

Hobbes claims that people are authorized to an absolute sovereign while at the same time reserving to himself or herself the right to resist under certain circumstances. This right to resist or rebel undermines Hobbes's claim for the absolute power of the sovereign and it renders the entire Hobbesian justification for absolute sovereignty invalid. The Leviathan has therefore sometimes been called out as a rebel's catechism, justifying rebellion instead of supporting absolute power. This essay will prove that Hobbes' claim for an absolute sovereign in his commonwealth is flawed because of the right that each individual holds to protect themselves above all else. Supporting evidence from Jean Hampton's, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* will be cited, and a unique comparison between Hobbes and Locke will be made to further prove that the Leviathan can justifiably be called a rebel's catechism.

Essay

Hobbes' commonwealth theory is based on one of the most terrifying monsters in existence, the Leviathan, "none is so fierce that dare stir him up [...] when he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid, upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear" (Job 41:10-33). His commonwealth exists to combat the terrors that are inescapable in the state of nature by constructing a covenant that is ensured through absolute power and fear of the sovereign. Yet, Hobbes gives people the right and the justification to rebel against the sovereign in certain circumstances, meaning that the Leviathan, arguably, can be seen more so as a form of 'guide book' justifying rebellion rather than a book that supports absolute power, as Hobbes probably intended. Therefore, this essay will argue that it is correct to describe Hobbes's theory as a rebel's catechism because the right to resist or rebel undermines Hobbes's claim for absolute power of the sovereign and it renders the entire Hobbesian justification for absolute sovereignty invalid. To prove this point, this essay will firstly underline how and why the right to rebel in Hobbes commonwealth contradicts his claim for absolutism. This essay will also compare Hobbes and John Locke's theories against one another while supporting the claim that the Leviathan is not purely absolutist, and will also use much supporting evidence from Jean Hampton which dissects Hobbes' social contract theory and claim for absolute power.

Firstly, all men begin in a state of nature with basic natural rights to not only themselves, but also everything. Under natural law there can almost only exist war and an ever-present fear of death because all men are inherently self-interested, and will do primarily what is beneficial to them and their own preservation. For this reason, Hobbes' believes it is necessary that all men enlighten themselves and agree to form a covenant in which they give up their natural rights to a single sovereign. Men must learn that it is in their best interest to form a civil society, and the only way to do so is to appoint an absolute power. This political power is necessary for the existence of a civil society (Boyd,