

The *Artful Wisdom* of Athena in the Myth of Prometheus vs. the Technical Spirit of Late Modernity

Kerassenia Papalexiou*

Introduction

In the context of the epistemological approach to the mythological background of the ancient Greek religion, the present study's aim is to analyze the contribution of the goddess Athena's *artful wisdom* («έντέχνου σοφίας»)¹ in the myth of Prometheus, to the evolution of human civilization in contrast to the technical spirit of late modernity. The context of reference is the Platonic dialogue *Protagoras*²; our methodological approach is historical-hermeneutical, through an attempt to thoroughly review the Protagorean rendering of the myth of Prometheus from a philosophical and an anthropological point of view.

Late modernity (or post-modernity), an era where the technical-scientific miracle has been deified and managed on many different levels³

* Kerassenia Papalexiou is a member of the Laboratory and Teaching Staff (E.D.I.P.) of the Department of Social Theology and the Study of Religion at the School of Theology of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

1. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321, d1.

2. *Protagoras* belongs to Plato's "Socratic" dialogues. It has been written ca. 393-392 BC. The dramatic time that the dialogue's action unfolds is 433-431 BC, before the beginning of the Archidamian War. The general context of the narrative relates to Socrates's visit to the house of Callias, in order for him to meet the renowned sophist Protagoras. The occasion for this visit is the desire of the young Hippocrates (Hipponikos's son) to meet the sophist (314e1: «Πρωταγόραν γάρ τοι δεόμενοι ἰδεῖν ἤλθομεν») and to be taught by him. Cf. and W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, pp. 41-42.

3. The question of the interpretation of the scientific theories' construction under the

in the whole spectrum of human activity and through various attempts for it to be defined⁴, introduces us to a new anthropological stake of its technologically galloping⁵ course. In Late Modernity, the concept of the human being is re-positioned as a problem of a (new) ontological aiming and cognitive/scientific debate (Th. Kuhn, P. K. Feyerabend).

The historically long passage from Modernity (founded on the Enlightenment imperatives) to Postmodernity⁶ –that has culminated in the 20th century– constitutes an interesting chapter in the history of civilization, while at the same time poses a challenge, based on the following ancient Greek precepts:

1. The imprint of the mythic-religious narrative on the so-called Western civilization; the subversion of this imprint had already been an integral component of the Sophistic movement, the so called first “Enlightenment”.

2. The radically different treatment of this narrative (Athena’s “*artful wisdom*”) from the very system that “gave birth” to it (Titan Prometheus’s intervention).

prism of the interaction between social reality-theory-researcher has already been addressed by the critical theory (Frankfurt School) from 1930-1970; cf. M. Horkheimer, *Φιλοσοφία και κοινωνική κριτική*, transl. A. Oikonomou, Z. Sarikas, Hypsilon Publications, Athens 1984, pp. 15, 16, 22, 28. [Among the major –first generation– representatives of the Frankfurt School are M. Horkheimer, Th. Adorno, H. Marcuse, Er. Fromm, Fr. Pollock, W. Benjamin, L. Lowenthal with very worthy successors, who have charted their own separate course: J. Habermas, Karl-Otto Apel, Alfred Schmidt].

4. Cf. Ih. Hassan, “The question of postmodernism”, *Performing Arts Journal* 6, 1 (1982), p. 33.

5. G. Pleios, «Νόημα και ἐργασία στὴν ὕστερη νεωτερικότητα: ὁ ρόλος τῆς ἐκπαίδευσης καὶ τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ τῆς εἰκόνας», *Ἐπιθεώρηση Κοινωνικῶν Ἑρευνῶν/Epitheorisi Koinonikon Ereynon* 114 (2004), p. 64.

6. Cf. J.-Fr. Lyotard, *Ἡ Μεταμοντέρνα Κατάσταση*, Greek transl. K. Papagiorgis, Gnosi Publications, Athens 1993, p. 29. For the term’s origins, see Ih. Hassan op.cit., pp. 30-31. On this matter, the following article is extremely important: J. Habermas and Seyla Ben-Habib, “Modernity versus Postmodernity”, *New German Critique* 22 (1981), pp. 3-14, it deals with the presence of the term modern in the history of Western Europe, starting from the 5th century AD, p. 3. [This is the speech delivered by J. Habermas in Frankfurt upon receiving a prize].

