

Chapter Three: The Socratic *Elenchus* and Practical Concerns

1. Socrates' Practical Orientation

In the *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero writes:

But from the ancient days down to the time of Socrates, who had listened to Archelaus the pupil of Anaxagoras, philosophy dealt with numbers and movements, with the problem whence all things came, or whither they returned, and zealously inquired into the size of the stars, the spaces that divided them, their courses and all celestial phenomena. Socrates on the other hand was the first to call down philosophy from the heavens and set her in the cities of men and bring her also into their homes and compel her to ask questions about life and morality and things good and evil. (5.4.10)

Cicero's comment may be dubious philosophical history, but it does point to a genuine contrast between the Socrates of Plato's early dialogues and certain of the Presocratics. To put it quite generally, this Socrates is interested first and foremost in practical concerns, in how best we might live our lives, as opposed to purely theoretical concerns, issues of cosmology and astronomy that have no direct bearing upon matters of general, everyday interest. How can we understand the philosophical activity of the Socrates of Plato's early dialogues in light of this contrast? How can we thus understand the *Protagoras*?

2. Socrates and Experts

In the *Apology* (Plato's portrayal of Socrates' defense while on trial), Socrates describes the philosophical activity that occupied him for much of his adult life and will shortly lead to his conviction and execution on charges of impiety and corrupting the young. Socrates says that he acquired his reputation for wisdom on account of one practice: Socrates sought out those with a reputation for wisdom and examined them in order to discern whether their reputations were justified. Socrates specifies three classes among the individuals he examined: men of public affairs, poets and craftsmen. He found, he says, in every case, that each individual he examined did not deserve a reputation for wisdom. He found that the poets and men of public affairs did not actually know the things they claimed or were reputed to know, while the

craftsmen did know some things (presumably with respect to their particular crafts) but on the strength of this knowledge they believed they knew all sorts of things they did not in fact know (and so could not be considered wise). Since he habitually refutes the claims of others in this fashion, Socrates claims, he has himself acquired a reputation for wisdom. But this reputation is undeserved—he at best has a sort of human wisdom, which merely means that he is aware of his own ignorance. (*Apology* 20c-22e)

Socrates describes here the activity perhaps most characteristic of him in the early dialogues: the examination (and refutation) of reputed or self-styled experts. As the list of people he examined indicates, he was interested only in experts whose expertise has practical importance. In the early dialogues, he is not interested, as Cicero observed, in matters of cosmology and similar subjects. In the *Apology*, he specifically forswears interest or competence in such subjects. (19b-c) Correspondingly, he neither mentions in his speech, nor do we see elsewhere in the early dialogues, that he ever examined any claims to expertise on these subjects.

In the *Apology*, Socrates claims that he undertook his examinations of experts at the behest of an indirect command from the god Apollo. We need not necessarily doubt this claim, but it is also not hard to see that Socrates could and perhaps would justify his activity without reference to divine sanction. In the *Apology*, for instance, Socrates claims that his activity provides the Athenians with genuine happiness in contrast to the apparent and false happiness they derive from a successful Athenian athlete. (36d-e) Socrates is certainly not claiming here that he makes the city happy because he gains for it the approval of Apollo. What else, then, justifies this claim?

In the *Euthydemus*, Socrates claims as entirely uncontroversial that all human beings wish to do well (*eu zen*) and to do so by having good things. (278e) When presented with practical questions, questions of precisely how we are to go about flourishing, Socrates often notes that to be practically effective, we ought to consult someone knowledgeable (*epistemon*) on the subject of our difficulty, an expert (*technikos*). He notes uncontroversially in the

Apology that if we wished to take proper care of young horses in our possession, we would seek out and rely upon the advice of an expert in the field, a horse trainer. (20a-b) By doing so, we would be far more likely to achieving our end (having properly raised, healthy, excellent horses). We would be far more likely to have something good, something conducive to a flourishing life. The horse trainer is able to make us more practically effective in pursuing our goals not by means of an inborn knack or divine dispensation, but rather by means of a body of knowledge he or she can articulate and teach to others. This analysis applies to the other *technikoi* Socrates often invokes: the shoemaker, the doctor, etc. are all able to be practically effective, to bring about good things, by means of knowledge.

