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Hippocrates commentates “On the Sacred Disease” explicitly stating that the sickness is “no wise more divine nor sacred than other diseases” but rather actually “originates like all other affections”, naturally (SD 31-33). From this, two intersecting concepts can be distinguished; both the vulnerability and ignorance of man are used to substantiate the authors claims.

Immediately introduced is the concept that mankind is guilty of ignorance. Mankind has always strived to answer questions regarding life, its origins, existence, and death. Hippocrates claims religion is the means in which men express ignorance in forms of praise or defense. For what man does not know, yet is thankful for, is attributed to the gods. The spectrum for which prayer and sacrifice take place range from a bountiful harvest to the gender of infantile kin. However when the questions pertaining to societal and personal discomfort, grief, and pain, the gods are now turned upon with an opposed attitude. Various symptoms of different illnesses are grounds to place blame on various gods. Hippocrates illustrates that, for if “they imitate a goat…the mother of the gods is the cause” or “if foam be emitted by the mouth…Ares then gets the blame”, religion is used as a scape goat in the very remedies in which divinity prescribes (SD 102-108). With this, the concept of the divine intervention’s extent is questioned and used to support the ignorance of man kind’s role in the misapplication of “sacred” in classifying this disease. In the process of using reverse syllogism, Hippocrates now turns to proving how the very use of common remedies and their form contradicts the influence at all. “For whoever is able, by purification conjurations, to drive away such an affection, will be able, by other practices, to excite it” draws to attention the purity in faith relating to the gods, forcing people to question the lengths in which their religion can be credible in physical/mental health cases (SD 80-82). Those susceptible to the sacred disease follow a set of purification and incantation guidelines that call for avoidance of an array of acts and abstinence of certain foods. It is known that the flesh of goat, to sleep, wear, or touch is a “hinderance to the cure” (SD 64). Hippocrates defeats this remedy stating that no Libyan would be free of the sacred disease for “they all sleep on goats’ skins, and live upon goats’ flesh” in diet and broader societal terms. Returning to the very use of such remedies after establishing such a failed logic the author furthers this failure by noting that if the illness referenced was divine, the avoidance of earthly materials would in turn do nothing to obstruct the gods will. Hippocrates highlights the failure in religious credibility with logic in order to expose the finger-pointing-nature of man.

The vulnerability of the human species is revealed throughout extensive anatomical explanation surrounding Hippocrates reasoning of the natural cause of “epileptic attacks” (SD 194). The authors claim cannot be understood without an overview of material pertaining to the concept. Explaining the network of blood vessels served as a basis in which various examples could be derived and further related to the claim of natural origins. Hippocrates thesis that the sacred disease is alike any other is actively used as multiple illnesses are mentioned. The extent to which cause-and-effect illnesses are provided is intentional in order to establish that man is not invincible and that it does not take a god to cause pain and illness. Following the same logic, a case in which air not reaching the brain causes the patient to “lose [their] speech, … choke, …foam” from the mouth and become insensible is revealed to be the sacred disease in question (SD 200-201). In the author’s time, the sheer detail in which the human body and mysterious pains are described, would be ground shaking as it calls to question the very cause of what society believed. The presentation of mankind’s susceptibility to poor health places Hippocrates claim, that the brain at the center of the sacred disease, is far more real than anyone had thought.

The intertwining use of man’s vulnerability and ignorance defends the claim beyond argument based on two overarching concepts regarding the natural tendencies and traits of man.

You did a good job of integrating quotes into your writing, and you kept your paper very textually focused without drifting into issues outside the text. Good start for your first paper.

Your writing is mostly focused on summary and should try to explore a specific idea or two in more detail. A good way to do this is to pick a particular portion of Hypocrites to discuss in detail and uncover the core idea of that section.

Perhaps you could focus on how Hippocrates uses rationality and contrast this with the criticisms which he brings against a society that he sees as irrational.