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Vytautas Kavolis: Civilizational Analysis as a Social and Cultural Criticism

LEONIDAS DONSKIS

I become through my relation to the Thou: as I become I, I say Thou.... All real living is meeting.* (Martin Buber)

This study is an analytical attempt at mapping Vytautas Kavolis’s theoretical thought by tracing it within the framework of his social and cultural criticism. It is not easy to provide such a discursive map, since Kavolis’s theoretical legacy stands as his silent intellectual and moral autobiography. Therefore, it increases the responsibility of the author who comes to examine such an intimate and deeply personal thing as another scholar’s autobiography. Every statement and passage of Kavolis’s thought, every formulation or sequence of his working hypotheses — all of those things are permeated by Kavolis’s existential and social experiences. This is why the theoretical reconstruction of Kavolis’s social and cultural theories, if reduced to the examination of his statements’ formal logical structure or to the context and analytical organization of his thought, would enable us to employ merely a scientific jargon by pointing out those paradigms of sociological thought that have been accepted and then further elaborated by Kavolis.

Kavolis was very skeptical and critical about such a banal, trivial and even “soulless” (as Kavolis would have said himself) concept of the social sciences and the humanities and of scholarship in general. Moreover, he was quite convinced that the attitude toward scholarship and ideas, which refuses to take the multi-faceted human experiences seriously, fails to enrich somehow either scholarship as such or the individuality of a scholar himself/herself. Kavolis was extremely attentive to human diversity, spontaneity and unpredictability, let alone those empirically invisible intellectual dramas and ideological passions that essentially stimulate one’s need for constructing the critical and abalyti-

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artical thought capable of articulating both oneself and the world.

He was very much interested in the actors of various societies and historical epochs, traced back in his analytical studies and interpretive essays, — not as in certain social or cultural types but rather as in flesh-and-blood human beings whose moral stances, modes of sensibility, and nuances of emotions come to uncover the Great Chain of Being (to recall Arthur Lovejoy's term) and the mystery of societal becoming as well. This is to say that Kavolis seems to have been constantly trying to answer the question which is most puzzling for every social analyst: What is the way the organized societal life and colourful social theater spring from such ordinary and mundane things as individual self-understanding, fellowship and friendship, mutual trust, and human interaction in general?

Instead of merely examining Kavolis's theoretical constructs, I would like to make them talk to us — in order to conceive of where they came from and how they came into being. In doing so, I will trace those implications of Kavolis's thought that are evidently evoking theoretical dialogue.

I hope that such a selection of Kavolis's theoretical legacy might serve as a clue in understanding the origins and meaning of his social and cultural criticism.

Truth and Value

Many concepts and definitions of the social and cultural criticism have been offered by the twentieth-century sociologists and intellectual historians. Yet, I am not tempted to join the mainstream interpretation of the social and cultural criticism by simply reducing it to the spread of the left-wing radical ideas in the social sciences and the humanities; nor would I refer to it as a mere social disconnectiveness of a scholar/intellectual from his/her milieu; nor am I going to treat it as the allegedly obsessive revisionism. Rather, I will deal with social and cultural criticism as the immanent and inescapable part, or even inner spring, of the modern social sciences and of the humanities. Such a standpoint is the only one that makes sense from the perspective of the end of the twentieth century.

Recall Louis Dumont's statement on the necessity of reconciling truth and value which have, since Kant, been radically sep-
arated from and contrasted to each other in modern thought, i.e.,
within the framework of the modern symbolic configuration, I
would like to point out that a sharp dividing line between truth
and value, in the context of the social sciences and the humani-
ties, is artificial and even false. Moreover, the radical distinction
between truth and value simply does not work in tracing the phe-
nomena of human consciousness; it refers to the ambitious epist-
temological program of modernity, rather than to a principal char-
acteristic of the social sciences and humanities.

In the discursive universe of both the social analysis and
interpretation of culture, value reveals itself as something that
always lurks behind truth. Indeed, value is the very starting-point
in the quest for truth; therefore, the former obviously underlies
the latter. Any study in social philosophy or sociology or intellec-
tual history or anthropology or literary theory which has some
implications for social and/or cultural criticism arises from its
author's intellectual and moral autobiography, thus mapping
his/her existential and social experiences. Social analysts and/or
interpreters of culture usually arrive at the subjects of their stud-
ies through their value orientations and moral choices, rather than
through the specifically theoretical preconditions. This is why it
is so important to recall, following Max Weber, the distinction
between discovery of a topic and analysis of it. For Weber, the
identification of an object of research arose from a scientist's
value complex — while its analysis employed value-free meth-
ods. This is more than true regarding Vytautas Kavolis's moral
imagination and critical scholarship.

Vytautas Kavolis appears as one of those twentieth-century
intellectuals whose critical thought was in constant interplay with
the subjects chosen by them for analysis, and whose disciplinary
choices or methodological preferences were derived from, and
suggested by, their existential and social experiences. The ways of
looking at society and culture conceptualized and articulated by
Kavolis obviously reflect his passionate striving for active partic-
ipation in, and even symbolic correction of, social reality.

This is borne out by Kavolis's numerous texts dealing with
Lithuanian history as well as with present culture, in which he
explained where, how, and why his country failed to embrace the
norms and values he so passionately advocated: the denial of any
kind of collective oppressiveness and consensus gentium-type morality — as opposed to the principles of individual responsibility, reason and conscience; critical self-reflexivity of a society and its culture — against any sort of self-centeredness and self-righteousness; intellectual and moral sensibility towards the Other — against the sense of fatal innocence and victimization; morally committed individualism — as contrasted to both individual and collective forms of anomie. Kavolis's critical insights into the nature of various clichés and even reactionary attitudes of Lithuanian immigrants in the U.S. (from anti-Semitism, so widespread in twentieth-century Lithuania, to the lack of intellectual and moral sensibility in general), deeply permeated and penetrated by his own experiences, shed new light on sociology itself as a phenomenon bridging thought and action.

Vytautas Kavolis was born on September 8, 1930, in Kaunas, Lithuania. In 1945, the fifteen year-old boy and his parents fled to Germany and joined countless Lithuanian refugees known under the generic term of DP, that is, Displaced Persons. Having left their country occupied by the Soviet Union, the family spent four years in various refugee camps. In Tuebingen and Hanau, Germany, Kavolis finished his secondary education. Then the family moved to the U.S. where Kavolis pursued his undergraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin (1950-52) and at the University of Chicago (Summer, 1951). His graduate training took place at Harvard University (M.A., 1956; Ph.D., 1960). His doctoral dissertation was titled “Failures of Totalitarian Socialization in East Germany: A Theoretically Oriented Case Study.” In order to imagine the context of Kavolis's academic relations and personal acquaintances at Harvard, it suffices to note that Pitirim A. Sorokin and Talcott Parsons were among his professors.