Instead of the deep-rooted notion of the civilization's linear evolution, founded on the "grand narratives"⁷ of the science, Discourse and coherent shifts in the panorama of the history of ideas framed by philosophy and religion, Postmodernity introduces a new spirit⁸ (of life) characterized by questioning, breaking with the past, the "heterogeneity of the elements"⁹, according to Lyotard, the subversion, the deceptive virtuality with hybrid landscapes of communication, teaching and participation in collective processes, which are not without consequences in terms of some of human nature's fundamental pillars: truth¹⁰, knowledge¹¹, religion, the sacred, science¹², art¹³, technique.

The Prometheus Myth according to Protagoras

In a completely different context, the myth of Prometheus¹⁴, as Plato narrates it in his dialogue *Protagoras*¹⁵ especially in the first part of the

7. Cf. J.-Fr. Lyotard, *Η Μεταμοντέρνα Κατάσταση*, *op.cit.*, pp. 56, 57, 62-71, 80-99. Lyotard (1924-1998) speaks of the "decline of narratives", as "the grand narrative has lost its credibility"; see *op.cit.* p. 99. Cf. also J. L. Ahumada, Maria I. N. E. Carneiro, "Tradition and Truth in Postmodern Times: Everyday Life, the Academy and Psychoanalysis", *American Imago* 63, 3 (2006), p. 293.

8. Let us note here the different perspectives expressed on the relationship between modernity and postmodernity; cf. Zygmunt Bauman ("liquid modernity"), as well as the very interesting article written by W. Van Reijen & D. Veerman, "An Interview with Jean-François Lyotard", *Theory, Culture & Society* 5, 2-3 (1988), pp. 277-309.

9. Cf. J.-Fr. Lyotard, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

10. Cf. R. G. Bagnall, "Postmodernity 1: Seeing, Believing, and Being in a Fractured World", *Counterpoints* 81 (1999), pp. 51-63, here pp. 53-54.

11. Cf. J.-Fr. Lyotard, *op.cit.*, pp. 25, 29, 32, 30-32, 36, 62.

12. Cf. M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno, *Η διαλεκτική του διαφωτισμού*, Greek transl. Z. Sarikas, Hypsilon Publications, Athens 1986, pp. 11-12. Cf. also C. Rocco, "Between Modernity and Postmodernity: Reading Dialectic of Enlightenment against the Grain", *Political Theory* 22, 1 (1994), pp. 71-73.

13. We note here some earlier versions of the Postmodernism: Marcel Duchamp, Neo-Dadaism, Pop-Art, post-modern architecture, etc.

14. See Julia van Rosmalen, Merel van Gulik, Belle van Rosmalen & T. van Gulik, *Prometheus and the Liver through Art and Medicine*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2022, pp. 15-16.

15. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 320c-324d. The part of the lecture (324d-328b) comes after

myth, gives us a completely different context of Discourse, a reversal of continuities, but with a different intention.

During the first phase of the myth, where theogony precedes the creation of the world («Ἦν γάρ ποτε χρόνος, ὅτε ἦσαν μὲν θεοί, οὐκ ἦν δὲ θνητὰ γέννη»¹⁶), *Protagoras* presents the beginning of the technical evolution of civilization as a result of the skills acquired by man as gifts from the gods. The gods initially decide to properly equip the human race for its survival and evolvement. They entrust the distribution of these precious provisions to Epimetheus¹⁷ and Prometheus¹⁸. The benevolent¹⁹ and far-seeing Prometheus, in order to help the human race, at that decisive²⁰ time of its rise from the interior of the earth («ἐν ᾗ ἔδει και ἀνθρωπον ἐξιέναι ἐκ γῆς εἰς φῶς»)²¹, poorly prepared in terms of his physical gifts, steals the «ἔντεχνον σοφίαν» from Athena and the fire²² from Hephaestus and gives it to the people. Since Epimetheus «οὐ

the exposition of the myth; the latter is not sufficient to complete the sophist's view but functions symbolically. Protagoras's speech closes with a poetic reflection. The main topics of discussion in the dialogue are the nature of virtue, the teaching of virtue (is it possible for the virtue to be taught and, if so, who are best suited to teach it), the question of the unity of virtue, as well as the question of the relationship between pleasure and good. W. K. C. Guthrie, *op.cit.*, 2003, pp. 25-26; F. Trabattoni, "The unity of virtue, self-predication and the 'third man' in *Protagoras* 329e-332a", *Essays on Plato's Epistemology*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2016, p. 241 et seq.; W. Burkert, *Ἀρχαία Ἑλληνική Θρησκεία, Ἀρχαϊκή καὶ Κλασσικὴ Ἐποχή*, Greek transl. N. Bezentakos and Afroditi Avagianou, Kardamitsa Publications, Athens 2015, p. 627.

16. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας* 320d.

17. Ἐπιμηθεύς (ἐπί + μῆδομαι = "afterthought") was the son of the Titan Iapetus (Uranus and Gaia's son) and the Oceanid Clymene. Cf. and Hesiod, *Θεογονία*, στ. 507-508.

18. Ὁ Προμηθεύς (πρό + μῆτις = "far-seeing" "forethought", *Προμηθεύς* in the Dorian dialect) was the brother of Epimetheus, Atlas and Menoetius, and son of Iapetus and Clymene or Themis; cf. Aeschylus, *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, στ. 209, Hesiod, *Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*, στ. 54.

19. Cf. Aeschylus, *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, στ. 267: «θνητοῖς ἀρήγων αὐτὸς ἡρόρμην πόνους». Cf. W. Burkert, *op.cit.*, p. 558.

20. Cf. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 320d: «Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἦλθεν καὶ τούτοις εἰμαρμένος χρόνος γενέσεως».

21. Cf. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321c, 6.

22. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Ἱστορικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 5 67: «Ἰαπετοῦ δὲ Προμηθεῖα τὸν παραδεδομένον μὲν ὑπὸ τινων μυθογράφων ὅτι τὸ πῦρ κλέψας παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἔδωκε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, πρὸς δ' ἀλήθειαν εὐρετὴν γενόμενον τῶν πυρείων, ἐξ ὧν ἐκκάεται τὸ πῦρ».

πάνυ τι σοφὸς ὢν»²³, has been slow, letting the human race unarranged and unorganized («ἀκόσμητον») while satisfactorily supplying the other beings. Prometheus, who realized that Epimetheus was being at loss (a futile and impractical condition of spiritual helplessness²⁴, quite different from its Socratic version), intervened to correct the distribution, inspired mainly by charity²⁵, using at the same time his acumen and ingenuity («ποικίλον αἰολόμητιν») ²⁶. He brought the gods down into the world of people's needs, as givers and not as rulers, contributing greatly to the gradual shift in the foundations of ancient Greek religion, without altering the current religious traditions – quite the contrary. This shift was linked to the civilization's evolutionary stages; it started with the establishment of altars for the worship of the gods («καὶ ἐπεχείρει βωμούς τε ἰδρύεσθαι καὶ ἀγάλματα θεῶν») ²⁷, to be followed by the invention of language («ἔπειτα φωνὴν καὶ ὀνόματα ταχὺ διηρθρώσατο τῇ τέχνῃ») ²⁸ and the beginnings of the spiritual culture. Nevertheless, this grand design could never have taken place without the creation of organized (social) life («τὴν μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν βίον σοφίαν ἄνθρωπος ταύτῃ ἔσχεν, τὴν δὲ πολιτικὴν οὐκ εἶχεν») ²⁹.

More specifically, Prometheus applied a process of strategic planning, as he was astonished by the weak human nature and the impending impasse («γυμνὸν τε καὶ ἀνυπόδητον καὶ ἄστρωτον καὶ ἄοπλον») ³⁰. This cunning design had a clear objective: man should see the invisible power of the goddess Athena's wisdom and make good use of it, assisted by the power of light. In this way, we would say, Titan created a complex tool («τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρί») ³¹ for the human potential to be

23. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321b8 For Epimetheus's foolishness, cf. Hesiod, *Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*, στ. 83-89.

24. Cf. Hesiod, *Θεογονία*, στ. 511.

25. Cf. Hippocrates, *Παραγγελίας* 6: «ἦν γὰρ παρῇ φιланθρωπική, πάρεστι καὶ φιλοτεχνή»; Aeschylus, *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, στ. 445-6: «λέξω δέ, μέμψιν οὔτιν' ἀνθρώποις ἔχων, ἀλλ' ὦν δέδωκ' εὐνοίαν ἐξηγούμενος».

26. Hesiod, *Θεογονία*, στ. 511 and 521.

27. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 322a, 4-5.

28. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 322a, 5-6.

29. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321d, 3-4.

30. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321c, 4-5.

31. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321d, 1.

utilized, except for the fact that this potential covers all humans, especially from the perspective of natural equality³². It is well known that, despite this strategic planning, Prometheus was punished by Zeus³³ (with the assistance of Kratos and Bia).

Conceptual Clarification – Goals

Athena's "artful wisdom" («ἔντεχνος σοφία») corresponds to basic technical-cognitive abilities that man possesses (which in this phase of civilization are related to metalwork, sculpture, architecture, etc.). It has nothing to do with the philosophical elaboration of the virtue of wisdom, as it appears in the Platonic dialogues and Aristotelian treatises. It does possess, though, an already visible and promisingly efficient epistemological dimension –analogous to the Modernity's epistemological foundations– constituting a technical "platform" which can be exploited by every intelligent human being in order for him to methodically ensure autonomy, advancement, perpetual progress and knowledge – that is, enlightening³⁴ propositions in their entirety. In his tragedy *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus eloquently delineates this cognitive dimension of the Titan's salutary intervention: «οἱ πρῶτα μὲν βλέποντες ἔβλεπον μάτην, / κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον, ἀλλ' ὄνειράτων / ἀλίγκιοι μορφῇσι τὸν μακρὸν βίον / ἔφυρον εἰκῇ πάντα»³⁵.

32. Many sophists have spoken about men's natural equality: Antiphon, Alcidas, Hippias, Critias. Cf. G. Romeyer-Dherbey, *Οἱ Σοφιστές*, Greek transl. G. Arabatzis, Daidalos Publications, Athens 2009, pp. 66-72, 91-101, 109-123, 132-134; W. K. C. Guthrie, *op.cit.*, pp. 2-13, 27-32; W. Burkert, *op.cit.*, p. 628. For a historical overview of the influence exerted by the Sophists, see Barbara Cassin, "Who's Afraid of the Sophists? Against Ethical Correctness", *Hypatia* 15, 4 (2000), pp. 102-117.

33. Cf. Hesiod, *Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*, στ. 47-48: «ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς ἔκρυψε, χολωσάμενος φρεσὶ ἧσιν, ὅττι μιν ἐξαπάτησε Προμηθεὺς ἀγκυλομήτης».

34. M. Horkheimer and Th. Adorno express their skepticism about the Enlightenment's reception by traditional theory in their *Διαλεκτικὴ τοῦ διαφωτισμοῦ*, *op.cit.*, pp. 13, 15, 23, 37.

35. Aeschylus, *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, στ. 447-450 and 459-460. Regarding the relation of Aeschylus with the religion, see H. Lloyd-Jones, "Zeus, Prometheus, and Greek Ethics", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 101 (2003), p. 66.

Through this wisdom, people recognize the complexity of the socio-cultural entity; as acting subjects capable of defining, signifying and organizing what initially seems chaotic and threatening, they gain access to this complexity through research and interpretation. Thus, the “*artful wisdom*” contributes to the acquisition by human beings of the “*wisdom about life*”³⁶. On the one hand, the Titan acknowledges in humans a principled “commitment”; on the other, he discerns their potential to changing this reality. This is his insight. Based on this philosophical anthropological approach, the insightful anthropological-cognitive-value intervention of Prometheus contributed enormously to the evolution of material civilization³⁷ thanks to the following:

1. In his ontological and existential questioning / aporia (questioning here refers to a kind of Socratic-wise ethical-cognitive virtue³⁸) completely different from that of Epimetheus.

2. In the perception of the salvific character of his mission («*ἤντινα σωτηρίαν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ εὖροι*»³⁹), for the fulfilment of which he did not turn to blind nature but to a divine quality (*σοφία*).

3. In his determination to break a moral rule (of not stealing)⁴⁰ and a rule of piety (he stole something that was in the possession of the goddess Athena). His decision was founded on his unconditional charity, but also on a different understanding of the concept of the divine. Prometheus’s daring act brought man closer to God (in a form of relationship that can hardly be found within the context of ancient Greek religion), so that he could enjoy divine goods.

Behind all this we recognize here a new model of leadership, which is projected in the labyrinthine mythical-religious ancient Greek past: the old model of leadership is that of Zeus⁴¹: – domination⁴², blatant

36. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321d, 4.

