becomes necessary – a rhetoric of the tragic, which makes it possible to legitimize decisions that cannot be justified and to present sacrifice as an inevitable condition of continued movement.

This problem becomes particularly acute in the context of war, states of emergency, and digital publicity, where decisions are made under conditions of time scarcity, pressure of intensity, and the impossibility of complete knowledge [Butler, 2009]. In such situations, rhetoric ceases to function as an instrument of persuasion and increasingly takes on the role of existential accompaniment to catastrophe: it does not prove, but fixes; it does not persuade, but formalizes the inevitable. The victim here becomes not an exception to the norm, but its silent foundation.

The mythological scene between Scylla and Charybdis allows this structure to be grasped in concentrated form. It is neither an allegory of a dangerous journey nor a moral parable, but a model of a situation in which navigation is possible only through the acceptance of loss [Homer,

1996]. The appeal to this figure is relevant not as a reconstruction of an ancient narrative, but as a means of philosophical analysis of contemporary forms of public decision-making, where the tragic ceases to be an event and becomes a regime.

The problem of tragic choice has a rich philosophical and cultural tradition. In classical philosophy and aesthetics, tragedy was understood primarily as a clash of equally binding values that does not admit harmonious resolution [Benjamin, 1978]. In political and social theory, the tragic has been treated as the limit of rational governance, as a zone in which universal norms lose their applicability.

Contemporary studies of public violence, sovereignty, sacrifice, and exclusion have convincingly shown that violence may be enacted not only as an act of coercion, but also as a structural consequence of decisions made “in the name of necessity” [Agamben, 1998]. Analyses of scapegoat mechanisms, biopolitical regimes, and logics of the state of exception have revealed how the victim becomes integrated into order as a condition of its preservation [Girard, 1986].

At the same time, in most existing approaches, tragic choice is considered either in ethical terms – as a dilemma of responsibility – or in political terms – as the result of institutional pressure [Arendt, 2003]. Far less often is it conceptualized as a navigational and rhetorical structure in which the decision is not so much chosen as articulated and framed as inevitable. The question of how rhetoric transforms loss into an acceptable cost of movement, and the victim into a functional element of the route, remains insufficiently clarified [Bourdieu, 1993].

The mythological figures of Scylla and Charybdis have traditionally been interpreted as symbols of danger, fate, or fatal choice [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988]. However, their potential as models of public decision-making, the distribution of responsibility, and the legitimization of sacrifice under conditions where no “right” path exists has scarcely been mobilized in analyses of contemporary forms of catastrophe management and public violence. This study addresses that lacuna. It proposes to consider tragic choice not as an exception to rationality, but as a specific regime of navigation in which rhetoric plays a decisive role: not by justifying violence, but by rendering it possible; not by removing responsibility, but by redistributing it in such a way that the path continues – at the cost of a loss acknowledged in advance [Benjamin, 1978].

The aim of the article is a philosophical analysis of tragic choice as a specific regime of navigation in contemporary publicity, in which forward movement becomes possible only at the cost of a loss recognized beforehand. The study seeks to clarify how, in situations where no “correct” path exists, navigation ceases to be the search for an optimal solution and is transformed into the management of inevitable damage [Virilio, 2006].

Within this aim, the article pursues the following analytical tasks: to distinguish between choice as an act of rational preference and tragic choice as a structure in which any decision entails sacrifice; to analyze the mythological figures of Scylla and Charybdis as a model of a situation in which navigation is possible only between incommensurable forms of loss [Homer, 1996]; to show how rhetoric frames such decisions as necessary and thereby renders them acceptable in public space; to trace the connection between tragic choice and the mechanisms of sacrifice, the distribution of responsibility, and cancel culture [Girard, 1986]; and finally, to outline the transformation of the navigating subject, who shifts from seeking the “right path” to making decisions under conditions of irreversibility [Agamben, 1998].

