

Q: Illustrate Hobbesian concept of limited right to revolution.

Ans: Introduction:

The renowned English philosopher Hobbes was born in Westport's Parish, near Malmesbury's town in the seventeenth century. He wrote famous book Leviathan in 1651, in which he propounded the famous Social Contract Theory. He is best known for his ideas on the social contract and the role of the state in maintaining order and security in society. In his well-known work "Leviathan", Hobbes proposed a limited right to the revolution that would have given people the power to overthrow the government in severe situations where the sovereign (absolute monarch) had failed to uphold its duty to protect the people. It is referred to as a "limited right".

because it can only be used in the most extreme circumstances, most often when the sovereign neglects its obligation to protect the people. moreover, Hobbes was in favor of absolute monarchy and the idea that the sovereign had the sole authority to impose order through the use of force. Overall, Hobbes' views are relevant in the current world, but with some criticism.

"A subject could only rightfully resist government authority as a matter of self-defense and only when lethal harm against him was imminent."

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (1651)

⇒ Definition of the Limited Right to

Revolution:

It means that people can overthrow the government in dire situations where the ~~the~~ sovereign has failed to protect them.

⇒ Hobbesian concept of limited

## Right to Revolution:

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, among others, pondered three major issues:

- What is the origin of the state?
- Why is it important to obey the state?
- In what circumstances can people revolt against the state's authority?

To address all the aforementioned questions, Hobbes painted a vivid picture of the state of nature, in which people are brutal and nasty but reasoned. The right to life was inherent in the state of nature. They believed that anyone could be killed to preserve their own life. Due to a lack of resources, people started fighting one another to protect their own lives. As a result, serious chaos developed, leading to the start of the war. People then transitioned from a state of nature (peace) to

a state of war. Then, people deliberated on Hobbes's laws of nature. Out of 19 laws, 1st (The first law of nature is about seeking peace) and 2nd (The second law of nature tells people to lay down their rights to seek peace, provided that this can be done safely) became the cornerstones of the social contract. They created a sovereign to escape the war state. The people who created sovereign authority in exchange for protection and security had decided to surrender all their rights instead of the right to life. Therefore, this social contract clearly shows that people had a limited right to revolt and could go against the sovereign only when their right to life was threatened.

"The right to nature... is the liberty each man hath to use his power, as he will himself,

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for the preservation of his nature;  
that is to say of his own  
life."

### Hobbes: Leviathan

Hence, Hobbes's right to revolution is limited because it can only be used when the sovereign fails to do its job and protect the people.

Although Hobbes' limited right to revolution reflects his belief in the importance of social stability and the need to limit the use of violence in society, many people have said that his ideas are too narrow and based on old ideas about government and society. Despite this, Hobbes's idea of a limited right to revolution is still an important part of political thought, and is still affects how people talk about the state's role and the social contract.

## ⇒ Application of Hobbesian limited Rights to Revolution in the Contemporary world:

Hobbes's idea of a limited right to revolution has led to the adoption of a democratic system of government, which makes it easier and less dangerous to change the government. However, some aspects of Hobbes' idea may still be relevant today in certain contexts.

The social contract theory of Hobbes according to which people give up some of their rights in exchange for safety and security, is still widely regarded as the foundation for contemporary states. For instance, the early stages of the Russian Revolution took place under Hobbesian conditions.

Furthermore, monopoly is prevalent in the modern world, where states use force and citizens are prohibited from using weapons to

overthrow the government, such as

in Myanmar.

In addition to it, the right to oppose or overthrow an oppressive or tyrannical government is still a necessary and justified course of action.

The limited right to revolution proposed by Hobbes may not be applicable in its original form.

Nevertheless, the tenets of the social contract and the significance of limiting violence in society are still valid in the modern world.

### Critical Analysis:

In a critical diagnosis, the limited right to revolution has been criticized by many scholars.

The following are the causes of this:

This idea is incompatible with modern ideas of democracy and

human rights.

→ It has a limited scope. As in the state of nature, when people enter the state of war, they get fed up with it. They followed Hobbes' natural law and became sovereign as a result of a revolution. It demonstrates that it has a narrow view of revolution and does not allow for peaceful and regular means of changing government.