These considerations made the expert a central concern for Socrates. Since knowledge makes us practically effective, it should be of the utmost importance to find knowledge or someone knowledgeable on the subjects of greatest importance to us—how to do well, what is in our benefit and how we might best flourish in life. This is the motivation of Socrates' philosophical activity in the early dialogues. Hence, when faced, in the *Apology*, with the question of to whom a man ought to send his son in order that his son may become excellent and flourishing, Socrates suggests that, just as if he had a young horse, he ought to send his son to someone *epistemon*, someone who by his knowledge can help his son to flourish. (20b)

Of course, the difficulty is to be able to recognize and to verify the credentials of an appropriate expert. There are, in Plato's and Socrates' society at least, individuals who claim to be able to make us happy through their instruction. How can we tell that an individual has the requisite knowledge that will enable us to live an excellent life?

Determining whether an individual makes justifiable claims to knowledge is an epistemological inquiry. This is the sort of inquiry to which Socrates is primarily devoted. However, it is important to emphasize that Socrates does not undertake these examinations primarily because of independent epistemological interests in what constitutes knowledge. Socrates is interested in epistemological questions because they have practical consequences.

3. The Examination of Expertise in the *Protagoras*

Socrates' activity in the *Protagoras* is overdetermined. Knowing Socrates' general philosophical proclivities, we would expect him to need to no prompting to examine Protagoras' claims to expertise. The sophist, after all, asserts that he teaches *arete*, and that he thus can enable an individual to flourish. This is precisely the sort of wisdom that centrally occupies Socrates.

However, the dialogue begins with Hippocrates: Hippocrates wishes to meet Protagoras and asks Socrates to speak to the sophist on his behalf. (310e) Hippocrates, however, is unable to say precisely what sort of instruction Protagoras will provide. Will Protagoras' teachings improve Hippocrates' soul? (313a-314c) To put it another way, will Protagoras instruct Hippocrates in such a way that he becomes knowledgeable and more practically effective in pursuing his aims? Since he is speaking on Hippocrates' behalf, Socrates is obliged to determine whether or not Protagoras can provide the sort of instruction Hippocrates desires—he is obliged to evaluate Protagoras' claims to expertise.

Protagoras, as has been shown in the previous chapter, coherently presents himself as one who can address Hippocrates' practical concerns—he proclaims that he is not, in contrast to Hippias and other sophists, primarily concerned in his teaching to explore purely theoretical questions in less useful subjects such as geometry. Protagoras defends his ability to teach something directly relevant to and useful for Hippocrates' desire to attain political excellence—*euboulia*, the ability to deliberate well, a capacity resulting in correct judgments about where the city's benefit lies, judgments on account of which men are admired and attributed excellence.

How does Socrates evaluate Protagoras? Once the sophist has fully elaborated his description of what he teaches and defended his ability to teach it, Socrates initiates a discussion with Protagoras on the question of precisely how the parts of virtue are related to the whole of virtue—as the parts of a face (nose, eyes, etc.) are related to the whole of a face or as the parts of gold are related to the whole of gold? (329d) This conversation takes various twists and turns, but, aside from the interlude wherein Socrates and Protagoras discuss Simonides' poem,

the essential question of the discussion remains the same. The conversation ends when it becomes clear that Protagoras' views on the matter conflict with the consequences of other beliefs he holds. He initially likens virtue to the face, claiming that one may possess certain virtues and not others and that the different virtues have different powers (*dunameis*). (330a-b) However, Socrates manages to convince him that one of the consequences of other beliefs he holds is that the parts of virtue are far more closely related than Protagoras originally claimed. When Protagoras thus contradicts himself, the sophist explicitly admits defeat and the conversation ends. Although Socrates never states it explicitly, this contradiction in Protagoras' beliefs is supposed to serve as a refutation of Protagoras' claim to expertise.