The years of Kavolis's youth and maturity are equally marked by his particular attachment to Lithuania; yet, as opposed to conservative Lithuanian immigrants in the U.S. who were nostalgic about inter-war Lithuanian state and identity politics, Kavolis moved the center of his intellectual and cultural concerns to the future vision of Lithuania and its culture — the latter being depicted, in his political and moral imagination, as West-oriented, liberal, open, critical, self-reflexive, and equally sensible to itself.
and to the great themes or political/moral issues of the twentieth-century world. Although Kavolis never applied for American citizenship, thus keeping his fidelity both to the idea of Lithuanian statehood and to his own cultural identity, his political and moral stance was far from plain patriotism. Kavolis’s stance can only be described in terms of critical and even severe examination of what he passionately identified himself with — Lithuanian modernity, its consciousness and culture. Kavolis always remained an American academic by his professional vocation and theoretical context, but a Lithuanian by virtue of his choice of being social and cultural critic.

Kavolis taught sociology and comparative civilizations at Tufts University (1958-59), the Defiance College (1960-64), and Dickinson College (1964-1996). Since 1970 he was Professor of Sociology at Dickinson College. On 1975, he was promoted to the rank of Charles A. Dana Professor of Comparative Civilizations and Professor of Sociology at Dickinson. Kavolis was Visiting Professor of Sociology at the New School for Social Research (1970-71). When his native Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, he was active in numerous academic programs and research projects at Lithuanian Universities: Kavolis was Visiting Professor of Sociology and Cultural History at the University of Vilnius, Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, and at the University of Klaipeda (1992 and 1996). In 1993, Kavolis received Lithuania’s National Prize for Culture and Art for his books on the modernity and contrasting models of self-understanding in Lithuanian culture — namely, Samoningumo trajektorijos: lietuviu kulturos modernejimo aspektai [Trajectories of Consciousness: Aspects of the Modernization of Lithuanian Culture] (Chicago: Algimanto Mackaus knygu leidimo fondas, 1986) and Epochu signaturos [Epochal Signatures] (Chicago: Algimanto Mackaus knygu leidimo fondas, 1991).

Yet, the discursive map of Kavolis’s social and cultural criticism, likewise his intellectual portrait in the broader sense, would be missing a main feature if we would pass by one more important aspect of his personality and of his activities. Kavolis seems to have never been a disconnected academic professional solely locked within a narrow world of academic references and connections. I am referring not only to Kavolis’s intellectual and
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moral commitment to Lithuanian culture but also to his need for the active participation in, and symbolic correction of, society and culture that have been freely and consciously identified by Kavolis as his own.

In other words, he needed not only to construct cultural theory but to symbolically construct the dynamic cultural practice as well — such cultural practice which he could symbolically complement, correct or at least affect somehow through his explanatory framework, interpretive skill and incisiveness, and massive analytical equipment. After all, Kavolis was always striving not for the formation of his referent group sensu stricto but rather for the formation of his Seelengemeinschaft, that is, the community of souls providing some intellectual and emotional intimacy of human connection. As cultural theoretician, Kavolis always tried to transcend the purely theoretical constructs — in order to enter the dynamics and mundane reality of his own culture, and, then, to experience and describe them from within. (This is why Kavolis has come to define Lithuanian culture in terms of a certain cultural workshop, thus bridging the dimension of cultural theory and that of cultural practice: in doing so, he has been tracing and critically examining, in his own culture and its political/linguistic practices, those forms and models of the universally valid human experience that have been suggested by his comparative studies and theoretical reconstructions of society and culture.)

Exactly the same might be said about Kavolis as sociologist: he was very active in the construction of Lithuania's social and cultural reality, thus transcending the limits of the social analysis and trying to find out whether his imagined — for such a long time — community is constituting itself as the society par excellence (i.e., as a common political and legal framework for the self-activating public domain moved by both the political and moral commitment and by human trust, rather than as a mere arithmetic totality of atomized and victimized human individuals).

At this point, Kavolis appears to have been nearly the paradigmatic intellectual: his life and intellectual/moral stance may well illustrate the notion of intellectuals as the agency of consciousness. Kavolis was the intellectual per definitionem, a man
of the movement, for whom his group was of great importance not only in experiencing a collective identity/group commitment or cultivating a strong sense of “us” against “them” (although it was also the case — without his vigorous journalism, persuasion, political propagandizing, polemic passion, and even ruthless irony targeted at the conservative part of the Lithuanian immigrant community in the U.S., Kavolis would be unthinkable), but also in disseminating his social and cultural imaginations/implementing his ideas as well.³

Every intellectual movement comes into existence through a certain kind of self-legitimizing discourse or rather metadiscourse from which there result such phenomena as: theoretical strategies; methodological preferences and disciplinary choices; the proliferation of the social sciences and/or the humanities; keywords (such as “the people,” “freedom,” “tolerance,” “justice,” “equality,” “liberalism,” “human rights,” etc.); and the discourse — i.e., the complex of the modes of speaking and thinking — of something that is equally important for all members of a given group or movement.

Such a metadiscourse, or background consciousness, containing the significations/signifying centers of social reality, on the one hand, and the strategies or modes of speaking of them, on the other, needs the Grand Text — it may well be a program document or manifesto or encyclopedia (as in case of the Encyclopédie of the French Enlightenment movement) or journal (as in case of the Austra [The Dawn] and Varpas [The Bell] nationalist movements and their journals on the eve of the emergence of modern Lithuania).

For Kavolis, the Santara-Sviesa [The Concord-Light] union (that is, the cultural union of Lithuanian immigrant liberals in the U.S. headed by Kavolis) has virtually become both his intellectual/cultural movement and Seelengemeinschaft, whereas the vision of modern, liberal and West-oriented Lithuania, accompanied by the search for the new political and cultural discourse capable of contextualizing and articulating Lithuanian liberalism, has served as the above metadiscourse. Subsequently, the Metmenys [Patterns] — i.e., the journal of the Santara-Sviesa movement edited by Kavolis from 1959 to 1996 — has become his Grand Text. (Sadly and symbolically, Kavolis passed away on
June 24, 1996, immediately after the conference of Santara-Sviesa in Vilnius, Lithuania.)

It suffices to glance at the way Kavolis has been leading the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (1977-83) to prove that he has always been the program intellectual, a man of the movement par excellence. In the U.S. (or, to be more precise, in the Anglo-American world), the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations has become, for Kavolis, his intellectual movement and Seelengemeinschaft, while his international metadiscourse might have been defined, in his own terms, as the search for the “multicivilizational universe of discourse” in the social sciences and the humanities. Needless to say that the Comparative Civilizations Review has served, for Kavolis, as the Grand Text, even in the sense of a certain historical narrative.

The movement of North American civilizationists, initiated by Pitirim A. Sorokin and then essentially influenced by Benjamin Nelson and Kavolis, seems to have been perceived by Kavolis as somewhat the collective alter ego of the Santara-Sviesa movement (the latter has been named by Kavolis the Institute for Multidisciplinary Studies not in vain; thus his intellectual commitment and moral one coincided). Exactly the same may be said about the invisible kinship between the Metmenys and the Comparative Civilizations Review. Indeed, Santara-Sviesa and the ISCSC, in Kavolis’s life, were the communities of affinity in terms of his life-long search for the ways of understanding the Other — in the idiom of self-and-civilization.