→ Hobbes' idea is unrealistic and ignores the historical social context in which individuals make decisions about government.

→ Hobbes' arguments lack the reality that some governments may use violence to maintain their hold on power and that individuals may need to resist such violence to secure their rights and freedoms.

So, Hobbes' idea that people have a limited right to start a revolution



has some value and merit, but it also has important limits. But still, it has been widely criticized for its narrow scope and outdated views on government and society. Hobbes' idea grew out of the English civil war, so they might not work in other times and places.

"Covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all. For it can never be that war shall preserve life, and peace destroys it."

Hobbes: Leviathan, 1651

### ⇒ Conclusion:

To sum up, Thomas Hobbes' limited right to revolution is at the core of his political philosophy. It continues to be a subject of debate and discussion among scholars and political theorists and has been criticized for its narrow scope and outdated views on government and society.

However, his concept of the limited right to revolution will remain relevant in contemporary discussions regarding the state's role in protecting citizens and maintaining social order. According to Hobbes, this is exercised as a last resort after all other means of redress have failed. Hence, the limited right to revolution reflects Hobbes' belief in social stability and the need to limit societal violence.



Q: Critically analyze the salient features of Plato's Republic. Do you think that some of its features are valid, even today?

Ans: Introduction:

The true romance of the Republic is the romance of free intelligence, unbound by custom, untamed indeed by human stupidity and self will, able to direct the forces, even of customs and stupidity themselves along the road to a national life." (Prof Sabine). The Republic is an excellent product of Plato's maturity. It is a major contribution to Political Philosophy, education, economics, moral aspects of life and metaphysics. The Republic by Plato is widely regarded as one of the most influential works in the history of philosophy. It explores a wide

range of topics such as justice, ethics, politics, education, and the nature of reality. Let's analyze some of its features and assess their relevance today.

## ⇒ Critical Analysis of the Plato's Republic:

### 1) The Theory of Forms:

One of the central concepts in Plato's Republic is the

Theory of Forms. According to this theory, there exists an ideal, perfect and unchanging realm of Forms, representing the true essence of things.

While this idea has been greatly debated, particularly due to its abstract nature, it raises important philosophical questions about the nature of reality, knowledge, and the

eternal search for truth. Although the concept of Forms may not have direct relevance to today's scientific understanding, the philosophical exploration it offers is still valuable in contemporary relating concepts such as universals and the possibility of absolute truths.

## 2) The Tripartite Soul:

Plato describes the human soul as consisting of three parts: reason, spirit, and desire. He argues that the just and harmonious state is one in which each part of the soul functions properly and fulfills its appropriate role. This can be seen as a metaphorical representation of a well-balanced individual.

Even today, the idea of understanding and nurturing different aspects of one's

Personality or psyche, and achieving a state of inner harmony, remains highly relevant for personal development and mental well-being.

### 3) The Philosopher-King:

Plato argues that the ideal state should be ruled by Philosopher-Kings, individuals who possess wisdom and a deep understanding of the Forms. These Philosopher-Kings would govern with a focus on justice and the well-being of the citizens. While the notion of Philosopher-Kings may seem unrealistic today, the underlying idea - that good governance requires leaders with knowledge, wisdom, and a commitment to justice - remains significant. It emphasizes the importance of intellectual and moral virtues in leadership positions.

#### 4) The Allegory of the Cave:

Plato's Allegory of the Cave serves as a powerful metaphor for the journey from ignorance to enlightenment. It encourages critical thinking, questioning assumptions, and seeking knowledge beyond the confines of familiar. The concept of breaking free from mental constraints and exploring the depths of reality remains highly applicable today, especially in a time when information is abundant and the need for critical thinking and discernment is crucial.

#### 5) Education as the key to a just society:

Plato places great emphasis on education as the foundation of an ideal society. He proposes a rigorous educational system that seeks to develop the virtues and

intellectual capabilities of individuals.

This focus on education as a means of shaping citizens as a capable of contributing to a just society is still relevant today. It

highlights the significance of education in molding individuals and fostering critical thinking, moral values, and civic responsibilities.

