

Definition of Revolution

Revolution is the politically, economically, or culturally motivated overhaul of a society in order to create a new order. A revolution necessitates this new and natural order and without this aspect it is something else.¹ For example, the American Revolution cannot be considered a revolution because prior to Britain's constricting of its Imperial rule, America had been governed by mostly the same institutions and ideas as it was after the "revolution".² Differently, the French Revolution was a true revolution in its execution, however its results yielded only a short period of revolutionary development, limiting its effects on French society.³ Therefore, for a movement to become a true revolution it must be sustained as well.

An example of a complete revolution might be Paul Celan's revolution of the German language. After anti-Semitism mutilated the German language through the minds of influential Germans such as Martin Luther and Adolf Hitler, Celan modernized and repurposed the language in his poems. Celan's did this in a way that de-stigmatized the language as one of death and destruction. For example, in his poem *Posaunenstelle*, speaks of the shofar or ram's horn blown atop Mount Sinai.⁴ The title line comes from Martin Luther's use of the word *Posaune* to refer to the shofar in his translation of the Old Testament. Luther thus stigmatized the word *Posaune* due to his own anti-Semitism. Celan then redefines this with his poem *Posaunenstelle*, which takes Luther's translation of the Shofar, and modifies it to remove the anti-Semitic stain of

¹ Lapham, Lewis, and Hannah Arendt. *Laphams Quarterly: Revolutions*. New York, NY: American Agora Foundation, 2014. 18-19

² Lapham, Lewis, and Hannah Arendt. *Laphams Quarterly: Revolutions*. 19

³ Lapham, Lewis, and Hannah Arendt. *Laphams Quarterly: Revolutions*. 19

⁴ Felstiner, John. "'Deep in the Glowing Text-Void': Translating Late Celan." *Representations* 32, no. 1 (1990): 175-86. Accessed November 30, 2018. 175

Luther, while also maintaining its reference to the blowing of the Shofar at the top of Mount Sinai. Furthermore, Celan takes the rest of the poem to glorify the Jewish Torah, which can be interpreted as calling the Torah a deep and glowing text full of lessons.⁵ Thus, Celan maintains a complete revolution because he reinvents the German language and its interpretation to remove the anti-Semitic stain that had plagued it for a thousand years. This trend has maintained as the German people even today look to continue the cleaning of their language. With this, Celan has created a revolution: a culturally and politically motivated overhaul of the previous order to create a new order which is sustained.

⁵ Felstiner, John. "'Deep in the Glowing Text-Void': Translating Late Celan." 181