Kavolis’s social and cultural criticism would be unthinkable without those methodologies that have been elaborated and vitalized by him — civilizational analysis (along with Benjamin Nelson, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Louis Dumont) and the history of consciousness (among his predecessors and co-contributors, in theoretically constructing the latter, one could list Philippe Ariès, Michel Foucault, Louis Dumont and Hayden White). The former provides a framework within which the key components of every sociologically identifiable civilization — of its social structure and symbolic organization — can be traced, in order to uncover the flux of symbolic meaning; whereas the latter employs in-depth structural exploration of the dynamics of the tendencies
of consciousness and of the predominant ideas in a given society or culture or historical epoch. (They both bring us to a proper understanding of what has been suppressed in one civilization but more or less released and developed in other, let alone the models of self-understanding and the ways of the perception of the Otherness.)

Liberalism vs. Nationalism: Bridging Moral Cultures

One of the tensions experienced and reflected on by Kavolis (particularly, in his Lithuanian essays) is that between self-appointed liberalism and the authentic liberal stance. In his essay, "The Current Meaning of Being Progressive," Kavolis points out:

We feel spontaneously that we can never consider as liberal the one who, though he appoints himself to be liberal, fights for restrictions of the freedom of discussions, and thus contributes to such a societal atmosphere in which one is afraid of expressing one’s non-conformist opinion. We consider as liberal man the one who, notwithstanding his ideological views and political coalition, fights for the diminution of restrictions in his milieu and in the world in general. In this sense, John XXIII and Paul VI, by virtue of having done their best to diminish restrictions within their institution, far surpass those who, desperately trying to become the popes of the struggle for freedom, succeed in turning to mere political propagandists of anti-Communism.

Kavolis also adds that liberalism can in turn have its own limitations (the editor of the Lietuviskis liberalizmas [Lithuanian Liberalism], a unique book indeed in the context of twentieth-century Lithuania, had severely criticized the weak points of liberalism, for he as nobody else was perfectly aware of its ups and downs): "In some cases, liberalism may be unprogressive: when children are given more freedom than they can take possession of; when there is more care about criminals and their rights than about the protection of their victims. However, even in those cases when liberalism, in its effects, is unprogressive, it is assessed in terms of the effort at diminishing restrictions, rather than in terms of some abstract principle."

Another tension, which might be considered as the most intense and, in the theoretical sense, the most dramatic in Kavolis's works, is that between liberalism and nationalism. For such a theoretician of responsible, i.e., morally committed, indi-
individualism as Kavolis, it was obvious that liberalism and nationalism might be not only compatible but even complementary phenomena — particularly, in bridging the individual identity and the collective one. However, the elitist and aristocratic nationalism of the first half of the nineteenth century, that is, nationalism of the epoch of the springtime of the peoples which came into being manifesting itself in Adam Mickiewicz and Giuseppe Mazzini's visions and their struggle for peoples' independence and freedom, had eventually transformed itself into a mere exclusive nationalism. The latter, in the second half of the nineteenth century and, particularly, in the first half of the twentieth century, was getting more and more mass, doctrinal and ideological.

So it is not accidental that nationalism of the epoch of the springtime of the peoples, which has come to respect and esteem the Other's freedom in the same way it did with regard to its own people, has been qualified by Kavolis as nothing other than a very liberal nationalism (which was later replaced by the above-mentioned exclusive, doctrinal nationalism permeated by what Kavolis called moral provincialism). In his article, “Moral Cultures: Maps, Trajectories, Tensions,” Kavolis put it thus:

The danger of nationalist [moral] culture lies in its moral provincialism. Nationalism, as John Stuart Mill noted, makes people indifferent to the rights and interests of any part of humankind, except for that that is called the same name as they are, and speaks the same language they do. Not always, however, has nationalist culture been provincial. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Europe was full of liberal nationalists who believed that the struggle for the liberation of all peoples is a common cause: therefore, a patriot of one people must help other peoples as well. Thus, later on, Basanavicius [one of the founding fathers of Lithuanian nationalism, the exponent of its liberal version] participated in the movement of Bulgarian democrats, and Georg Julius Justus Sauerwein [the nineteenth-century Lithuanian romantic nationalist of Sorbian origin] wrote “We Were Born Lithuanians” (and another version of the same song which was dedicated to the Sorbians). Yet, nationalism of the second half of the nineteenth century — in part, because of the impact of social Darwinism — moved away from the notion of universal brotherhood, enthusiastically shared by all nationalists, and reshaped itself within quite a narrow frame of the exclusive
(“zoological”) defense of people’s interests by all means. This is to say that nationalism got “primitive.” (In many non-Western countries — for instance, in India, — the twentieth-century nationalism has repeated this sequence; so we can ask if it might be taken as as a natural part of the nationalist movements’ evolution, that is, as a consequence of the transformation of nationalism into a mass phenomenon?) Exclusive nationalism is incompatible with liberal culture which is, in principle, morally universalistic. (In the rationalist version of liberal morality: all are equal in their rights; in the romantic version of liberal morality: all are equal in their pain which equally hurts everybody.)

The question arises: Why and how did such a focus of theoretical and ideological tension appear in Kavolis’s discursive universe? The reason seems to be quite simple: Kavolis was perfectly aware of the total absence and even impossibility of liberalism, in its paradigmatic Anglo-Saxon version, in Lithuania. Obsessive efforts to identify it in, or to impose it on, Lithuanian consciousness and culture would have led only to the coercive falsification of Lithuania’s history, politics and culture.

Some important prerequisites of political liberalism, which may indeed be identified in Lithuania’s history, date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the aristocratic legacy of liberalism and some manifestations of political and religious tolerance in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lithuania that have been explored by Kavolis through his painstaking study of the Renaissance and Baroque Europe. The beginnings of political and religious tolerance in Lithuania — that have manifested themselves by Lithuania’s historical virtue of once having been multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country — fascinated Kavolis; this is why he considered the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural past of Lithuania its lost golden age.

Therefore, Kavolis had to search for what have been termed by him the responding tendencies in consciousness and culture. In other words, he had to find room, within the framework of Lithuanian consciousness, for the theoretically identifiable beginnings of liberalism — in the form of the responding historical trajectories and tendencies of the thought and of intellectual/moral stances. This is exactly how Kavolis came to construct the concept of cultural liberalism, the latter referring to the priority of
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individual reason and conscience — no matter explicit or implicit in a given society and culture — over collective oppressiveness and consensus gentium-type morality.