The methodology of the article is constructed as navigational rather than linearly deductive. The study does not aim to derive a universal principle of tragic choice, but focuses on analyzing those regimes of movement in which choice loses the character of optimization and assumes the form of an existential decision without exit [Blanchot, 1995]. Hermeneutic analysis is employed to work with mythological texts, above all the episode between Scylla and Charybdis, where the extreme situation of the impossibility of a “good” choice is articulated. These figures are treated not as allegories or illustrations, but as analytical models of navigation under conditions of structural catastrophe [Detienne & Vernant, 1978]. Rhetorical analysis makes it possible to identify the ways in which tragic choice is articulated, legitimized, and stabilized in public space. Particular attention is given to the rhetoric of necessity, damage minimization, and

the “lesser evil” as forms of discourse in which sacrifice ceases to be perceived as an exception and becomes an element of the route [Butler, 1997]. A socio-political perspective is applied to conceptualize the connection between tragic choice and the mechanisms of sacrifice, exclusion, and the distribution of responsibility. In this context, the tragic is treated not as an aesthetic category, but as a regime of public action in which violence is not denied but framed as an inevitable condition for the continuation of the path [Schmitt, 2005]. Such a methodological combination makes it possible to consider tragic choice not as a moral anomaly or a failure of rationality, but as a stable form of navigation in contemporary publicity – a form in which movement is preserved, yet always at the cost of a loss that is acknowledged and articulated in advance [Žižek, 2008].

Tragic choice does not begin where knowledge is absent, nor where the subject is disoriented. On the contrary, it arises in a situation of ultimate clarity. All options are discernible. All consequences are known. Error is excluded – because there is nothing left to err about. Any decision will be both correct and destructive at once [Arendt, 2003].

In this sense, the space between Scylla and Charybdis is not a space of alternatives. It is neither a fork nor a crossroads. It is a narrow passage where movement is possible only on the condition of a loss accepted in advance. Navigation here does not seek the best path – it selects a form of damage [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988].

Scylla and Charybdis are not symmetrical threats. They cannot be compared on a scale of risk, as if one were dealing with probabilities or benefits. Scylla guarantees sacrifice: the loss of part of the crew, visible, calculable, and personalized. Charybdis, by contrast, offers the possibility of total disappearance – not sacrifice, but annihilation, in which guilt, responsibility, and even the fact of choice itself vanish [Benjamin, 1978].

The tragic character of the situation lies not in the cruelty of the world, but in the structure of the decision itself. To choose Scylla is to consent to sacrifice, knowing exactly whom one is giving up. To choose Charybdis is to risk everything, including the very possibility of bearing witness to the choice. Between guaranteed loss and potential catastrophe there is no “correct” answer. There are only different regimes of bearing responsibility [Agamben, 1998].

Scylla embodies a form of violence that is permitted precisely because it is limited. This monster does not destroy everything. It takes a strictly measured share. Its victims can be counted, named, mourned. This is the source of its rhetorical force [Girard, 1986].

Guaranteed sacrifice is easier to legitimize than abstract risk. It allows control over the narrative to be maintained: we knew, we chose, we minimized the damage. In this regime, navigation turns into an accounting of losses. The decision appears rational because the damage is finite [Bourdieu, 1993].

The rhetoric of Scylla is the rhetoric of the “lesser evil”. It is built on comparison, calculation, and an appeal to necessity. The sacrifice is not concealed, yet it is not called into question. It is declared an inevitable part of the path. Responsibility for it can be redistributed: the decision was difficult, but there were no other options [Butler, 1997].

In public space, this logic is reproduced whenever exclusion or violence is justified by the preservation of the whole. Someone must be sacrificed – for the sake of the system, order, forward movement. Scylla always acts openly. It does not hide or disguise itself. Its power lies in its transparency [Schmitt, 2005].

Charybdis is of a fundamentally different kind. It does not offer sacrifice – it offers disappearance. In its logic, there is no place for individual responsibility, because there are no surviving witnesses. If Scylla leaves bodies behind, Charybdis erases all traces [Arendt, 1963].

The rhetoric of Charybdis is a rhetoric of total risk, in which the very idea of choice dissolves. One can say: we did not know, we hoped, we took a risk. Responsibility is diffused within the scale of catastrophe. No one chose death – it simply happened [Žižek, 2008].