4. The Practical Justification of the Socratic Elenchus

One element of the refutation of Protagoras' claim to expertise could not be more simple. Protagoras claims that his subject of expertise is virtue and Socrates has shown that Protagoras holds contradictory beliefs about virtue. As Frede writes:

Socratic elenctic dialectic is supposed to test whether the respondent on a given subject-matter has any claim to authority, to knowledge, to expertise. It proceeds on the assumption that somebody who is in a privileged position to speak on a certain subject will not contradict himself on the very subject of his expertise. Surely the least we can, and need to, expect from an expert is that when we turn to him to find out the correct answer to some question we have, he does not give us an answer only to contradict it a few minutes later.¹

If Hippocrates is to rely upon Protagoras as an expert, he needs the sophist to provide useful and reliable advice and instruction on his subject of competence—how one may acquire virtue and thereby become successful in political affairs. Protagoras claims that he can, on the basis of his expertise, teach a certain cognitive excellence to Hippocrates, namely *euboulia*, an excellence that can gain him the position and the honor he desires. However, Protagoras acknowledges that there are parts of virtue other than this cognitive excellence. The virtue of a man also consists in traditional virtues such as courage and piety. It seems quite obvious to

¹ Frede [1992a], p. 211.

Protagoras that the various virtues are separable from each other and thus from the cognitive excellence he claims to teach and Hippocrates wishes to learn. The sophist furthermore indicates that it is quite common to possess one virtue and not others—he feels he has seen many examples of this phenomenon. (229e)

So if one were to ask Protagoras, prior to his discussion with Socrates, whether he feels it is necessary that his students be courageous in order to possess *euboulia*, he would presumably answer no. Therefore, if he were faced with a “graduating” student, of the sort he claims to have seen often before, namely one prudent and wise, but not courageous, he would nevertheless consider himself to have educated this individual successfully. This ought to be reflected in his pedagogy. Protagoras must believe that he need not worry nor hold himself responsible for teaching his students to be courageous in order to teach them *euboulia* successfully.

Yet Socrates convinces Protagoras that it follows from certain beliefs the sophist has that all the various parts of virtue are closely related. The final refutation of Protagoras comes when he convinces the sophist that courage is a sort of wisdom—knowledge of what is and is not to be feared. (360c-e) If one possesses this knowledge, then one will necessarily be courageous—Protagoras enthusiastically agrees and asserts that knowledge will always be the ruling element in an individual and will never be overwhelmed by pleasure. (352a-d)

Can Protagoras at the end of the dialogue still assert that someone he has taught successfully might possess *euboulia* but not courage? The sophist claims to teach a virtue by which one comes to know, by sound deliberation, what is beneficial for oneself. Surely this means that one who came to possess *euboulia* would also come to possess knowledge of what one ought to avoid and what pursue. Having this knowledge, Protagoras has unreservedly agreed, will mean that an individual is courageous. Thus it seems that he ought not to identify an individual who does not act courageously as possessing *euboulia*. Protagoras now has very good reason to think that, if one of his students does not display courage, he has not taught this student successfully.

Yet it seems unlikely that his strong first impression on the subject now counts for nothing. It seemed quite obvious to Protagoras that there are many individuals who were brave but not just, just but not wise. While he has reason, on the basis of his agreements with Socrates, not to identify certain cowards as possessing *euboulia*, he still probably feels he has actually observed such people. Protagoras is thus in a state of *aporia*: he has reason both to believe and not to believe that one may be courageous but not possess *euboulia*. Thus he would be unable to determine whether he has successfully taught what he claims to teach and unable to decide whether he ought to concern himself with his students' courage or lack thereof.

Protagoras' *aporia* is not merely a theoretical affair. He is not merely unable to decide whether a certain proposition is true. Unless he resolves the contradiction in his beliefs, he will be paralyzed from a practical point of view. If his beliefs remain in conflict, he will be unable to act in a rational fashion. Anyone relying upon his advice or instruction would be in a similar difficulty.

Bringing an interlocutor into a state of *aporia* is, of course, extremely characteristic of Socratic dialectic—it is the result of the Socratic *elenchus* or process of refutation. Having identified a belief with which he wants to take issue, Socrates generally proceeds in the *elenchus* by supplying premises with which his interlocutor agrees and from which follows the contradictory of his original belief. The *elenchus* does not demonstrate or prove the contradictory of Socrates' interlocutor's view. In his 1956 introduction to the *Protagoras*, Vlastos characterizes what the *elenchus* does achieve:

[The purpose of the *elenchus* is] to increase one's insight into the logical relations between propositions and thus one's ability to estimate how the truth claims of one proposition are affected by those of others. Socrates seems to be telling us something like this all along: 'I am not undertaking to show you that this which I believe is true, and that which you maintain is false. All I am going to do is to investigate with you how either of them is related to a number of other things so that you can see for yourself what commitments you are making *if* you accept the truth of your premise. Whatever decision you take will have to be yours.'²

² Vlastos [1956], p. xxx.