The concept of cultural liberalism served as a means to culturally assimilate liberalism to modern Lithuania's mainstream value-and-idea system (though liberalism, in Lithuania, used to be quite frequently misinterpreted and misrepresented as just another term for agnosticism or left-wing political stances; this is still the case). Moreover, the concept of cultural liberalism came to enable Kavolis to hypostatize liberalism as such to the autonomous moral culture or even paradigm of consciousness. It sheds new light on the way Kavolis employs a comparison of the nationalist, liberal and romantic moral cultures. The nationalist moral culture, placed at the level of a broad comparative historical perspective, is assessed by him in the following way:

The moral culture of this type is deeply rooted in history; one may find its early, premodern forms in Jewish and Chinese traditions. Yet, those traditions were "ethnocentric," i.e., perceiving the entire virtue of the world as represented solely by their own communities. Current nationalism is said to have become, in the brightest manifestations of its maturity, "polycentric," i.e., striving for the equal and normal participation of its own nation in the concert of all nations — consulting their equally valuable cultures and learning from them. [...] The symbolic arena of nationalist culture is the ritual of the repetition of history, be it the never-ending campaign to reconquer Alsace or Gandhi's demonstrations of non-violent resistance. The addresses of nationalists are just the same — the ever-lasting repetition of the same. 9

Being aware of how problematic is the search for the origins — or at least manifestations — of liberalism in Central and East European political history, Kavolis was trying to identify and analyze both the particular liberal stances and the element of liberalism itself in the history of Lithuania's national rebirth (or, to be more precise, of Lithuanian modernity, however failing in the course of history). He had qualified the ideas and stances of the Varpas [The Bell] and Ausra [The Dawn] nationalist movements (along with those of their leaders Vincas Kudirka, Jonas Basanavičius and Jonas Sliupas) as liberal, thus drawing a sharp
dividing line between a liberal nationalism and a conservative one. In doing so, Kavolis was theoretically and intellectually bridging the nationalist and liberal moral cultures in virtue of employing the perspective of the history of consciousness (otherwise, he would inevitably have failed to accomplish such a task, for neither political theory nor political practice may provide a sufficient basis for bridging those, one would think, mutually exclusive things). At the same time, Kavolis was consistently trying to overcome the abyss between his own frame of reference, conceptual framework and analytical/interpretive language, on the one hand, and the mainstream Lithuanian consciousness and culture, on the other.

In his comparative studies, Kavolis impressively contextualized cultural liberalism tracing it back to: Socrates's ethical intellectualism and, particularly, his idea of the priority of the individual reason and conscience over the collective decisions; some elements of Christian theology stressing the crucial importance of the principle of the free will; Chinese neo-Confucianists' intellectual and moral stances; the frame of mind of the Heian epoch Japanese aristocratic culture; the assertion of Hinduism and of the Grand Duke of medieval Lithuania Gediminas's that all the ways — regardless of how distinct they can be — lead to that same God; and even the early Islam's principle of *ijtihad*, according to which, one is entitled to use one's individual reason in interpreting the religious laws of Islam. Kavolis seems to have always been convinced that cultural liberalism, both in the West and in non-Western civilizations, disseminates as the universal element of human experience, although explicit and developed political liberalism has been unambiguously taken by him as the solely Western phenomenon of political consciousness. (Therefore, the possible implication of this thought would be as follows: cultural liberalism has its chance even in those societies and cultures where political liberalism, historically thinking, has never had any possibility of coming into being.)

The theoretically accurate, flexible and differentiating attitude toward nationalism (without which it would be impossible to make any clear distinction between the Herderian-Renanian paradigm of nationalism, that is, liberal nationalism par excellence, and the Action Française-type reactionary, radical and integral
nationalism, not to mention the grasp of how the modern Central and East European nations came into political existence) has assisted Kavolis in embracing its grandeur and misery:

For liberals, the principal criterion to evaluate nationalism is that of free self-determination. The nation's rights to political and cultural independence are protected insofar as the nation expresses its members' self-determination to perceive themselves the way the nation represents. Yet, the liberals will always raise their voices in defense of the individuals' rights and, above all, of the right of self-determination about how to be a human in cases: if the authorities of a given nation happen to determine who does belong to the nation, and who does not; what should be found in its members' souls, and what can never be found; or if they happen to deny the normal human rights of those who do not belong to that nation/those who do not want to belong to it. The collective may be respected insofar as it respects both the individuals and the variety of their reason, conscience and life-styles. In liberal democracy, only pluralist and ethnically unlimited nationalism is acceptable, whereas assimilationist and ethnicity-cleansing nationalism can never be accepted.¹¹

However, in bridging Lithuanian consciousness, as one of the manifestations and agencies of the nationalist moral culture, and the liberal moral culture, Kavolis kept his fidelity to the principle of the critical self-reflection. As noted, Kavolis was perfectly aware of the limitations of liberalism itself. This is why he was striving for its integration in the multidimensional, complementary and coherent framework for a more proper interpretation of the world. Both as one of the modern moral cultures and as one of the predominant political ideologies of the modern world, liberalism is merely one of many ways to reflect on social reality and human individual, one of many possibilities to describe human consciousness in terms of existential and social experiences. In fact, being the derivative of Western rationalism and individualism (inescapable from the British empiricist tradition and common sense political philosophy as well), liberalism missed many points of human experience that are deeply grounded in other faculties of human sensibility: the sense of history, collective identity, group commitment, joint devotion, religious and
mystical experiences, and the like. Needless to say, those points, throughout history, have been dealt with and articulated by other moral cultures.

One of the paradoxes of liberal social philosophy and of liberal moral culture would be that that the classic British version of liberalism, i.e., Millian liberalism of the nineteenth century, remained surprisingly insensitive to the process of the formation of the new national entities, and particularly to the cultural and moral dimensions of this process. One wonders why and how it could be the case, since nothing else but liberalism came to construct the concept of political nation thus lifting it to the rank of the key ideas of modernity. The concept of political nation came into being through French social philosophers of the Enlightenment (at this point, nearly all the philosophes are worth of mentioning here; yet, such theoreticians of equality and tolerance as Montesquieu, Condorcet, Helvétius and Bayle should be mentioned first) and Anglo-American political philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This is the reason why the disconnectiveness of the nineteenth-century liberalism (with regard to those dramas and passions that captivated a half of Europe) is really surprising. Most probably because of this kind of its disconnectiveness, Kavolis, in his works, mentions — from time to time — the inability of liberalism to conceive of a number of the structures of sentiments and the nuances of emotions that are of decisive importance for individuals' moral stances and for social connection as well.

Notwithstanding its limitations, liberalism was considered by Kavolis as the only moral culture, the very essence of which lies in advocating the principles of individual reason and individual conscience. Nowhere else but in the liberal moral culture (and its historical prototypes that anticipated and shaped cultural liberalism), has there emerged the free human being capable of determining him/herself by his/her own reason and individual conscience, and critically questioning him/herself and his/her society/culture.

It should never be forgotten, however, that the nationalist moral culture has also made its substantial contribution to the social and cultural criticism, for nothing but the nationalist type of moralization has promoted the connected and committed
social/cultural criticism. Through the notions of the universal brotherhood/sisterhood and moral egalitarianism immanent to, and deeply inherent in, nationalism, the nationalist moral culture has promoted the historically unprecedented social intimacy between a particular individual and his/her imagined or real community. (This moment of importance will be traced below.)

