

Introduction: The Structure and Purpose of the *Protagoras*

1. The Theme of the *Protagoras*

The author of the Platonic seventh letter¹ outlines a youthful ambition of a sort that should be familiar to readers of Plato's dialogues. "When I was young," Plato writes, "I had the same experience as many: I thought that, as soon as I should become my own master, I would immediately enter into politics (*ta koina tes poleos*)." (324c)

In his early years, Plato writes, he twice considered becoming involved in Athenian politics, at two distinct moments in the city's history. The first moment occurred after the revolution of the thirty tyrants, an oligarchic coup whose leaders included several members of Plato's family. Plato also had a desire (*epithumia*) to become politically active directly after the overthrow of this regime, (325a) when Athens once more had a democratic government.

In both cases, Plato did not pursue the object of his ambition and instead became alienated from political life. In both cases, the causes of this alienation were the unjust actions of those holding political power and specifically, at least in part, their actions towards Socrates. The oligarchs attempted to compel Socrates to assist them in the execution of an innocent man, while certain leaders of the restored democracy were responsible for Socrates' own execution. Neither the oligarchs nor the democrats were successful in establishing a just government in Athens.

Plato writes that the more he considered the state of public affairs in Athens, "the more it appeared to me that it is difficult to manage politics rightly" (*tosouto chalepoteron ephaineto orthos einai moi ta politika dioikein*). (325c-d) Plato finally concluded that under the existing conditions of Athenian government it was impossible for him to achieve what he desired—to take a leading role in managing the city's affairs justly and wisely. He continued, he assures us,

¹ I take the author of the seventh letter either to be Plato or someone with access to facts about Plato's biography. I am here making use only of the most general and minimal (and thus hopefully the least controversial) details of Plato's early life--the more detailed narrative of Plato's trips to Sicily and the philosophical digression in the seventh letter are not relevant to the subject of this thesis.

to look for opportune moments (*kairous*) to enter politics (326a)—he had not concluded that engagement in the political life was an unworthy ambition. It was rather that Plato had by then come to the conclusion that one had first to engage in other activities to achieve this goal.

Plato, of course, came to the conclusion that one must engage in philosophy in order to manage political affairs in a just fashion. He believed this on the basis of arguments he developed and took to be rationally persuasive. Plato takes his arguments to show that one cannot know what a just political order is, except through the activity of philosophy. It is furthermore only through this knowledge that a just political order can be established, that “the cessation of evils for the human race” will come about. (326a)

A similar transition occurs in Plato’s *Protagoras*. The *Protagoras* is concerned with another young Athenian aristocrat by the name of Hippocrates, who also desires to take a leading role in the political life of Athens. He hopes to achieve this goal through receiving instruction from Protagoras, the great sophist who is visiting Athens at the time of the dialogue, decades before the revolution of the thirty. He asks Socrates to speak to the sophist on his behalf. Socrates, for his part, questions whether Protagoras is an appropriate and capable teacher for Hippocrates. Most of the dialogue consists of a discussion between Protagoras and Socrates concerning the very thing Protagoras says he teaches, namely virtue or excellence (*arete*)--something, all participants in the dialogue assume, that will enable Hippocrates to achieve his goal.

The *Protagoras* thus begins with a figure similar to the one we find in the seventh letter: youthful and eager to make a name for himself in public affairs. Hippocrates sees a direct and efficient route to politics in the instruction of Protagoras, just as Plato saw a direct route to political influence in his relatives among the thirty.²

However, in the course of their discussion, Socrates manages to make Protagoras contradict himself several times. It seems, therefore, unwise for Hippocrates to take the means

² Having stated his political ambitions, the author of the letter writes that “some pieces of good fortune (*tuchai*) for me concerning public affairs occurred, such as the following.” (324c1-2) He then relates what constituted good luck for his political ambitions--the participation of his family in the coup of the thirty.

to political power that he first found attractive. Philosophical discussion with Socrates has shown that Protagoras holds inconsistent beliefs concerning virtue. He is presumably unable to do what he claims—namely, teach virtue. Socratic discussion thus serves as a test of competence for Protagoras or any other similar teacher. In order to discern whether the instruction he desires will suitably benefit his soul, Hippocrates must submit his prospective instructors to Socratic examination, a philosophical practice.