To survive the *elenchus* without contradicting oneself, then, requires that there not be any inconsistencies in the set of propositions one believes, nor any such inconsistencies in the logical consequences of those beliefs.

The *elenchus* has special importance for ethical beliefs. Presumably all experts, whether experts on moral matters or otherwise, in order to justify their claim of expertise must be consistent in their beliefs in their area of expertise. Indeed, Socrates indicates in the *Apology* that the craftsmen do know some things—presumably they are consistent in their beliefs about their particular crafts. However, no one in the early dialogues is ever successful in claiming expertise in excellence, virtue or other ethical questions. No one ever answers knowledgeably the questions of how one ought to live or how one might flourish. Why is this sort of claim to expertise more prone to refutation through the *elenchus*?

Compared to the subject matters of the other *technai*, ethical matters are far more likely to be fraught with controversy and cause disagreement. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato makes Socrates contrast ethical terms with terms like “iron” or “silver”: “But what happens when we say ‘just’ or ‘good’? Doesn’t each one of us go in a different direction? Don’t we differ with one another and even with ourselves?” (263a) Additionally, the controversy raised by ethical questions is not as easily resolved as other sorts of disagreement. When we have disagreements about the size of numbers or “about the larger and the smaller” or “the lighter and the heavier”, we simply measure the disputed quantity. However, when we disagree about “the just and the unjust, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad”, we are not likely to resolve our disagreement easily, but instead we will grow angry and hostile towards each other. (*Euthyphro* 7b-d)

The ethical beliefs of a society or of an individual are generally far more complex and far less isolated from beliefs of other kinds than a society’s beliefs about medicine, shoemaking, etc. We tend to pick up beliefs about what we ought to do, what is in our advantage, and what we ought to avoid from a variety of different sources, with no guarantee that any among this array of beliefs will be consistent with the others. This conflict can especially arise when one attempts to

reconcile general definitions of ethical terms (“courage is staying at your post”) and examples of these terms (“the peltasts acted bravely while fleeing”). Because of the greater complexity of one’s ethical beliefs before reflection, it is far more easy for one to be caught in a contradiction.

It was no coincidence that failing the *elenchus* caused both practical and epistemological difficulties for Protagoras. Failing the *elenchus*, especially when one’s ethical beliefs are being examined, generally can lead to practical difficulty. In such cases, when one finds that one’s beliefs are inconsistent, one cannot act rationally without abandoning some belief. One may furthermore have no criteria by which to decide which belief to drop.

Inconsistency in this realm can thus be paralyzing for rational action. Consider once again the case of Hippocrates: Protagoras wishes to impart to his students the ability to deliberate well—the ability possessed by Pericles, on account of which he was able to determine what was best for the city as whole. It is this ability that Hippocrates desires and undoubtedly would be honored for.

If Hippocrates is to make these sorts of decisions well and appropriately, he must be able to decide upon a persuasive and consistent standard of benefit by which he will make his decision and may justify it. However, his beliefs may result through their logical consequences in competing standards of benefit. In such a situation, Hippocrates could not easily reject any of such competing standards. He might in fact have strong reasons to believe that multiple standards are justified. Unless he is able to resolve this difficulty, he will be unable to decide upon a course of action he can wholeheartedly endorse as beneficial.

Consider another example, also from the early dialogues. In the *Euthyphro*, the title character is in a particularly severe difficulty. His father left a slave (who killed another slave) lying in a ditch for so long that he died. He wishes, he leads us to believe, to take the action that is pious in his circumstances. He feels it is always pious to prosecute the wrongdoer—thus he ought to prosecute his father for the slave’s death. Yet, there are considerations that could lead Euthyphro to believe that it is impious to treat his father in such a hostile fashion. (4b-e) Euthyphro ignores these considerations, but we need not do so. If we do not, we will be unable

to say whether on grounds of piety Euthyphro is obliged or forbidden to prosecute his father. If we are to pronounce judgment on Euthyphro's action, we must thus somehow resolve the contradiction between these competing standards of piety.