By stating the insufficiency and limitations of the liberal moral culture in embracing the variety of the forms of modern consciousness and culture, Kavolis notes:

Liberal culture itself insufficiently embraces the totality of human essence and of human relation with his milieu. The nineteenth-century liberal culture took seriously neither nature, nor radical evil, nor the distinctiveness of national cultures, nor the subconscious sphere of human experiences and its demands. It failed somehow to identify the emotional reciprocities and emergent, though never verbalized, human solidarities — Seelengemeinschaften.

At the same time, Kavolis has never had any doubts about the liberal moral culture’s ability to provide a serious alternative to those negative tendencies of other moral cultures that have been termed by him moral provincialism, ecclesiastic imperialism, ascetic revolutionism, and irresponsible determinism; neither has Kavolis had any doubts that “liberal culture underlines one of the basic human elements which is suppressed in other moral cultures: his ability to rationally judge everything by his own reason and conscience, while recognizing others’ right to arrive at conclusions different from his, and his duty to perfect the ability of his judgment all the time: the problems we encounter in the course of human and civilizational development tend to become more and more complex.”

Although Kavolis has always subscribed to the liberal standpoint, the liberal moral culture, in his theoretical vision, can only acquire its real theoretical and moral value by entering the space of dialogue or even polylogue with other — both classic and modern — moral cultures. The same interpretive principle of polylogue, translated from his moral stance into the explanatory framework, has been applied by Kavolis to the comparative study
of civilizations: there are no (and there cannot in principle be) self-sufficient civilizations, since some of them come to release and develop something that is inevitably suppressed, or at least neglected, in others. Thus, the comparative study of civilizations coincides with social and cultural criticism while tracing the models of self-understanding and of the perception of the Other.

This is precisely the theoretical context and moral focus where the idea of the bridging of moral cultures (that is, the idea of one's free participation in several moral cultures, which implies the critical questioning and symbolic correction of one's own culture from a comparative perspective) comes from. Therefore, the scholar's participation in, and critical examination of, several moral cultures (i.e., one's capacity to reflect on one's own participation in several models of cultural logic, thus theoretically attaching oneself to, and contextualizing in, their interplay) becomes part of the scholar's moral biography. In so doing, he places him/herself in the imaginary gallery of other individuals and in the symbolic archives of their moral biographies as well.

Kavolis has extended the following hypothetic thesis on the contrasting logics of moral cultures:

Moral cultures have different logics that tend to contradict each other. The thinking of those who participate, in at once, in several moral cultures (i.e., the thinking of those who think from within of the contemporary man's existential situation) should rest on their clear awareness of the inexorable conflicts between these cultures and of the ways of dealing with these conflicts: What kind of things are to be bridged? What kind of abysses (or of qualitative stumblings) are to be accepted and penetrated by their lives and destiny? One of the tensions, which manifests itself in the contemporary liberal culture of the West, is as follows: Is the rational public life possible when the intimate culture is romantically anarchist? Should one search for the common ground for these separated spheres of modern existence? If so, should one return to some traditional concept of transcendence or should one move forward towards the totality of human experiences as a common link between what have been separated by modernity? [Italics mine]
Kavolis seems to have penetrated the very core of modernity and its challenge by offering his inclusive theoretical alternative. How to react to the challenge of modernity? How to accept it? (This problematical focus sheds new light on postmodernism as one of the possible responses to the fundamental theoretical alternative and existential dilemma formulated by Kavolis. He considered postmodernism to be the possible way to reconcile those things that have been taken by modernity as incompatible in principle, rather than as a mere theoretical trend in fashion.) How to reconcile and bridge what have been ruthlessly separated by modernity: truth and value; rationality and emotional intimacy; expertise and sensitivity; hierarchy and equality/individualism; tradition and innovation; the classic canon and the released creative experiment; metaphysics and phenomenalistic science; a particular individual and community; a particular community and universal humanity?

One of the possible ways would be to suggest a return to metaphysics and religion (that is, to what has been called by Kavolis the traditional concept of transcendence) — the phenomena that have been, from the point of view of the split between truth and value, neutralized, relativized and, consequently, placed by modernity on the margin of consciousness and existence. Another way (suggested by the sequence and logic of Kavolis's thought and by his ambitious epistemic program for both the social sciences and the humanities) would be rather an attempt at analytically embracing and, by attaching the dimensions of value and meaning, encompassing the totality of human experiences — through the comparative study of civilizations. The latter implies the analysis of the flux of symbolic meaning and of the change of the structures of consciousness over time in Western and non-Western civilizations — by capitalizing on the civilization analysis and the history of consciousness.

Modernity with a human face — this term, coined by Kavolis, refers to the necessity of sensibility in social analysis and interpretation of culture. Both coincide with social and cultural criticism, since they are constantly accompanied by the tension between the *is* and the *ought to be*. On the other side, truth and value can never be located in a single culture or civilization. Truth and value disseminate insofar as a comparison of the comple-
mentary, though distinct, models of self-understanding is employed.

An exponent of the modern sociological disciplines, civilization theoretician and sociologist of culture (it was Kavolis who had even invented such, one would think, a hardly possible sociological discipline as the sociology of fine arts), Kavolis, however, seems to have never been tempted to exaggerate the significance either of Western scholarship or of Western intellectual culture in general. He has been interested not only in Western civilization's "conquest and exodus" (Kavolis used this term introduced by Eric Voegelin in his philosophy of history, although Kavolis did not subscribe to Voegelin's point of view), that is, not only in its political and cultural accomplishments, crises and cul-de-sacs, but in the possibility to theoretically contextualize Western civilization itself by conceiving it within, in Kavolis's own terms, the idiom of self-and-civilization, too.

The question is: Whether it is possible to adequately conceive of Western civilization only within the framework of the modern configuration of values and ideas? This issue might be referred to as the very point of departure for Kavolis's notion of the comparative study of civilizations. For him, the comparative study of civilizations was oriented to provide an interpretive and conceptual framework for self-understanding within the idiom of self-and-civilization. The implication is that comparative studies are interlaced with one's own intellectual and moral biography, — that was the way Kavolis arrived at both the civilization analysis and the history of consciousness. His enthusiasm about, and dedication to, comparative studies had nothing to do with the doctrine of political correctness. Kavolis's civilizationist commitment is much more likely to have been directly related to his intellectual conscience. The latter, as the conditio sine qua non for transcivilizational empathy and theoretical sensibility in general, seems to have become one of the principal categories not only for Kavolis but for Benjamin Nelson as well.18

However, for Kavolis, modernity was too complex a phenomenon to be reduced to some simplistic schemes or overgeneralizations: he took modernity in an all-encompassing variety of its forms and national variants instead, on the one hand, and thus entailed the analysis of contradictions within modernity, on the
other. Tracing some antimodernist intellectual and moral stances or antimodernist tendencies of consciousness of a given society (e.g., examining a series of the failed modernizations in Central/East European countries), Kavolis perceived them as but an inescapable and unavoidable part of modernization itself.