37. Cf. Aeschylus, *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, στ. 469-470.

38. Cf. Plato, *Ἀπολογία Σωκράτους*, 29b-29c.

39. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321c, 8.

40. Cf. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321e, 2, 322a, 2.

41. Cf. Hesiod, *Θεογονία*, στ. 529, 677-684, 687-696; Apollodorus, *Βιβλιοθήκη* A, 2, 1.

42. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321a, 3; Hesiod, *Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*, στ. 2-9. Cf. and H. Lloyd-

authoritarianism⁴³, and forceful imposition in the form of patriarchy⁴⁴. The new model is represented by Prometheus, who draws on some of the old model's tools, but defines his own philanthropic, giving, efficient and enlightened model of a leadership ministry⁴⁵. This is because he prioritized the needs of the human race, discerning and extracting the proper tools: «τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρί». He exhibited empathy, organizing spirit and humanism, and the human beings acknowledged the stance he had adopted⁴⁶.

Athena's "artful wisdom", as a methodical work of a "positively" oriented intentionality, constitutes a condition of overcoming the immanent contradictions and weaknesses of human nature⁴⁷, but it does not substitute nor does it alone ensure the necessary political dimension of the human beings, which are destined to live in organized cities («οὕτω δὴ παρεσκευασμένοι κατ' ἀρχὰς ἄνθρωποι ὥκουσιν σποράδην, πόλεις δὲ οὐκ ἦσαν»)⁴⁸. For this reason, it is more akin to modernity, without being fully in tune with its precepts (in any case, that it would not be possible), if we understand the latter not only as a historical-cultural period but also as a conceptual construct.

The "artful wisdom", embedded in the cultural and religious context of the time, despite the fact that it refers mainly to the issue of technical skills, it differs from the technical spirit⁴⁹ of late modernity in the following ways:

- i. It creates its identity through identifiable constants of widespread cultural acceptance (divine qualities).
- ii. It requires a reductive handling (Prometheus), without any underlying parameters and connotative attempts.

Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

43. Cf. Homer, *Ὀδύσσεια*, ε, στ. 103-4: «ἀλλὰ μάλ' οὐ πως ἔστι Διὸς νόον αἰγιόχοιο / οὔτε παρεξελθεῖν ἄλλον θεὸν οὔθ' ἀλιῶσαι».

44. Cf. Homer, *Ὀδύσσεια*, α, στ. 386-7, 390; Hesiod, *Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*, στ. 59.

45. Cf. Aeschylus, *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, στ. 478-506.

46. In Athens, the festival of *Προμήθεια* was celebrated with torchlight processions. Prometheus had by now been an integral part of the Attica cults. See W. Burkert, *op.cit.*, p. 362.

47. This dimension of Athena's wisdom is also highlighted in the *Odyssey*, β, στ. 116-118: «τὰ φρονέουσ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἅ οἱ πέρι δῶκεν Ἀθήνη. / ἔργα τ' ἐπίστασθαι περικαλλέα καὶ φρένας ἐσθλὰς / κέρδεά θ'».

48. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 322b, 1.

49. Cf. J.-Fr. Lyotard, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

iii. It aims at the salvation of humanity as a whole; it constitutes a unifying principle – a principle of reference.

iv. It introduces wisdom, an important balancing quality, that is common to both gods and humans, into the “technical culture” of the age.

v. It combines the radical and the universal in the imprint of a rational condition (Athena’s wisdom), which acts in a constructing and not a deconstructing manner. The “*artful wisdom*” is not perceived as a metaphysical transcendental condition; it is a human practical-mental quality.

vi. It focuses on the logical course and evolution of human civilization, which is based on the exploitation of abilities, skills, technical facilities and a new type of logic: the participation of the human race in the divine fate, i.e. in a privileged society, by virtue of which its course will be forever changed. From now on, «ὁ ἄνθρωπος θείας μετέσχε μοίρας»⁵⁰.

The technical spirit of Late Modernity follows a different course and has a different set of priorities, although in Postmodernity the issue of affluence, the blind, constant search for resources and consequent abundance remains one of major importance. In the context of a historical-philosophical and anthropological perspective, the “*artful wisdom*” focuses on the consolidation of material civilization through unifying functions that were important for that era:

- a. The divine assistance (Zeus, Athena, Hephaestus, Prometheus).
- b. The “incarnation” of the divine realm’s cognitive virtue. Athena’s “*artful wisdom*” acquires human dimensions, and, thanks to the Titan, is transmuted.
- c. The possession of the political art, so that people live concentrated in cities («ἐξήτουν δὴ ἀθροίζεσθαι καὶ σώζεσθαι κτίζοντες πόλεις»)⁵¹.