Charybdis often appears morally preferable: it does not require a direct decision about sacrifice. It preserves the illusion of innocence. If Scylla forces one to admit, “we decided who would die”, Charybdis allows one to say, “it just happened that way”. In this sense, Charybdis is

not merely a whirlpool, but a form of suspending responsibility through an appeal to fate, chance, or system. Where the possibility of assigning blame disappears, the subject of choice itself also disappears [Ellul, 1964].

Odysseus's decision is crucial precisely because he chooses Scylla. He chooses guaranteed loss over abstract disappearance. In doing so, he refuses the alibi of catastrophe [Arendt, 2003]. He knows whom he will lose. He knows that he will live with this knowledge. And yet he makes the decision. This is neither heroism nor cold calculation. It is the acceptance of responsibility for the trajectory, even when that trajectory inevitably passes through death [Agamben, 1998].

Here navigation reaches its tragic form. It is no longer tied to the search for salvation. It is tied to sustaining the subject in a situation where any movement is traumatic, yet stopping means the end [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988].

Odysseus does not minimize evil – he accepts it as part of the path. This is what distinguishes tragic choice from cynical calculation. The sacrifice is neither justified nor denied. It is acknowledged [Benjamin, 1978].

In contemporary publicity, tragic choice is increasingly masked as rational necessity. The rhetoric of minimal damage, inevitable losses, “there was no other option”, reproduces the logic of Scylla without naming it as tragic [Bourdieu, 1993]. At the same time, the rhetoric of systemic failures, force majeure, and unpredictable consequences reproduces the model of Charybdis, in which responsibility dissolves into the scale of processes [Žižek, 2008].

Between these two regimes, publicity oscillates, avoiding the essential point: the recognition that a choice was and remains a choice, even when it has no correct answer [Arendt, 1963].

Scylla is not merely a monster that devours six men. In philosophical terms, she appears as a structural node of the sacrificial mechanism. It is no coincidence that her victims are countable, visible, and distributed in time. This is violence that can be framed, explained, and – most importantly – acknowledged [Girard, 1986].

It is precisely this acknowledged character that makes Scylla's sacrifice rhetorically bearable. It allows the situation to be stabilized through the localization of evil: death does not spread across the entire trajectory but is concentrated in specific bodies. The sacrifice is not denied – it is singled out. This is what constitutes its functionality [Butler, 2009].

The scapegoat mechanism operates not because the victim is hidden, but because it is sufficient. It seals the rupture. Scylla is a figure of violence that recognizes itself as violence, yet can be integrated into the rationality of the path. The sacrifice does not halt movement – it pays for it [Girard, 1986].

It is important to emphasize: Scylla's sacrifice is not arbitrary, yet neither is it just. It is inevitable not in a moral but in a structural sense. Someone must be given up so that others may pass. This is neither punishment nor guilt. It is the distribution of damage as a condition for the continuation of the trajectory [Schmitt, 2005].

Here tragic choice is still preserved as choice. Odysseus does not hide behind fate, does not appeal to chance, and does not delegate the decision. He assumes it – and thereby remains the subject of navigation, albeit at the cost of irreparable loss [Arendt, 2003].

The crucial difference between the logic of Scylla and that of subsequent catastrophes lies in the following: here the sacrifice does not abolish the subject. On the contrary, it affirms it – as the one who chooses and lives with the consequences [Butler, 2004].

The sacrificial mechanism in Scylla does not destroy navigation. It makes it tragic, but still possible. The path continues not because evil has been eliminated, but because it has been taken upon oneself. This is the moment when navigation requires not knowledge or speed, but the capacity to endure guilt [Agamben, 1998].

However, it is precisely here that the limit of this mechanism becomes apparent. Sacrifice, even when acknowledged, remains a temporary solution. It stabilizes the path only over a short distance. If tragic choice becomes habitual, it loses its tragic character – and turns into a technique [Ellul, 1964].

This is why the next episode – Thrinacia – is so radical. Here tragic choice is no longer enacted. It is delegated [Arendt, 2003].

On the island of Helios, the prohibition is clear, the consequences are known, the warnings have been given. Unlike Scylla, there is no forced situation here. There is a pause. There is waiting. There is hunger – but there is also knowledge [Homer, 1996].