Hippocrates thus ought to undergo a transition of the sort described in the seventh letter. Like Plato, he ought to see that his ambitions for his life require him to pay heed to philosophical concerns. In the seventh letter, views similar to those expressed in the *Republic* seem to motivate Plato's transition to philosophy. Clearly those same views do not appear in the *Protagoras* and are not the reasons given why Hippocrates ought to live a philosophical life. What is common to the *Protagoras* and the seventh letter is not an entirely shared philosophical outlook. Rather they are tied together by a common theme, the theme of reorientation toward philosophy.

I take this theme to point to the general purpose of the *Protagoras*. The dialogue is primarily concerned to show how a figure with political ambitions such as Hippocrates must be sensitive to philosophical concerns, must live his life informed by philosophical practices.³ Correspondingly, the central task of this thesis will be to examine whether and how Socrates shows that Hippocrates ought to engage in philosophy.

2. Summary of the Dialogue

³ This is the purpose Plato intended the dialogue to have. Therefore, Plato endorses Socrates' demonstration that Hippocrates must live a philosophical life if Hippocrates is to realize his goals. I leave the question open as to whether the historical Socrates himself held the views presented in the dialogue.

The dialogue can be profitably divided into 6 parts, setting aside the very beginning of the dialogue, wherein Socrates meets an unnamed friend and proceeds to relate to him his discussion with Protagoras.

(1) Socrates first tells how his young friend Hippocrates wakes him in the middle of the night and states his desire to study with Protagoras. Before they proceed to the house of Callias, where Protagoras is staying, Socrates questions Hippocrates as to what he thinks Protagoras will teach him and how he will benefit from the sophist's instruction. Hippocrates is unable to give an answer satisfactory to Socrates. (310b-314c)

(2) Socrates and Hippocrates arrive at Callias' house. Socrates asks Protagoras what he will do for Hippocrates, to whom Socrates attributes political ambitions, should Hippocrates become his student. After some clarifications from Socrates, Protagoras claims that he teaches sound deliberation (*euboulia*). (318e) Socrates identifies Protagoras' subject as virtue (*arete*) or political expertise (*politike techne*) (319a), then gives two arguments that virtue cannot be taught. Protagoras responds in his "great speech," which attempts to show that virtue is teachable. (314c-328d)

(3) Socrates claims to be satisfied with Protagoras' account of the teachability of virtue and only asks whether Protagoras thinks the various virtues—temperance, courage, piety, justice and wisdom—are parts of virtue as the nose, eyes, mouth, etc. are parts of the face or as the parts of gold are parts of the whole of a piece of gold. (329d) Protagoras answers that the parts of virtue are analogous to the parts of a face and "unlike each other, both in themselves and in their powers or functions." (330b) Socrates then tries to get Protagoras to agree first that justice and piety, and then that temperance and wisdom, are not dissimilar in the way he originally claimed. He succeeds at least in getting Protagoras to agree that temperance and wisdom have the same polar opposite and that they are "one thing." (333b) (328d-335a)

(4) Shortly after making this concession, Protagoras breaks off the conversation with Socrates. After intervention by various members of the audience of the discussion, Protagoras agrees to continue the discussion, but chooses to discuss virtue through poetry. Protagoras

attempts to make Socrates contradict himself while interpreting a poem of Simonides. Socrates manages to avoid this largely by an extraordinarily parodic interpretation of the poem. (335a-348c)

(5) Socrates steers the conversation back to the question of the relations between the various parts of virtue. He allows Protagoras to change his view, and the sophist now claims that justice, temperance, wisdom and piety are closely related,⁴ but that courage is entirely dissimilar. (349d) Socrates then attempts to show that courage is a sort of wisdom, arguing from the hedonistic premise identifying living well as living a life in which pleasure outweighs pain. (351c) Protagoras eventually agrees to the opposite of what he previously asserted concerning courage and wisdom. (348c-360e)

(6) Socrates then briefly summarizes the results of the dialogue: if the conversation could speak, it would mock Socrates and Protagoras for being inconsistent. Protagoras began by asserting that virtue can be taught, yet denies that the virtues are closely related to wisdom or knowledge, hence indicating that they cannot be taught. Socrates on the other hand began by asserting that virtue cannot be taught and ended by trying to show that “everything is knowledge”, hence indicating that it can be taught. To clear up these matters, Socrates suggests that they undertake an inquiry of what virtue itself is. Protagoras politely declines and Socrates leaves Callias’ house. (360e-362a)