For instance, one of the most interesting implications of Kavolis's concept of modernization is his statement that nothing but modernity comes to reveal/invent the tradition, for, according to him, we simply do not have another interpretive framework to articulate it except for that within which historical consciousness and historical narratives disseminate. In fact, historical consciousness (i.e., backward- and forward-looking consciousness critically questioning or even rejecting the present) is just another term for modernity. Therefore, the stances of traditionalists and even of fundamentalists of various kinds — no matter whether they are aware of that or not — are merely a certain inversion of modernity. Other conceptual or interpretive frameworks, within which it would be possible to reflect on traditions or traditional cultures or premodern civilizations, simply do not exist.

This statement might be best exemplified by referring to Kavolis's analytical study, “Civilizational Paradigms in Current Sociology: Dumont vs. Eisenstadt.” Having noted that Dumont is evidently criticizing modernity from a premodern perspective, Kavolis points out: “What is problematic about this type of critical theory is that Dumont judges modernity from premodern premises (which, he argues, have in crucial respects been validated by the shortcomings of modern experience). Dumont justifies choosing this perspective by arguing that the premodern is, in the experience of humanity, the typical case, the modern the exceptional. [...] But it might also be thought that the premodern should be approached through the particular version of the modern (taking for granted that modernity emerges in culturally diverse forms) in which the directions of development of the former are revealed.”

Kavolis's attempts at reconciling and bridging those moral cultures and cultural logics that have been separated by modernity, as noted, have always been present behind his scholarly projects and academic activities. The following passage, dealing with
the tension between the rational public life and the romantically anarchist intimate culture in the Santara-Sviesa movement, shows how deeply permeated by the challenge of modernity Kavolis's individual existence and public life were: "Perhaps, throughout the history of Lithuanian cultural movements, this tension has nowhere else been so dramatic as in the spiritual universe of the Santara-Sviesa where both of these stances — the rational public life and the romantically anarchist intimate culture — are equally intensively emphasized, equally spontaneously accepted."

The theoretical construct, therefore, had to be embodied in cultural practice and mundane reality. On the other side, even the theory itself turns out to be quite frequently inspired by a mere human friendship. For Kavolis, Santara-Sviesa was not merely a movement; nor was it a mere model of Lithuania as his imagined community. As noted, it was rather a community of souls which almost perfectly embodied the principle of unity in diversity. After all, Santara-Sviesa exemplified the Romantic notion of friendship as a joint devotion. It is not difficult to notice that Kavolis considered human trust and friendship to be the clue to the puzzle of human connection. Most probably, hence Kavolis's theoretical interest in the history of human friendship and socialization.

The Pathologies of Ambiguity and the Ambivalence of Criticism

Kavolis's works on both "the ambiguous man" and "the pathologies of ambiguity" throw new light on his notion of social and cultural criticism. The distinction between "unambiguous man" and "ambiguous man" refers to cultural psychology — one more boundary discipline balancing between the social sciences and the humanities, which has been elaborated by Kavolis. (Such disciplines as cultural psychology or literary sociology or sociology of fine arts resulted from Kavolis's conscious attempts at crossing the boundaries of disciplines, on the one hand, and bridging the social sciences and the humanities, on the other.) Hence Kavolis's studies in comparative social pathologies examining the origins of destructiveness and tracing the models of evil.

Once more, let me recall the fact that Kavolis was an untypi-
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cal sociologist. The frame of sociology was too narrow for him. Not in vain, one of Kavolis's main theoretical ambitions was to provide a multi- and interdisciplinary framework for civilization analysis within which there would be possible to bridge social philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology (particularly, symbolic anthropology based on the interpretive framework of Clifford Geertz's works — it was one of Kavolis's methodological and disciplinary preferences), intellectual history, cultural history, historical semantics, semiotics, and literary theory.

He was by no means globalist — the globalization theory seems to have been outside Kavolis's scholarly concerns. He was by no means dreaming about certain "great syntheses"; nor was he longing for the revival of Grand Theory — Kavolis has never had any doubts about the priority given to the relationship between theoretical sophistication and empirical evidence, rather than to the purely speculative thought. Therefore, psychohistorical anthroposociology — such a term was first coined by Nelson and Kavolis for civilization analysis — came to refer not to a certain pigeon-holing methodology but, on the contrary, to joint disciplinary dedication to the analysis of such problems that are hardly possible, for particular disciplines, to embrace or at least to handle somehow. It should never be forgotten that Kavolis was always stressing short-term, ad hoc disciplinary alliances that are very easy to dismantle immediately upon one's arrival at some conclusion summing up complex research.

Small wonder, then, that it was vital for Kavolis to demonstrate, in the perspective of cultural psychology, how the structural shifts of symbolic meanings and/or the symptoms of societies, historical epochs, cultures, and civilizations in crisis manifest themselves through a particular human individual and his/her behavior or stance. One should admit that a society or culture in crisis inevitably reveals itself through individual consciousness/human individual in crisis. One of such manifestations of culture in crisis is what has been termed by Kavolis the ambiguous man.

In his analytical study, "The Pathologies of Ambiguity," Kavolis notes that a number of humans quite frequently reveal, for themselves, their psychic ambiguity, although they become absolutely clear and unambiguous in forming or at least influence-
ing other humans' behavior and stances. In Kavolis's opinion, the ambiguous man is especially longing for the intense experiences: this kind of the striving for intensity, which is psychoanalytically identifiable and exploitable, jeopardizes not only the personality of the ambiguous man but the entire modern consciousness and culture as well. According to Kavolis,

Where there prevails the striving for intensity, there predominates — quite often — the authoritarian style in both thinking and decision-making, even when the conscious contents of the thought is libertarian: let's take, for example, Marcuse or the Living Theater. The intensity seekers quite naturally tend to think in polarities contrasting "truth" to "error," or "virtue" to "mean-ness," instead of searching for some missing links and nuances. Those nuances represent nothing other but the psychic ambiguity in their character which they consider unbearable and try to repress with arbitrary, though "real," moments of intensity. This is why they, even in demanding the freedom of choice, expect others to choose their way to be free or even their way to conceive of freedom. The dogmatic demands to the world spring from the inner ambiguity of personality. One can be preserved by the vigorous terms from one's inner dissolution. (Psychoanalysts used to identify this mechanism in the earlier, more or less romantic, Russian revolutionaries.) Dogmatism is the mechanical stabilization of the ambiguous man, rather than the organic one springing from the depth of his personality. (Yet, this kind of protective armor, deep inside the ambiguous man, sooner or later comes to crack down and destroy either the ambiguous man himself or others.)

One of the possible implications of Kavolis's thought would be that the ambiguous man, being incapable of analytically grasping and critically questioning himself, eventually comes to misrepresent social reality itself projecting on it those painful elements of his personality and experience that are too hard for him either to understand or to eliminate from himself. (It would be some kind of dogmatism which springs from the cognitive dissonance.) Therefore, if "the dogmatic demands to the world spring from the inner ambiguity of personality," dogmatism itself is merely an illusion of both the clear standpoint and transparent thought.
One's striving for intensity, in one's milieu, actually betrays one's ability to critically analyze neither oneself nor human reality as it is — before its enchantment with some kind of ideological magic, ideocratic formulas, carnal and psychic experiments, and the like. The dogmatic/ambiguous man is incapable of critically analyzing at all: he is only capable either of creating some gloomy prophecies or of symbolically excommunicating those who are considered to be a threat to the body social and its nearly mystical coherence (when the quest for enemies comes to replace the critical analysis, his troubled imagination easily provides a group-target).