And yet it is precisely here that the final collapse of navigation occurs.

The decision is no longer made by Odysseus. It is distributed among the companions, justified by circumstances, dissolved into a collective “we could not do otherwise” [Arendt, 1963]. The sacrifice here is not chosen – it is carried out by circumventing choice.

This is a fundamentally different type of catastrophe. If Scylla required a subject capable of assuming guilt, then Thrinacia destroys the very figure of the responsible subject. There is no scapegoat here – because no one assumes the role of the one who sacrifices [Girard, 1986]. The eating of the sacred cattle is neither error nor weakness. It is the disintegration of the very structure of decision. The prohibition is violated not because it is unclear, but because it no longer holds meaning [Schmitt, 2005].

In the scene of Thrinacia, tragic choice is replaced by survival without a horizon. Hunger becomes an argument, and necessity a justification. Sacrifice ceases to be an act and turns into automatism [Ellul, 1964]. For this reason, the retribution here is total. All perish. Not because the punishment is cruel, but because navigation has already become impossible. A path on which choice is delegated cannot be continued. It breaks off not because of an evil fate, but because of the loss of a subject capable of choosing [Agamben, 1998].

If Scylla is tragedy, then Thrinacia is the end of the tragic. There is no longer anyone to bear guilt and no one to make a decision. Only the process remains [Benjamin, 1978].

In this sense, Thrinacia is an extreme model of contemporary publicity, where responsibility dissolves into procedures, collective reactions, and algorithmic “it just happened” [Dean, 2010]. There is sacrifice, but it is not acknowledged. There are losses, but they are not reflected upon. A choice existed – but no one made it.

Navigation here collapses completely, because the path is no longer sustained either by heroism or by tragic courage. It dissolves into the hunger of the present, where the future is no longer thought, and the past is not retained as a lesson [Fisher, 2014].

Thrinacia is the point at which tragic choice ceases to be choice and becomes procedure. Unlike the Scyllan sacrifice, where violence was localized, acknowledged, and taken upon oneself, here it dissolves. Where no one dares to say “I”, the decision does not disappear – it acquires a monstrous autonomy, becoming the mechanics of fate [Butler, 2009].

Odysseus’s companions know the prohibition. They have been warned. The consequences have been explained to them. This is crucial: the catastrophe of Thrinacia does not arise from ignorance, fear, or suddenness. It emerges from a condition in which knowledge no longer governs action. The prohibition exists, but it does not bind. The truth has been spoken, but it does not act. Navigation is formally preserved – and precisely for that reason, it collapses [Foucault, 1972].

The sacrifice on Thrinacia is not chosen. It is a byproduct of collective survival. Hunger, exhaustion, waiting for the wind – all of this becomes justification, but not cause. The cause lies deeper: the subject of tragic decision disappears. No one says “I”. Everyone says “we”. And in this “we”, responsibility evaporates [Bourdieu, 1993].

It is precisely at this point that Thrinacia becomes a model of cancel culture. Cancel culture does not operate like Scyllan violence – visible, acknowledged, tragically assumed. It operates in a Thrinacian manner: without addressee, without subject, without a moment of decision [Arendt, 2003]. Violence here is not committed – it “happens”. Not because someone intended to destroy, but because no one stopped the process [Ellul, 1964].

Exclusion in cancel culture does not require malicious intent. It is carried out through consent without decision, through repetition without an act, through “everyone thinks so”, “the

algorithm showed it”, “the community reacted” [Dean, 2010]. The victim is not sacrificed – it emerges. It can neither be revoked, nor reflected upon, nor worked through [Butler, 2004].

Thrinacia is the scene where sacrifice becomes devoid of meaning. The sacred cattle are eaten not for salvation, not for sacrifice, and not for rebellion. They are eaten because the procedure of life continued while navigation was no longer sustained as a task. So too in cancel culture: the subject is destroyed not for the sake of purification or justice, but because the archive and reaction continue to operate [Derrida, 1995].