These foundations are at the opposite end of the spirit of Late Modernity and its centrifugal tendencies. Prometheus’s decision was profoundly rational, an eclectic epistemological method, and most clearly exhibits

50. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 322a.

51. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 322b, 5-6.

the spirit's (i.e. Prometheus's) rebellion against the established order that had been set by Zeus, with the aim of establishing a new one. It was an enlightening initiative – cognitively, morally, humanistically, and politically; an initiative of a radically different spirit from the Late Modernity's symbolic constructions, which is not only a new cognitive state, but also a new socio-political-anthropological condition (Lyotard, Freud, Lacan).

The non-condescending, adamant and philanthropic struggle for the survival of the human race does not only involve a salutary sign of reference. It also symbolizes a spirit free from mythical-religious inflexibilities. The «ἔντεχνος σοφία σὺν πυρί» (although of divine origin) surpasses those inflexibilities – even if it comes from the gods.

Towards a Policy of Meaning

The argument, the reason and the intentionality of the philosophizing subject (in our case, Prometheus: «δίδωσιν ἀνθρώπῳ») ⁵² are those that offer possible interventions to still unprocessed meanings [(“artful wisdom” («ἔντεχνος σοφία»)] The internal restructuring of meaning –its newly acquired interventionist capacity–, constitutes the politics of meaning in the specific socio-cultural horizon of reference. This results to the dynamics of an active, purely operational meaning. This technical ⁵³ possibility provided by Prometheus did not turn into a life stance; it simply facilitated the realization of a holistic vision of humanity, by virtue of a political-sociological plan, with a visible anthropological horizon of reference: «ἦντινα σωτηρίαν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ εὖροι» ⁵⁴. Prometheus invested in this dimension of the divine quality, and this is the enlightenment-type politics of the meaning of his offering. According to the myth,

52. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321e 3.

53. Indeed, according to Ferrarin, Prometheus's offer was combined with a practical intelligence, which was characterized by a specific political dimension; see Al. Ferrarin, “Homo Faber, Homo Sapiens, or Homo Politicus? Protagoras and the Myth of Prometheus”, *The Review of Metaphysics* 54, 2 (2000), p. 292.

54. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321c, 7.

the foundation of human cultural progress was not the mechanization and instrumentalization of “artful wisdom” («έντέχνου σοφίας»), but the emergence of the Promethean sublime attitude towards humanity. It is this basic distinction that the relevant myth is offering to us.

Epilogue

In the context of the Late Modernity’s technicism, not only technology but also nature and man are instrumentalized. Myth on this point was prescient, as was Prometheus, who would raise the issue of harnessing the “inner wisdom” and the possession of political art («τὴν δὲ πολιτικὴν οὐκ εἶχεν»)⁵⁵, for the societies to be created and developed. Zeus will respond with the equal and universal administration of αἰδῶς and δίκη⁵⁶ (justice) for the societies to be advanced comprehensively and substantially.

For man, the universal symbol was not the divine source of technical civilization («έντεχνος σοφία σὺν πυρί») but Prometheus, its agent, as it has been splendidly shown not only from Plato, but also from Hesiod (*Theogony, Works and Days*), and Aeschylus in his Trilogy *Prometheia* (*Prometheus the Fire-Bringer, Prometheus Bound, Prometheus Unbound*)⁵⁷.

If the questioning, the constant concern about what Modernity has brought forth is Postmodernity’s emblematic dynamic⁵⁸, the balance, critical reflection, and avoidance of man’s instrumentalization are only some of the issues for which Orthodox Theology, Philosophy, Sociology ought to articulate a critical, reconciliatory, peace-making discourse.

55. Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 321d, 4.

56. See Plato, *Πρωταγόρας*, 322a-323a.

57. From this trilogy we have only the surviving *Prometheus Bound* (463-456 BC), with 1,093 verses, where Aeschylus focuses on the dipole: theft of light – succession to divine power.

58. On this, see R. G. Bagnall, *op.cit.*, p. 51.