⇒ How is the Republic's Feature Relevant Today?

written in ancient Greece at a time of major Political decay, Plato's Republic is becoming increasingly relevant for anyone who cares about justice or has an interest in restoring the Political health of communities. In fact, what one learn in the Republic is that the nature of justice depends on the nature of the city and that there are strong parallels



between the city and the soul.  
one view of justice held by  
many can be found in a  
discussion with Thrasymachus when  
he says:

Democracy makes democratic laws,  
tyranny makes tyrannical laws, and  
so on with the others. And  
they declare what they have made  
what is to their own advantage -  
to be just for their subjects,  
and they punish anyone who  
goes against this as lawless  
and unjust. This, then, is what  
I say justice is, the same  
in all cities, the advantage  
of the established rule.

In the Republic, just as there  
are five different regime types,  
there are also five corresponding  
characters of men, and they  
each give birth to the next:  
aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy,  
democracy and tyranny. These regime

types can also be read in order of excellence.

### ⇒ Aristocracy

An aristocracy is a regime ruled by well-educated people who mix Prudence and experience to become superior leaders. The leaders of this regime channel their desire and ambition through reason. There are three separate casts in an aristocratic

- Society:
- 1) Ruling class, defined by wisdom;
  - 2) Soldiers/guardians, defined by a Pursuit of honor; and
  - 3) the majority class, defined by the base desires of man.

considering Plato's tripartite theory of the soul, an aristocrat is a person in whom appetite, logic, and spirit work together properly.

## ⇒ Timocracy:

A timocracy is a system where property replaces wisdom as the highest value. In this regime, the soldiers / guardian class are no longer warriors in ~~wisdom~~ as ~~the~~ highest pursuit of honor but seek the things important to people of the middle class - moderate wealth, medicine, basic schooling, leisure, influence, etc. In this system, leaders are more "high-spirited" and simple-minded than in an aristocratic regime (Crete and Sparta are Plato's examples of a timocracy). A timocratic man's nature is primarily goods but reason's pre-eminence has been eclipsed by appetite and spirit, which are the new highest values in a timocracy.

## ⇒ Oligarchy's

An oligarchy is the first regime in which an actual desire for wealth rules. It is not property in this system that is valued, but money. Money is desired for its own sake, whereas in previous regimes money was a means to acquire the materials necessary for the good life. In this way, money is prized over virtue or honor. The rulers in an oligarchy are warriors whose 'spiritedness' dominates their souls. Oligarchs tend to be thrifty, hard-working, and possess a superficial honesty devoid from self-interest. They may seem superior to the majority, but their souls are extremely fragile. Oligarchs are scions who have forsaken their father's values because the fragility of a decaying regime could not maintain its previous

orientation toward the good life. Oligarchs retreat from a life of high ambition and virtuous living. These men only appear to be good, while their desires are almost entirely self-oriented and materialistic.

In Plato's Republic, a democracy is a regime where one can find the most variety, which is why every character type can be found it. Again, as found in previous regimes, the aim of democracy is not virtue, but freedom. Democracy abhors restraints so freedom for individuals to do as they wish is the highest value. In a democracy, the ordering of the ~~ruled~~ rulers and the ruled is often reversed. In this way, the lower classes grow large and society begins to cater to the lowest common denominator. In a democracy,

men act more like boys, teachers  
fear their students, and the  
battle of the sexes finally  
commences. A democratic man is  
often consumed by his desires  
and he assigns equality to  
everyone regardless of merit or  
deed.

After democracy crumbles, tyranny  
emerges from combining a desire  
for freedom and a lack of  
discipline. In this regime there are  
no remnants of civic virtue  
and power is seized for the  
purpose of maintaining order. A  
tyrant is the worst type of  
regime. The tyrant is eros  
incarnate. For a real life  
example, it's quite possible that  
this character type has some  
Trump-like qualities.

considering the state of ~~our~~  
current political spectrum, there may  
have something important to learn

from Plato's Republic. If nothing else, one could certainly benefit from a discussion about the good at a time when everything seems so relative or democratic. While not all the features of Plato's Republic may be directly applicable or feasible in a modern context, many of its underlying themes and philosophical explorations maintain their relevance. The work raises timeless questions about knowledge, morality, leadership, and societal organization, making it a valuable source of contemplation and reflection even today.