The punishment that follows Thrinacia is not retribution in a moral sense. It is structural [Agamben, 1998]. All perish except Odysseus – not because he is righteous, but because he did not delegate the choice [Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1988]. He may err, may be cruel, may be cunning – but he remains the subject of decision. Thrinacia destroys the collective as a form of navigation. After it, the path can continue only for one who is capable of bearing responsibility alone [Arendt, 1963]. This is not the elevation of the hero, but a tragic narrowing of the space of action. The subject can no longer rely on “we”, nor on procedure, nor on consensus [Bourdieu, 1993].

In this sense, Thrinacia marks the end of publicity as a shared movement. After delegated violence, the path becomes radically solitary [Butler, 2009].

Conclusion. When choice is delegated, navigation becomes impossible.

The analysis of Scylla and Thrinacia makes it possible to fix a fundamental distinction between two types of violence in public space.

Scylla embodies tragic choice: violence acknowledged as violence; sacrifice localized and assumed; a decision that destroys, yet preserves the subject. This is violence after which the path remains possible – though at the cost of irreparable loss.

Thrinacia, by contrast, demonstrates violence without choice. There is no tragic gesture, no subject of decision, not even the illusion of sacrifice. There is only a process in which prohibition loses force, truth ceases to bind, and responsibility disperses into collective automatism. It is precisely this type of violence that underlies contemporary forms of exclusion, where no one acts – and therefore no one is guilty.

In this light, cancel culture appears not as a moral anomaly, but as a Thrinacian regime of publicity: violence without a subject, sacrifice without meaning, decision without a decision-maker. It is not a scene of conflict, but a scene of exhausted navigation.

After Thrinacia, the path is possible only in one mode – outside collective justifications, outside procedures, outside the comfort of consensus.

Yet even this path does not lead directly to return. Beyond tragic choice and delegated violence, another, far more seductive threat emerges – a space where choice is no longer required at all.

The island of Calypso is neither catastrophe nor violence. It is rest. Immortality. The absence of loss. The suspension of history as such. Here navigation is not destroyed – it becomes unnecessary.

REFERENCES

- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford University Press.
- Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. Viking Press.
- Arendt, H. (2003). *Responsibility and judgment*. Schocken Books.
- Benjamin, W. (1978). Critique of violence. In *Reflections: Essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings* (P. Demetz, Ed.; E. Jephcott, Trans., pp. 277 – 300). Schocken Books. (Original work published 1921)
- Blanchot, M. (1995). *The writing of the disaster* (A. Smock, Trans.). University of Nebraska Press. (Original work published 1980)
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *Language and symbolic power* (G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Brown, W. (1995). *States of injury: Power and freedom in late modernity*. Princeton University Press.

- Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.
- Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso.
- de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life* (S. Rendall, Trans.). University of California Press.
- Dean, J. (2010). *Blog theory: Feedback and capture in the circuits of drive*. Polity.
- Derrida, J. (1995). *Archive fever: A Freudian impression* (E. Prenowitz, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.
- Detienne, M., & Vernant, J.-P. (1978). *Cunning intelligence in Greek culture and society* (J. Lloyd, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.
- Ellul, J. (1964). *The technological society* (J. Wilkinson, Trans.). Vintage Books. (Original work published 1954)
- Fisher, M. (2014). *Ghosts of my life: Writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures*. Zer0 Books.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Girard, R. (1986). *The scapegoat* (Y. Freccero, Trans.). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Homer. (1996). *The Odyssey* (R. Fagles, Trans.). Penguin Classics.
- Norris, P. (2023). Cancel culture: Myth or reality? *Political Studies*, 71(1), 145-174. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217211050404>
- Schmitt, C. (2005). *Political theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty* (G. Schwab, Trans.). University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1922)
- Vernant, J.-P., & Vidal-Naquet, P. (1988). *Myth and tragedy in ancient Greece* (J. Lloyd, Trans.). Zone Books.
- Virilio, P. (2006). *Speed and politics: An essay on dromology*. Semiotext(e).
- Žižek, S. (2008). *Violence: Six sideways reflections*. Picador.

Kuznetsova Kateryna Y.

PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor

Department of Theoretical and Practical Philosophy named after Professor J.B. Schad

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

4, Maidan Svobody, Kharkiv, Ukraine

E-mail: kateryna.kuznetsova@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4979-066X>

Panov Volodymyr Y.

PhD in Philosophy, Lecturer

Department of Theoretical and Practical Philosophy named after Professor J.B. Schad

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

4, Maidan Svobody, Kharkiv, Ukraine

E-mail: v.panov@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8401-915X>

Authors Contribution: All authors have contributed equally to this work

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

The article was received by the editors 10.02.2026

The article is recommended for printing 04.04.2026

The article was revised 28.03.2026

This article published 25.05.2026

РИТОРИКА ТРАГІЧНОГО ВИБОРУ: КОЛИ НАВІГАЦІЯ ВИМАГАЄ ЖЕРТВИ

Кузнецова Катерина Юріївна

кандидат філософських наук, старший викладач

кафедри теоретичної і практичної філософії імені професора Й. Б. Шада

Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна
майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, 61022, Україна
E-mail: katerny.kuznetsova@karazin.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4979-066X>

Панов Володимир Ярославович

доктор філософії, викладач
кафедри теоретичної і практичної філософії імені професора Й.-Б. Шада
Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна
майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, 61022, Україна
E-mail: v.panov@karazin.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8401-915X>

АНОТАЦІЯ

Стаття присвячена філософському аналізу трагічного вибору як специфічного режиму навігації в сучасній публічності, за якого рух уперед стає можливим лише ціною наперед визнаної втрати. На відміну від ситуацій дезорієнтації або дефіциту знання, трагічний вибір постає в умовах граничної ясності: всі варіанти відомі, всі наслідки передбачувані, але жодне рішення не може бути «правильним» у нормативному сенсі. Навігація в такому режимі перестає бути пошуком оптимального шляху й трансформується в управління неминучим збитком.

У центрі аналізу – міфологічний епізод між Сциллою і Харибдою, який розглядається не як алегорія небезпеки, а як модель публічного рішення в умовах відсутності прийнятної альтернативи. Сцилла інтерпретується як фігура гарантованої, локалізованої жертви, що дозволяє зберегти суб'єктність вибору та взяти відповідальність за траєкторію. Харибда, навпаки, постає як логіка тотального ризику, де відповідальність розчиняється в масштабі можливої катастрофи. Вибір Одиссея на користь Сцилли осмислюється як відмова від «алібі катастрофи» та прийняття трагічної відповідальності. Подальший аналіз зосереджується на епізоді Трінакрії, де трагічний вибір більше не здійснюється, а делегується. Порушення заборони на острові Геліоса інтерпретується як розпад самої структури рішення: знання більше не утримує дію, а жертва виробляється автоматично, без суб'єкта, який би взяв її на себе. У цьому контексті Трінакрія постає як модель сучасної культури скасування, де насильство здійснюється не через свідомий акт, а через процедури, повтор і колективну реакцію без адресної відповідальності.

Стаття показує, що трагічний вибір не зникає в сучасній публічності, але радикально трансформується: від визнаної жертви до делегованого насильства без суб'єкта. Такий зсув руйнує навігацію як спільний рух і залишає лише самотнє продовження шляху тим, хто здатен не делегувати відповідальність навіть у ситуації необоротності.

Ключові слова: трагічний вибір; навігація; жертва; відповідальність; Сцилла і Харибда; Трінакрія; культура скасування; публічність; риторика необхідності; насильство; міфологічні моделі.

Внесок авторів: всі автори зробили рівний внесок у цю роботу

Конфлікт інтересів: автори повідомляють про відсутність конфлікту інтересів

Стаття надійшла до редакції 10.02.2026

Переглянуто 28.03.2026

Стаття рекомендована до друку 04.04.2026

Опубліковано 25.05.2026

Як цитувати / In cites: Kuznetsova, K., & Panov, V. (2026). The rhetoric of tragic choice: when navigation demands sacrifice. *The Journal of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Series Philosophy. Philosophical Peripeteias*, (74), 312-320. <https://doi.org/10.26565/2226-0994-2026-74-30>