Throughout the text, Hippocrates criticizes the Shamanistic perspective of using mystical elements to explain the unknown. He says this is because “Men regard its nature and cause as divine from ignorance and wonder, because it is not at all like to other diseases” (SD 33). Mysticism, according to Hippocrates, stems from ignorance and wonder, but is that not where all explanations come from? There is an unknown and want to make it clear, to make it fit with the current mindset. Taking a short break from Hippocrates, to better understand the mentality of Shamanistic explanation, let’s look to the Barotse creation myth where the gods flee the earth to escape man. At the end of the story, Kamonu (man) failed to reach the gods and “never found his way to Nyambi’s home” (PM 36). What this suggests is that mankind forgot the nature of the gods, what Nyambi wished to teach them, and fell out of contact. What this does not mean is it is impossible to relearn these things, especially since they are seen as holy. In nature, stories like this are inquisitive and seek explanations. The Shamans of this tribe would have very much wanted to seek out the nature of the divine. This being said, the mysticism presented here does not necessarily close the doors for answers and shut up the people, rather, it creates a focal point of thought and explanation.

What exactly does Hippocrates mean by this mysticism he criticizes and how different is that from his own line of thought? Essentially it is attributing the unknowns to some higher cause, to something divine. Hippocrates states, “this notion of its divinity is kept up by their inability to comprehend it” (SD 34), which is true, but surely Hippocrates does not fully comprehend it either. He presents enough observations to prove that it is natural in cause. He provides a counter to the current thought process, but that does not necessarily mean his conclusion is right. What this ultimately boils down to is the fact that the scientific method does not exactly exist at this point in time. Both sides of the argument have an untested hypothesis created only based on observation, albeit, the hypothesis of divinity at its source was somewhat tested through Hippocrates’s logic. With only these two sets of observations there are many assumptions made on both sides. This brings up the question: what does Hippocrates attribute the remaining unknowns to?

Going back to the idea that mysticism is naturally inquisitive, this correlates with Hippocrates’s point that those who perpetuate this idea “deceive mankind by enjoining lustrations and purifications upon them, while their discourse turns upon the divinity and the godhead” (SD 84). This essentially restates the idea that mysticism fixates the focal point of discussion on the divine. This is where the thinking of Hippocrates differs from the Shamanistic perspective. Hippocrates bases his entire argument on observation and logic, on thought. Hippocrates even mentions the importance of thought when he says, “I am of the opinion that the brain exercises the greatest power in the man” (SD 368). Mysticism relies on the idea that what cannot be explained is divine in nature and can only be realized through religious or spiritual methods, whereas Hippocrates believes that the unknown can eventually be made known through thought and observation. Thought is the greatest of human power.

* Even though you did not need to defend a thesis in this paper, you should still start with an introductory paragraph that introduces your topic and lays out the points you will be discussing. In your actual papers, you will be laying out your thesis and its supporting arguments (without using any quotes) in your first paragraph.
* I think the strongest part of your paper was the second to last sentence where you contrast mysticism with Hippocrates’ views. If this had been in your first paragraph, your argument could have referred back to it, giving your paper a much clearer focus and helping the reader to follow the logic of your argument.