One goes to the sort of expert one finds in the early dialogues for practical advice, advice one can rely upon in difficult situations. If one wishes to determine that an expert will give advice that helps one to steer clear of the difficulties above, one needs to determine that the expert has resolved such contradictions in his or her set of relevant beliefs.

Suppose we had the difficulty in finding such an individual that Socrates notoriously had. How can we actively surmount this problem?.

5. The Solution: The Priority of Definition

We need a way to sort through our beliefs that contradict each other either directly or through their logical consequences. Nor is it merely our own beliefs and opinions that we must arbitrate. It is hardly necessary to note that probably no possible area is so prone to dispute and a bewildering variety of opinions as ethical questions—questions of what is in our advantage, what we ought to do, etc. How are we to reconcile the many things that people believe (*doxai*), the many things that seem and appear to people (*phainomena*)?

We need, Socrates claims, some sort of knowledge to help us avoid errors in choosing which of our many opinions are correct. Knowledge is what will infallibly help us always to make the correct decision, to avoid those things that falsely appear to be the case. “While the power of appearance often makes us wander all over the place confused and regretting our actions and choices, both great and small,” Socrates tells Protagoras, “the art of measurement, in contrast, would make the appearances lose their power by showing us the truth, would give us peace of mind firmly rooted in the truth and would save our life.” (356d-e) This, Socrates tells us, makes knowledge that which will “save” us. Knowledge ensures that we never make the wrong practical decision.

This claim comes in the context of Socrates' argument from the hedonistic premise. However, Socrates can certainly be read here as making a more general point. In fact, Frede writes correctly, in my view, of this section:

Obviously, this part of the argument still rests on the hedonistic assumption that we aim at pleasure (and nothing else); but it need not do so. What is true of pleasure and pain, namely, that they are systematically misestimated depending on the distance, is generally true of whatever is held good or bad. If we are guided by the systematically distorted beliefs about good and bad that naturally arise from appearances and gain acceptance in our communities, thus reinforcing our own illusions, we shall ruin our lives. Only knowledge, a calculus of goods to correct our misleading beliefs, can save us.³

One might helpfully add to Frede's comment that the *phainomena* (appearances) which knowledge corrects need not simply be misleading sense-data. They may be things that simply appear to us in a general sense to be the case—they may thus be beliefs about morality, human nature, etc.

Precisely what is this knowledge of which Socrates speaks? Socrates takes the conversation with Protagoras not to have established any positive thesis presented in the discussion as knowledge. His discussion with Protagoras has shown that the sophist is vulnerable to certain practical crises, crises that, as an expert, he ought to be able both to avoid himself and to help his students to do likewise. However, Socrates makes clear in part 6 that, viewed as an attempt to establish positive doctrines in the context of dialectic, the discussion has failed. Socrates, however, indicates a further direction that inquiry with Protagoras could and ought to take: a discussion endeavoring to determine what virtue itself is. (360e-361d)

This is characteristic of what Aristotle called Socrates' focus on universals or definitions.⁴ A number of modern scholars have also commented upon this feature of Socrates' dialectical practice. Robinson labeled Socrates' proclivity to turn to this sort of inquiry the priority of definition. Robinson, drawing upon the early dialogues in general, claimed that

³ Frede [1992b], p. xxxi.

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1078 b9-17. In searching for definitions or universals, Socrates is, of course, not interested merely in codifying the linguistic behavior of his fellow Athenians. He is interested rather in the sort of definition that sheds light upon the phenomena to which the definiendum refers. For a rewarding discussion and analysis of Socrates' interest in definitions, see Sharvy [1972].

Socrates believed that one cannot know or say anything useful about a concept, x , until one knows a definition of x , what x is.⁵ Geach, in an article on the *Euthyphro*, asserts that Socrates views on definition constitute the “Socratic fallacy”. This “style of mistaken thinking” consists in claiming both that (a) one cannot know that a thing, a , is an example of some concept or predicate, x , until one knows a definition of x and (b) that it is no good to bring up examples of x to define x .⁶ Geach rightly points out that this makes knowledge of both examples and definition fairly impossible and that, of course, “we know heaps of things”⁷ (e.g. this is a fish) before we have any definitional knowledge.