3. General Interpretations of the Dialogue

There is little or no scholarly consensus on the philosophical purpose or significance of the *Protagoras*. Scholars are divided on the question of whether Socrates (or Plato) is concerned in his discussion with Protagoras to present and argue for his own philosophical views or whether Socrates intends only to refute Protagoras. Is the *Protagoras* a dialogue like the *Republic*, wherein Socrates (usually taken in this dialogue to be the representative of Plato)

⁴ Scholars disagree whether the close relationship between the various virtues is one of straightforward identity or one of mutual implication. See also note 9 below.

is more clearly discussing and supporting his own views, or more like the *Euthyphro*, an aporetic dialogue in which Socrates only shows his interlocutor to be confused and Socrates' (and Plato's) own views, at best, must be reconstructed indirectly?

Nearly all would agree that the dialogue is at least intended to be critical of Protagoras and his views. G. M. A. Grube made this critical aspect the basis for a general interpretation, taking the dialogue and every section thereof to be “an attack upon the sophists as represented by Protagoras, the greatest of them.”⁵ Grube takes the most difficult passages for this line of interpretation to be parts 3 and 5 of the dialogue. To deal with part 3, Grube argues that questions about the unity of virtue are a particular concern for Protagoras due to his unwillingness to teach all traditional disciplines (such as astronomy and music). Protagoras, according to Grube, makes it clear in the course of his great speech that he is interested merely in teaching justice, temperance and piety, not wisdom. Hence he must argue that he can teach his students to be just, pious, etc. while not endeavoring to teach them to be wise (e.g. teaching them astronomy, music, etc.). Thus Socrates' argument for a close relationship between temperance and wisdom challenges Protagoras' ability to pick and choose the subjects he teaches.⁶ Grube takes Protagoras' views to imply and rely upon hedonism—given his general philosophical commitments, the sophist can only appeal to a hedonistic “criterion of goodness.”⁷ Thus Grube takes the whole dialogue to be “relevant to” and primarily to be “a thorough critique of the teachings and method of the greatest sophists.”⁸

Many scholars, while following Grube in his argument for the critical aspect of the *Protagoras*, also argue that a number of theses in parts 3 and 5 are positively endorsed by Socrates. Socrates, according to these scholars, not only attempts to attack the views of the sophist, but also attempts to establish views of his own.

⁵ Grube [1933]: p. 203.

⁶ Grube [1933]: pp. 203-204.

⁷ Grube [1933]: p. 206.

⁸ Grube [1933]: p. 207.

Many hold that Socrates is in part 3 advancing his own view that the various virtues are closely related to wisdom or knowledge. Precisely what sort of unity Socrates wants to argue for is itself a subject of great scholarly controversy.⁹ However, whatever Socrates' thesis about the unity of virtue may be, many do hold that he is here advancing this positive view, not merely showing Protagoras' view to be incorrect. This line of interpretation dates back at least to A. E. Taylor, who claims that the primary philosophical view the dialogue "does teach is...the Socratic thesis that 'all the virtues are only one thing—knowledge' and that its philosophical purpose is simply to make clear that this thesis is the foundation of the whole Socratic criticism of life."¹⁰ Most scholars today follow this line of interpretation and hold that Socrates is indeed here arguing for his own views.¹¹

Far more divisive, however, is the status of part 5, the interpretation of which greatly determines what sort of purpose one can attribute to the dialogue as a whole. When Socrates argues from the premise that living a life where pleasure outweighs pain is living well, does he himself endorse and believe that premise? Or does he merely adopt the premise in order to refute Protagoras' views? If Socrates does indeed endorse this sort of hedonism, then presumably it is fair to see him here as arguing for his own views, including the theses that no one chooses what is bad willingly and that courage is a sort of wisdom, both of which he derives with the help of the hedonistic premise. Thus, if we do read Socrates as presenting the hedonistic premise as a view he believes and then arguing from it, it would appear that the dialogue may be intended to establish a number of Socrates' (or Plato's) own philosophical views. Many more recent writers on the dialogue have taken this approach, among them C. C. W. Taylor, Martha Nussbaum and Terence Irwin.¹²

⁹ This debate goes back to Vlastos [1972], who holds that the relationship between the virtues implied by Socrates' questions is one of mutual implication, and Penner [1973], who argues the relationship is one of strict identity.

¹⁰ Taylor [1927]: p. 235.