Kavolis offers an even more strict formulation: "The demand of intensity may be easier satisfied by the action — or by the 'carnal thinking,' i.e., by the substitution of the thought for the motions and sounds, — than by the intellectual (especially, disciplined), self-critical analysis; it may be easier satisfied by the destruction of what is present (or by some bizarre experiments) than by the creation of something new." Then we can observe a sudden transition of Kavolis's thought to the new theme which was most probably of great personal importance for him: "It may throw new light on the ambiguous men's tendency toward cultural pessimism, that is, the extreme criticism of a given culture and its institutions. Such a criticism was widespread in Germany, from the end of the nineteenth century to the Weimar period, and it prepared a good soil for the Nazi 'Utopia' [...]. This case denies the standpoint that criticism is always a remedy of society."

Kavolis's statement implies that extreme, radical and detached social and cultural criticism (or, to use one of Michael Walzer's key terms, the disconnected criticism) is flourishing in the countries which have a relatively weak tradition of the politically committed, i.e., connected, social and cultural criticism. So Kavolis might have employed the following working hypothesis: the disconnected criticism (I would define it as the ad extra criticism) and cultural pessimism come into existence where it was virtually impossible to disseminate — either because of a historically short, weak and fragile tradition of liberal democracy (as in nearly the entire Central and Eastern Europe, except for the Czech lands) or because of the historically unprecedented oppressiveness of the state power structure and the deeply grounded gap
between culture and politics (as in Russia) — either for utopian imagination (in its classical shape) or for the connected critical thought, i.e., the ad intra criticism.

The question arises: Whether and how social criticism is possible where there is neither the public domain nor the elaborate public political discourse, and where criticism can only manifest itself either through the antistructural movements (as, for instance, the skomoroch — Russian jesters in semi-Byzantine medieval Russia or, say, the yurodivye in Russia of Ivan the Horrible or of Boris Godunov) or through exaggerated cultural pessimism, overgeneralizations and gloomy prophecies? (After all, what does remain from the society as such if the public domain and public political discourse happen to be eliminated? Where can connected criticism arise from if this happens to be the case?) It would be difficult to imagine a West European or North American critical thinker depicting his/her country in the way the great Russian cultural pessimists Piotr Chaadaev and Vladimir Pechorin did. Only having realized the difference between the latter, on the one hand, and, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson or William Morris or Samuel Butler, on the other, we can properly understand the crucial difference between the ad extra criticism and the ad intra one.

One of the most profound of Kavolis's insights into the moral origins of the nationalist critique of nationalism, that is, the social and cultural criticism within the framework of the nationalist moral culture, reveals a hardly identifiable basis for the politically and morally committed criticism in the twentieth century:

The liberal and romantic moral cultures, after all, are rooted respectively in the individual's rational (ascetic) and emotional (mystical) depth, whereas the nationalist moral culture rests on community, i.e., a historically concrete, “natural” community, which is being, on the voluntary and mystical basis, maintained or revived by the committed individual. The individual finds himself as having received a significant part of his moral substance from his community, and is prepared to hand over this substance, after having it refracted through his own experience, to the next generation of the community members. But inasmuch as his community's experience becomes his personal substance, part of his identity, he severely judges this community and its history.
rejecting those things that are perceived by him as the deformation of his moral character. At the same time, he judges himself asking whether his contribution to community coincides with what it needs the most [italics mine].25

And then Kavolis ironically sums it up: "[...] What it actually needs, not necessarily coincides, in the nationalist view, with what its people concretely want. The nationalist follows and conforms to a theory which provides the ready-made answer what the people does want, not to the polls of population."26 Therefore, if the social/cultural critic, instead of participating in several moral cultures, limits and reduces him/herself to a single nationalist moral culture, it betrays either the symptoms of ambiguity in his/her consciousness and moral stance, accompanied by the striving for intensity and political power, or the shabby individual identity, accompanied by the desperate need for some kind of symbolic compensation/dissolution in the mystical collective body.

This is to say that the ambiguous man can never become the connected critic. Such a human ambiguity may easily transform itself into the ambivalence of criticism, which disseminates in the severe critiques of those social phenomena (certain models of social order or of culture, modes of human interaction and self-expression, institutional practices, networks of social organization, etc.) that are considered by the critic to be alien and hostile to his/her imagined community and its lost golden age. ( Needless to say that this is nothing else but the classic odi et amo attitude one can direct either to oneself or to others.) In brief, the connected critic is unthinkable without what has been called by Kavolis the clear structure of identity and personality.

Connected social and cultural criticism might best be defined in the following way: it implies and rests on one’s ability to experience the dynamics and dissemination of one’s society and culture as one’s own drama, while treating social analysis as the correction of the field of one’s own intellectual possibilities and moral choices. In other words, criticism means one’s ability to absorb the most symptomatic tendencies of social and cultural change taking place in one’s society and culture, and, then, to return them — permeated by one’s individual experience and the-
oretical articulation — to one's community or society, in the form of critical warning or of intellectual and moral trial.

The most proper context of Kavolis, as social and cultural critic, refers to the company of "the nationalist critics of nationalist politics" (following the way in which Michael Walzer has described Martin Buber). This company is primarily represented by such non-conformist and politically committed critics as Albert Einstein and Martin Buber — both dedicated Zionists, though mavericks and dissenters in the Zionist movement, who frequently criticized the Zionist movement leaders and their policies. As Walzer has incisively noticed, Julien Benda — the very embodiment of disconnected criticism — would undoubtedly have thought of such a position as impossible. However, Benda would most probably have been in turn labeled by Kavolis as an ambiguous critic.

The question may arise: Does it make any sense to compare a Lithuanian immigrant, interactionist sociologist and civilizationalist with an Austrian-Jewish philosopher and theologian, the founding father of the dialogue-based personalism, and, after all, a committed Zionist and one of the most severe critics of Zionist politics? I believe that such a comparison makes sense in many respects. First, like Buber, who might best be defined as the philosopher of return, Kavolis is the withdrawal-and-return sociologist (to slightly modify Arnold J. Toynbee's term). Both have severely and consistently criticized what has been perceived by them as the object of their devotion — their imagined communities that have eventually come into being as the nation-states (both have essentially contributed to the nation-building process). One would think that it is they of whom Lewis Coser has said: "We are likely to be especially critical of the things we love." Second, one more common feature of Kavolis and Buber has to be pointed out — their particular intellectual sensibility which may well be described in terms of theoretical and moral empathy. It suffices to recall Kavolis stressing the importance of the ethics of compassion, inherent in the romantic moral culture (as in the romantic version of liberal morality: all are equal in their pain which equally hurts everybody), and of the perception of the Other. Walzer characterizes Buber's empathy by referring not only to him but to the Talmud as well: "It is only common sense,
as the Talmud says. 'Who knows that your blood is redder [than his]? Perhaps his blood is redder' [...]. The same argument holds with regard to the group: 'There is no scale of values for the function of peoples. One cannot be ranked above another' [...]." Both Buber and Kavolis, by virtue of having been the dialogue theoreticians par excellence, have raised their voices against instrumental and manipulative exchanges. Last but not least — they can be analyzed as nearly the paradigmatic cases of liberal nationalism which always has its universalistic moral implications.

