

By comparing and contrasting the requirements necessary for the appropriation of knowledge or wisdom in the examples of both Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* and Plato in *The Republic* an explanation will be given as to the relationship between nature and reason. In using this explanation it will illustrate the differing implications for each ruler in the aforementioned literature concluding that both rulers in each regime act as the guiding reason of the state.

In Plato's doctrine of wisdom it becomes clear that it resides outside of nature and is associated with the eternal and is thus permanent. According to Plato, knowledge is something to be strived for; it is a good that is an end to itself internally, for its own sake but it can't be obtained in this world. Plato contends that the only thing that provides concrete knowledge and wisdom of the world, and of the Good, is relied solely upon the transcendental forms from an internal natural aptitude. Plato also held that not everyone was able to grasp these forms; that nature did not allocate the necessary faculties evenly throughout the population as represented by the Myth of the Metals (94).

By way of Socrates' view of justice in the soul (it is like health in the body) we come to see the utilization of reason in *The Republic*. Reason is what knows what is best and harmonious for all the parts within the tripartite soul (121). Mirrored in the notion of a just state reason is that which determines the proper distribution of tasks among its citizens and dictates the ideal state would be ruled by those who are educated and trained to rule, while having no further possessions or interests. These qualifications are fulfilled by the philosopher (439).

What is the opinion of the majority in the *polis* (the citizens held within the cave), is not harmonious with the knowledge of the philosophers so hence the tension between the philosopher and the city. The ordinary citizen is neither rational, nor moderate, nor spirited; as a result, their desires do not reflect the Good. Thus the implication for the ruler of the *polis* is that he should have a philosophical soul because this is the way in which the ultimate reason controls the desires of the masses. Due to this the true philosophers must bear the opposition of the truth or abandon their nature, they are cursed to the persecution by the masses who are

driven by their desire and are the very people that need them the most (168).

In contrast according to Hobbes both the state and the natural laws arise from reason. Hobbes states that the natural laws arise from reason because we instinctively wish to preserve our own life; in fact he argues that using our power to preserve our own life is our only natural right (189). We can clearly tell that the natural state of man, which according to Hobbes is one of total war between every man, is not conducive to this most basic desire. Thus we begin to reason to formulate natural laws with the purpose of preserving our own life first and attaining our material desires second. Hobbes held that nature gave each man the same equal basic abilities by which leads to the equal ability among all men to use this reason.

In representing the soul as a tripartite entity, Plato has a tool with which to defend reason. Plato states: "And ought not the rational principle, which is wise, and has the care of the whole soul, to rule...?"(441). Here we can say that since the rational part is the only possible faculty by which to act, the defense of reason is not so much based on a pragmatic approach that 'it works,' unlike Hobbes, and that 'it ought' to rule, but on a logical necessity.

Reason formerly mediator of the Good and used for the collective benefit, now becomes a mere calculating device, to be used with Hobbes' deductive method that would yield knowledge or wisdom to all individuals that desired it (97, 105). Thus if each man has an equal ability to reason, and this reason enables him to utilize the proper method, then it would follow that each man has equal ability at knowledge or wisdom. It was each man's right to use these mechanisms to manipulate nature to fulfill his self-interested desires.

If, in opposition to Plato, we adopt a materialist Hobbesian position and justify reason by its utilization to the continuing attainment of material conditions in the world by way of the scientific method, then we also accept that knowledge, its equal distribution and manipulation is by nature a political instrument. This position reasons as means rather than ends to one's gratification and that the knowledge it produces a power differential that allows us to "rule" not

only our own lives but also the lives of others as well.<sup>1</sup> Reason is a mere means to satisfaction, not an end in itself and ultimately can be used without moderation. Hobbes held that by nature men are equal and that nature could and should be improved upon by using his rational method; nature becomes a means to the ends (each man's desires).

Hobbes suggests that the observation of nature and the sensation of the material world is always affected by the individual character of the observer, therefore experience of natural phenomena and the perception of reality do not constitute a competent basis upon which to ground philosophically true conclusions. As long as there are differences in experience, which in turn lead to differences in knowledge certainty cannot be achieved. Due to the subjective "reality" of nature that Hobbes allows us disputes within the realm of knowledge would tend to be problematic. This implies for the Leviathan that it will be the final, ultimate reason that will enforce the citizens' collective contracts<sup>2</sup>, this sovereign will bring justice that will ensure stability within the state (202,223).

In conclusion, by way of Plato's and Hobbes' attainment of knowledge and the utilization of reason within the coming to have knowledge ultimately both imply that the relationship between nature and reason is different for each. Plato sees both reason and nature as ends where Hobbes sees both as ends to a means.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately both rulers, for Plato the philosopher and for Hobbes the Leviathan, reason both serves as the ultimate reason of the society. By Plato this conclusion is a natural one and for Hobbes it is an improvement upon nature (81).

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<sup>1</sup> This looks suspiciously like Thrasymachus' view of the just as the "might is right" argument (22).

<sup>2</sup> Or their definitions by which constitute knowledge, the conclusion of which (ultimate authority of this is the Leviathan), is called science (131).

<sup>3</sup> For Plato it is to be utilized for the collective and for Hobbes it is for the individual.