¹¹ See Vlastos [1956], Irwin [1995], Nussbaum [1986].

¹² Taylor and Irwin take the *Protagoras* to be either presenting the views of the historical Socrates or to be a Platonic justification of the views of the historical Socrates (See Taylor [1991]: p. 210 and Irwin [1995]: p. 91). Nussbaum remains agnostic on the question of whether we ought to attribute the views of Socrates in the dialogue to the historical Socrates or Plato (or neither) (Nussbaum [1986]: pp. 87-88). For an older articulation of the claim that hedonism is Plato's attempt to justify Socrates' views, see Hackforth [1928].

Finally, there is a line of interpretation whereby the dialogue has no philosophically substantive purpose. The discussion between Protagoras and Socrates, according to this view, is merely a verbal contest—who wins is determined primarily by rhetorical considerations, not by standards of good argumentation. W. K. C. Guthrie is perhaps the most direct proponent of this sort of interpretation:

If we look to the *Protagoras* for philosophical lessons, it may seem an irritating patchwork of niggling argument, irrelevant digressions, false starts and downright fallacy. Read as a play in which the most outstanding and individual minds of a brilliant period meet and engage in a battle of wits, it will give a different impression. That is how it should be read. A serious discussion of the nature of virtue, and how it is acquired must be left, as Protagoras said, for another occasion.¹³

Thus, no substantial criticism of Protagoras is achieved, nor does Socrates seriously argue for anything. To be charitable, we must say that Plato intends the dialogue to be merely a dramatic representation of sophistic debate, not a philosophically serious work.

Furthermore, any logical mistakes Socrates makes are merely due to his desire to win the debate—he is not seriously interested in solving the philosophical problems of the dialogue. Donald Zeyl, who along with George Klosko¹⁴ generally follows Guthrie, writes thus of Socrates' general method in the dialogue:

Socrates will be less concerned to defend positions (which all agree are recognizably his own) with arguments which represent *his own* reasons for holding these positions, than to attack the contradictories of those positions as these are maintained by his opponents, and to do so by using the most effective means his offensive purpose and the conventions of eristic will allow.¹⁵

4. The Aporetic Character of the *Protagoras*.

As I wrote above, I take the purpose of the dialogue to be to show why an individual with Hippocrates' political ambitions ought to live (to some extent) philosophically. Socrates

¹³ Guthrie [1975]: p. 235.

¹⁴ Klosko [1979]

¹⁵ Zeyl [1980]: p. 13.

achieves this purpose not by views he presents and argues for in the course of discussion with Protagoras, but by showing that engaging in Socratic discussion is necessary for determining whether Protagoras or anyone else is qualified to teach political virtue—and thus is necessary also for Hippocrates’ finding the means to realize his political ambitions.¹⁶ Before he becomes Protagoras’ student, Hippocrates must determine whether Protagoras is radically confused (and unable to help Hippocrates achieve his aims) and to do this he must engage in a fundamentally Socratic philosophical practice. I therefore take Socrates to be demonstrating how one can determine whether one’s interlocutor is confused and also that Protagoras, in particular, is confused—the *Protagoras* is, in my view, an aporetic dialogue.

Parts 3 and 5 of the dialogue (those containing Socrates’ arguments concerning the unity of virtue and most problematically his arguments for unity that rely upon a hedonistic premise) are, of course, the crucial passages to account for in my interpretation. I follow Grube in seeing these sections as intended to be a refutation of Protagoras.¹⁷ These sections constitute a long and complex argument in which Socrates’ primary goal is to convince Protagoras to agree to the opposite of the sophist’s original view concerning the unity of virtue. Protagoras, as outlined above, first committed himself to the claim that the various virtues are related to the whole of virtue as the parts of a face are related to the whole of the face, not as the parts of the gold are related to the whole of a piece of gold. There are at least two times in the course of the discussion when Socrates achieves his primary goal: at 333a when he convinces Protagoras that temperance and wisdom have the same polar opposite and are therefore closely related (either a relation of identity or mutual implication), and at the end of the dialogue (360e) when Protagoras admits that courage is wisdom or knowledge. Socrates is primarily concerned to secure these agreements from Protagoras and this is his primary purpose in parts 3 and 5.