Kavolis's attitude to the intellectual, emphasizing the ascetic self-discipline, self-denying love to work, and self-dedication, evidently relates to the universalist origins of the liberal moral stance. As Walzer puts it: "The crucial moral principle of the true intellectual has the form of a self-denying ordinance. It was perfectly expressed many centuries ago by a Jewish sage giving advice to other sages and would-be sages: 'Love work, do not domineer over others, and never seek the intimacy of public officials' [...]." This attitude obviously penetrates Kavolis's closing remark on cultural liberal: "For a cultural liberal, it suffices to do his work, to be immune to various distractions, and to resist moral corruptions in himself." It is very important to note that Kavolis, in spite of his fidelity and commitment to his native Lithuania, has never identified completely himself with anything thus preserving his critical distance and individual independence from the establishments, political authorities, and bureaucracies. His stance might best be summed up by referring, once more, to Walzer. Walzer has written the following words on Albert Einstein: "A man of passion and detachment, he found his own equilibrium in a balance of the two." These words perfectly fit for Vytautas Kavolis as well.

Postscript

My main task, in this study, was to substantiate the working hypothesis that Kavolis's great theoretical ambition to bridge the social sciences and the humanities, their disciplines and approaches, methods and perspectives, etc., was nothing else but the continuation and derivative of his great ethical intention to bridge the distinct moral cultures and models of self-understanding. This is exactly how value comes to manifest itself, in the uni-
verse of the social and cultural critic's discourse, constantly underlying what we take as truth, i.e., the *adequatio rei et intellectus* dimension.

Therefore, Kavolis's multi- and interdisciplinary studies of society and culture can be depicted as the very top of an iceberg beneath which there lurks his conscious and even highly prescriptive participation in the distinct, though complementary, realms of human existence (in Kavolis's own terms, in the distinct symbolic logics and frames of meaning). Having defined civilizations — the largest comprehensive and sociologically identifiable sociocultural entities — as symbolic designs emanating values and meanings for human self-understanding and self-fulfillment over time, Kavolis has come to treat the comparative study of civilizations not only as the specifically theoretical project but as a phenomenon of transcivilizational sensibility and conscience as well. Such a concept of civilization, which deals with it as consisting of social structure and symbolic organization, came from Nelson's works (Kavolis has acknowledged that Nelson has been a major contributor to this perspective — a perspective which seems to prevail in current comparative studies).  

Like all great theoreticians who are — by virtue of being provocative and challenging — far ahead of plain empiricism and obedient school-theorizing, Kavolis had some vulnerable points in his analytical studies and interpretive essays. (As noted, Kavolis applied interactionist sociology to the comparative study of civilizations.) Having capitalized on some humanist interpretive techniques and cultural (particularly, literary) documents, he crossed the boundaries of disciplines and expanded the horizon of the social analysis, let alone his numerous challenges to the things that have been taken for granted before. Yet, he took empirical data and information about societies and cultures solely from the scholarly journals and books. This is why his direct contact with social reality sometimes seems to be somewhat problematic. (Although Kavolis's rare theoretical and cross-cultural sophistication has essentially contributed to the incisiveness of his social analyses.) Moreover, Kavolis took empirical data on non-Western civilizations solely from the secondary sources, i.e., the monographs and studies written by other authors, where the facts and data were already refracted through a certain explanatory frame-
work or analytical scheme. Most probably, this is one of the unavoidable problems of every methodologist and conceptualist. Kavolis's last theoretical concerns revolved around the problem of human trust, which was lifted by him to the rank of a fundamental sociological issue. How does human capacity for association and communication, originating from such, one would think, unimportant things as various voluntary societies and clubs, eventually turn into the mighty social capital from which there results the modern — pluralist and civil — society? Why humans, in well-organized social life, are no longer clinging together or striving for, in Kavolis's terms, the "strong" relations and extremely intense friendships (that would be perceived as the only hope for the meaning of their lives)? Why is this still the case in Central and East European countries where intense and strong human friendship is frequently accompanied by the absolute mistrust regarding the state and its institutions, i.e., the forms of organized societal life? How does society — which should never be confused with the arithmetic totality of human beings — originate in general? These questions reflect the basic sociological concerns of Kavolis in his last Lithuanian contributions. They show him as having returned to the primary questions of the social analyst and critic.

The critic is always in the universe of the primary questions and in the situation of the permanent beginning.

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NOTES


2. Among Kavolis's other books which became his major contribution both to Lithuanian intellectual culture and to international scholarship, the following should be mentioned: (1) Lietuviskasis liberalizmas [Lithuanian Liberalism ], Editor (Chicago: Santara-Sviesa, 1959); (2) Zmogaus geneze: psichologine Vinco Kudirkos studija [The Genesis of Man: A Psychological Study of Vincas Kudirka] (Chicago: Chicagos Lietuviu literaturos draugija, 1963); (3) Artistic Expression: A Sociological Analysis (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), translated into Swedish and Spanish, Chapter 5 translated into German; (4) Nuzemintuju generacija: egzilio pasaulejautos eskizai [The Generation of

3. Exactly those features as characteristic of the modern intellectual are referred to by Robert Darnton. In his brilliant article on the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment movement led by the philosophes, Darnton considers the latter to have been the very prototype of what we call the intellectuals. See Robert Darnton, “George Washington's False Teeth,” The New York Review of Books, XLIV, 5 (March 27, 1997), pp. 34-8.


9. Ibid., pp. 183-84.
11. Ibid., p. 38.
12. The term “imagined political community,” coined by Benedict Anderson for the definition of the nation, seems to express the very essence of both the nationalist moral culture and of nationalist historical and cultural imaginations. See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 5-7.
14. Later on, Kavolis, in his monograph, Moralizing Cultures, comes to name the irresponsible determinism “a modern amoral culture” and “the culture of determinism.” This concept, as well as the terms signifying it, had obviously assisted Kavolis in providing some incisive insights into the phenomena of the conspiracy theory, victimization, and technocratic consciousness. See Vytautas Kavolis, Moralizing Cultures (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1993), pp. 48-9.
16. Ibid., pp. 190-91.
19. See the revised version of this study in Kavolis, Civilization Analysis as a Sociology of Culture, op. cit., p. 33.
22. Idem.
27. See Walzer, The Company of Critics, op. cit., p. 66.
28. See ibid., pp. 37-8; p. 66.
29. Quoted from ibid., p. 43.
30. Ibid., p. 67.
31. Ibid., pp. 43-4.
34. For more on this issue, see Kavolis, Civilization Analysis as a Sociology of Culture, op. cit., pp. 19-20.