A number of scholars have endeavored, successfully I believe, to clear Socrates of any charge of fallacy.⁸ While I don’t want fully to enter the debate concerning the Socratic fallacy and the priority of definition, I think it is fair to point out that neither of these supposed Socratic doctrines makes an appearance in the *Protagoras*. Socrates suggests in part 6 that it would be sufficient for clearing up their difficulties concerning whether virtue can be taught to pursue an inquiry into the nature of virtue itself. However, here the dialogue ends—Socrates makes no further claim concerning the importance of definitions. If he believed that being able to articulate a definition of virtue was a necessary prerequisite for determining whether virtue is teachable (or saying anything useful about virtue at all), he did not make this clear in the *Protagoras*.

In the *Protagoras*, then, Socrates suggests to Protagoras that they inquire into the nature of virtue in order to clear up the difficulties they had earlier. However, an answer to the sort of inquiry Socrates proposes would clear up not only his current difficulties, but indeed precisely all those difficulties which the *elenchus* diagnoses. The inquiry into definitions can thus be said to be practically motivated as well.

Gerasimos Santas in his book on Socrates notes several “pragmatic” uses Socrates has for the definitions he desires to uncover. The first of these uses Santas calls the “diagnostic” use

⁵ Robinson [1953], p. 53.

⁶ Geach [1966], p. 371.

⁷ Geach [1966], p. 371.

⁸ See Burnyeat [1977], Santas [1972]. Other discussions of the Socratic fallacy include Beversluis [1987], Vlastos [1994], chapter 3, Nehamas [1975] and Woodruff [1987].

of definitions.⁹ The diagnostic use of definitions is well exemplified in the *Euthyphro*. Euthyphro has decided, prior to the dialogue, that he will prosecute his father and is in the process of bringing him to court, taking this to be the pious action despite opinions to the contrary. Socrates marvels at his confidence in deciding what is pious and asks him for definition of the pious so that he will be able to mount a successful defense in his own upcoming trial. Socrates specifies his request for a definition of piety:

Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it, and using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not. (6e)

When we have discovered what piety itself is, we have a criterion by which we may decide whether controversial cases or examples are pious or not. We can cut through the various conflicting beliefs that led us initially not to be able to decide whether, say, prosecuting Euthyphro's father was pious for Euthyphro. It is not only in this case, however, that the definition will be of aid. The definition will help us to systematize our beliefs in general, deciding which to forego and which to reaffirm. Santas considers this diagnostic use of definitions only in the context of disputed examples (either concrete particulars or more general types), but the diagnostic use of the definition appears to be why Socrates proposes looking to such an inquiry in the *Protagoras*—we will be able to determine questions about the concept under discussion, e. g. whether virtue is teachable, by relying upon the definition. Making reference to adequate and appropriate definition will tell us which of our various and conflicting beliefs to abandon.

However, definitions provide us not only with the ability to make sound diagnostic judgments about examples and statements in dispute. As Santas makes clear with his “aitiological” use of the definition, definitions provide us with a means to justify our decision.¹⁰ We can fall back, when challenged in one of our beliefs, on definitions to defend our judgments. Thus Hippocrates, faced with a question of whether something is truly in the city's benefit or not, can rely upon a definition of the quality that makes an excellent human being, of virtue.

⁹ Santas [1979], pp. 115-118.

¹⁰ Santas [1979], pp. 118-122.

Presumably, that which makes the citizens of Athens most excellent is what is in the city's interest, since it is in each citizen's interest to be excellent or virtuous.

A definition, then, provides a belief around which one may appropriately organize the rest of one's beliefs. One may abandon and reaffirm one's conflicting beliefs in accordance with its dictates. Thus a definition plays very much the role of that Socrates assigned earlier to knowledge.

6. What Has Socrates Shown Hippocrates?

To summarize: Hippocrates, we saw in chapter one, desired a life of politics, a leading role in the management of Athens, where he would be honored for knowing not only what is to his own benefit but what is to the benefit of the city as a whole. Protagoras offered to teach him *euboulia*, sound deliberation through which he could arrive at precisely those decisions for which he would be honored. Socrates, on the other hand, showed how, in order to avoid certain pitfalls in coming to make those decisions, one needs to consider the consistency and consequences of one's vast set of moral beliefs. He furthermore suggests a line of inquiry that we know from other dialogues, one that would help to organize his beliefs in an adequate fashion. Thus Socrates has shown Hippocrates that, in order to realize his ambitions, he must first engage in characteristically Socratic dialectical practices—he must first philosophize.