¹⁶ Thus I disagree with Guthrie’s line of interpretation—Protagoras’ defeat in dialectic has substantive philosophical implications. Socrates’ reasoning may occasionally be fallacious, but what is important for the dialogue is not the particular views agreed upon in the discussion, but rather the claim that if Hippocrates wishes to determine whether Protagoras is an adequate teacher, he must engage the sophist in Socratic dialectic.

¹⁷ However, I would follow Grube only in saying that these arguments first and foremost constitute a dialectical attack upon Protagoras—I do not agree with the other details of his interpretation.

One of the attractions of reading the dialogue in this fashion and taking parts 3 and 5 to be aporetic in character is that such a reading can meaningfully account for the dialogue as a whole and every section of it. For a relevant contrast, consider Irwin's interpretation of the *Protagoras* in his *Plato's Ethics*. Irwin takes the primary purpose of the dialogue to be an attempt to justify and provide a foundation for the moral theory presented generally in Plato's early dialogues. Socrates in the early dialogues, on Irwin's account, makes an unjustified claim, namely that virtue somehow ensures happiness. Socrates can justify this claim if he provides some sort of objective standard according to which one may determine whether an individual is happy and judge the connection between that happiness and virtue. Hedonism provides precisely such a standard. Once we assume that happiness is a life where pleasure predominates, we can then recommend virtue by means of an objective standard that measures happiness. Thus Plato is providing a theoretical background and justification for a central claim of Socratic moral theory.¹⁸

However, if the purpose of the dialogue is merely to present this justification, why need the dialogue occur in the context of a discussion with Protagoras? Protagoras, on Irwin's reading, appears in the dialogue only in order to articulate confused and false views concerning virtue. The context of Socrates' statement about pleasure and virtue play absolutely no role in Irwin's interpretation of the dialogue. The *Protagoras* could effectively present what Irwin thinks Plato intends it to present if it consisted only of a didactic treatise arguing for the views of parts 3 and 5—to perform its philosophical task, as Irwin sees it, the *Protagoras* need not include Protagoras at all.

I would claim, on the contrary, that it is important for an interpretation to be able to articulate why Plato presents parts 3 and 5 as reactions to a particular set of views, namely those of Protagoras. Even more than this, however, it seems to me to be a critical failure to ignore Hippocrates—the dialogue, after all, is supposedly an attempt to determine whether

¹⁸ Irwin [1995]: pp. 88-94.

Hippocrates ought to embark upon a certain course of action. Surely this has some relevance for how we understand the various views Socrates and Protagoras consider.

I will return in chapter 3 to my interpretation of parts 3 and 5, but in this section I will give some indication of my reasons for interpreting these parts of the dialogue as aporetic in character. By claiming that Socrates is in these sections of the dialogue concerned only to get Protagoras to contradict himself, I also mean to claim that he is not arguing here for his own views, for which he merely gains Protagoras' sometimes strained acceptance. Thus, I disagree with a wide and formidable range of scholars, including Taylor, Irwin and Nussbaum.

Scholars claim that hedonism is Socrates' own view for several general reasons. First of all, some doubt whether Protagoras actually agrees in the course of the discussion to the hedonistic premise. On certain readings of the text, Protagoras appears to avoid formally committing himself to hedonism. Zeyl, however, has shown convincingly that the text can be read quite naturally as showing that Protagoras assents to the crucial premises.¹⁹

However, C. C. W. Taylor and the rest also have a more general and fundamental reason for ascribing hedonism to Socrates. Why, it is asked, would Socrates present the hedonistic principle without criticism, argue from it and reach conclusions that seem very similar to his own views, unless he believed it to be true? Would he not otherwise be guilty of misleading his audience on matters that, as Socrates would be the first to admit, are of no small importance?²⁰

This objection arises from an insensitivity toward the dialectical setting of Socrates' arguments. Indeed, facts concerning Socratic dialectic should encourage us not to see these passages as straightforwardly presenting Socrates' (or Plato's) own views. In an article entitled "Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form," Michael Frede distinguishes between various sorts of dialectic (discussions between a questioner and an respondent) to be found in Plato's dialogues. Drawing upon Aristotle's account in the *Topics* of dialectical practices in the early

¹⁹ Zeyl [1980]: pp. 5-12.

