

ALVYDAS NOREIKA

## Vytautas Kavolis and Herbert Marcuse: Controversies in Interpretation of Mythology

### *Summary*

In the paper, Lithuanian American sociologist's Vytautas Kavolis' approach to the myths of Prometheus, Narcissus and Satan is compared with the one of Herbert Marcuse, a member of the Frankfurt school. It is argued that both authors develop their approaches in diametrically opposite directions. If Marcuse treats Prometheus as a symbol of enslavement and exploitation of man caused by development of the modern industrial apparatus, then Kavolis perceives this mythological figure as an embodiment of the rebellion against supreme authority, inspired by compassion. In the eyes of the

member of the Frankfurt school, Narcissus is a symbol of man's non-reconciliation (rebellion) with the demands of the modern production apparatus, the overcoming of these demands in the distant future and the creation of a completely free and non-repressive society. Meanwhile, from Kavolis' point of view, the Marcusean Narcissus is nothing but a disguised Satan. He, like Satan, rebels not out of compassion for others, but for his own sake and because of his unmet emotional needs. The paper deals with the question, what reasons conditioned the differences in the interpretations of the myths, too.

**Keywords:** Vytautas Kavolis, Herbert Marcuse, social-psychological interpretation of mythology, political mythology.