²⁰ Taylor [1991]: p. 209.

academy, Frede contrasts what he calls elenctic and didactic dialectic. In didactic dialectic, the questioner identifies a mistaken moral belief of the respondent, for the opposite of which he has a sound and valid argument. The questioner then proceeds to offer his own proof, asking for his interlocutor's assent to every assumption and inference in the argument and thus opening it to objection at every step.²¹

In contrast, in elenctic dialectic one seeks not to demonstrate something as true, but rather merely to demonstrate the respondent's confusion. Frede thus characterizes the difference between dialogues that feature didactic versus dialogues that feature elenctic dialectic: “[dialogues that represent Socrates engaged in elenctic dialectic] do not represent him as leading a respondent to see the truth on some matter. They rather lead the respondent by an argument to see the ignorance out of which he made some claim.”²²

To demonstrate ignorance or confusion, the practitioner of elenctic dialectic does not produce a proof of the opposite of the respondent's belief. To do so, after all, would be to demonstrate the truth of the opposite of the respondent's belief—and thus engage in didactic dialectic. In his introduction to the *Protagoras*, Frede describes the process of (presumably) elenctic dialectic.

The argument, then, that forces the respondent to admit that not p need not really constitute a proof that not p . All it needs to show is that the respondent is prepared to make assumptions from which it would follow that not p ; but these are not necessarily assumptions which Socrates himself is making. After all, Socrates is just asking questions, and we can at best guess how he himself would answer them. The arguments do not so much refute a thesis or establish its contradictory, as they refute a person by showing him to be inconsistent and confused.²³

In sections 3 and 5, does Socrates engage in elenctic or didactic dialectic? If Socrates engaged in didactic dialectic in the dialogue, we would expect him then to claim that he has established as true the various theses he has argued for, primarily the notion that all the virtues are knowledge. Does he make such a claim?

²¹ Frede [1992a]: pp. 208-209.

²² Frede [1992a]: pp. 210.

²³ Frede [1992b]: pp. xvi-xvii.

Quite the opposite. In part 6, Socrates takes his discussion with Protagoras to have established nothing with certainty. Both his and Protagoras' views in the latter part of the dialogue are inconsistent, he claims, with other views they have committed themselves to in the dialogue. If they are to dispel this confusion, they must undertake further inquiry. Their present discussion, Socrates explicitly claims, has not settled any questions concerning virtue.

Given the character of Socratic dialectic, it is clear that Socrates would regard any belief he has concerning virtue as belief only—he would not claim, in the context of an aporetic dialogue, that any view of his has been demonstrated to be true. Socrates quite clearly believes that making such a claim would require further inquiry. Any beliefs on the subject would have to be shown to be consistent with other views Socrates holds—specifically with some sort of successful definition of virtue, the subject of the inquiry to which he invites Protagoras.

5. An Outline of this Thesis

The primary task of this thesis will be to show precisely how Socrates demonstrates that Hippocrates ought to have philosophical concerns, given his political ambitions. The dialogue focuses on Hippocrates not as a representative of human beings or rational agents generally, but rather as a representative of a small number of individuals in a common and very particular set of social and economic circumstances in ancient Athens. Socrates argues from these very specific, contingent facts about Hippocrates and individuals like him. My first chapter will be primarily concerned to make clear precisely what ambitions and desires characteristically belong to individuals of this sort. I shall also in this first chapter show how the focus of the dialogue upon this sort of individual explains certain puzzling features of the dialogue, specifically, part 4, in which Socrates and Protagoras discuss Simonides' poem.

My second chapter will concern Protagoras' claims about what he teaches. Protagoras, I will argue, is also explicitly addressing an individual in Hippocrates' social position. I will also address charges of inconsistency made against Protagoras in the secondary literature—charges which, I will argue, are unjustified.

I shall account for the remaining parts of the dialogue (3, 5 and 6) in the third chapter of this thesis. The primary task of this chapter will be to make clear how Socrates demonstrates that engaging in philosophy is necessary if Hippocrates is to realize his ambitions. As I argued above, Socrates does this by showing a kind of philosophical inquiry to be necessary for establishing Protagoras' credentials. I shall therefore be concerned with justifying Socrates' philosophical procedure generally. I shall not be interested in how precisely Socrates proceeds in the dialogue—precisely what views are implied by his questions or whether the arguments he presents in the course of the discussion are all valid. These questions, to which a voluminous amount of secondary literature has been devoted, need not be answered in order to proceed with the primary purpose of this thesis. We may inquire whether Socrates is justified in claiming that Hippocrates, if he is to realize his goals, must engage in Socratic philosophizing without inquiring whether Socrates' own philosophizing in this dialogue is without error.