

A **salon** is a gathering of stimulating people of quality under the roof of an inspiring host or hostess, partly to amuse one another and partly to refine their taste and increase their knowledge through conversation and readings, often consciously following [Horace's](#) definition of the aims of [poetry](#), "to please and educate" (*aut delectare aut prodesse est*).

Pasted from <<http://www.answers.com/topic/salon-gathering>>

Defining Characteristics of Modernity

There have been numerous attempts, particularly in the field of [sociology](#), to understand what modernity is. A wide variety of terms are used to describe the society, social life, driving force, symptomatic mentality, or some other defining aspects of modernity. They include: [Bureaucracy](#), Disenchantment of the world, [Rationalization](#), [Secularization](#), [Alienation](#), [Commodification](#), Decontextualization, [Individualism](#), [Subjectivism](#), Linear-progression, [Objectivism](#), [Universalism](#), [Reductionism](#), [Chaos](#), [Mass society](#), [Industrial society](#), Homogenization, Unification, Hybridization, Diversification, [Democratization](#), Centralization, Hierarchical organization, Mechanization, [Totalitarian](#), and so on. Modernity is often characterized by comparing modern societies to [premodern](#) or [postmodern](#) ones, and the understanding of those non-modern social statuses is, again, far from a settled issue. To an extent, it is reasonable to doubt the very possibility of a descriptive concept that can adequately capture diverse realities of societies of various historical contexts, especially non-European ones, let alone a three-stage model of social evolution from premodernity to postmodernity.

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Leviathan

Hobbes's masterpiece, however, was the *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651). In the first two parts, "Of Man" and "Of Commonwealth," he reworked the ground already covered in the earlier treatises; in the last two, "Of a Christian Commonwealth" and "Of the Kingdom of Darkness," he embarked upon a discussion of Scripture and made a vigorous attack on the attempts of papists and Presbyterians to challenge the right of the sovereign. Hobbes's reputation as a thinker rests mainly on his contributions to the philosophy of man, in which he propounded an influential egoistic psychology. In moral theory he is generally regarded as a pioneer of the Utilitarian school. He justified obedience to moral rules on a purely secular basis, as the means to "peaceable, social, and comfortable living." Yet he also said that the laws of nature were God's commands. In his political theory Hobbes first analyzed the conditions necessary for peace and security and then, in his version of the social contract, provided a recipe for constructing an ideal state in which these conditions could be satisfied. His fundamental concept was natural right rather than natural law. It is essentially a right to self-preservation. No man is obliged to act in accordance with the law of nature if he thinks such conduct inimical to his own security. Yet peace cannot be achieved unless the law of nature is generally observed. In the absence of peace, man would live in a state of war, which would be a time of "continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Hobbes's solution was to give everyone a guarantee of the good behaviour of his fellows by creating a power sufficient to keep them in awe. This power will be created if each individual promises every other individual that he will carry out whatever commands some selected person (or an assembly) shall consider necessary for the peace and defense of all. A sovereign so established may survive even if all the subjects desire to depose it. The sovereign's right will be as absolute as its power; it is responsible only to God. It cannot be unjust to its subjects, since these have authorized its actions. Nor is it bound by any covenant with the people. By 1651 Charles I was dead and the Royalist cause seemed hopelessly lost; accordingly, at the end of *Leviathan*, Hobbes attempted to define the circumstances under which submission to a new sovereign became legitimate. He had always maintained that a subject had the right to abandon a ruler who could no longer protect him and to transfer his allegiance to one who could; but the statement of this view in *Leviathan* gave serious offense to Prince Charles's advisers, who concluded that Hobbes was trying to curry favour with the new regime in England in order to facilitate his own return. Barred from the exiled court and under suspicion by the French authorities for his attack on the papacy, Hobbes thus found his position in Paris becoming daily more intolerable. At the end of 1651, he returned to England and made his peace with the new regime.

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An **apodeictic** proposition in [Aristotelean logic](#) asserts things which are necessarily or [self-evidently](#) the case or impossible, in contrast to [assertoric](#) propositions which merely assert that something is or (is not) the case, or [problematic](#) propositions which assert only the possibility of something being true. For instance, "Two plus two equals four" is apodeictic. "Chicago is larger than Omaha" is assertoric. "A corporation could be wealthier than a country" is problematic.

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Madame de Guermantes -- fictional charcter from Marcel Proust;

Questions of epistemology are questions are also questions of social order
Latour, pg. 14

In the aftermath of the English Civil War, as people were groping for new forms of political order, Robert Boyle built an air-pump to do experiments. Does the story of Roundheads and Restoration have something to do with the origins of experimental science? Schaffer and Shapin believed it does. Focusing on the debates between Boyle and his archcritic Thomas Hobbes over the air-pump, the authors proposed that "solutions to the problem of knowledge are solutions to the problem of social order." Both Boyle and Hobbes were looking for ways of establishing knowledge that did not decay into ad hominem attacks and political division. Boyle proposed the experiment as cure. He argued that facts should be manufactured by machines like the air-pump so that gentlemen could witness the experiments and produce knowledge that everyone agreed on. Hobbes, by contrast, looked for natural law and viewed experiments as the artificial, unreliable products of an exclusive guild. The new approaches taken in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* have been enormously influential on historical studies of science. Shapin and Schaffer found a moment of scientific revolution and showed how key scientific givens--facts, interpretations, experiment, truth--were fundamental to a new political order. Shapin and Schaffer were also innovative in their ethnographic approach. Attempting to understand the work habits, rituals, and social structures of a remote, unfamiliar group, they argued that politics were tied up in what scientists did, rather than what they said.

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Paracelsus ([November 11](#) or [December 17, 1493](#) - [September 24, 1541](#)) was a famous [alchemist](#), [physician](#), [astrologer](#), and general [occultist](#). Born **Theophrast von Hohenheim** (full name **Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim**), he took the name Paracelsus later in life, meaning "superior to [Celsus](#)", an early Roman physician.

Paracelsus, sometimes called the "**father**" of [toxicology](#), wrote:

"The dose makes the poison."

In other words, the amount of a substance a person is exposed to is as important as the nature of the substance. For example, small doses of [aspirin](#) can be beneficial to a person, but at very high doses, this common medicine can be deadly. In some individuals, even at very low doses, aspirin may be deadly. Dose-response assesses the dose levels at which adverse effects were observed in test animals, and these dose levels are used to calculate an equal dose in humans.

Pasted from <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracelsus>>

Jean Bodin (or Baudin or Bodinus) was a [16th Century](#) French jurist, [natural law](#) philosopher and precursor of [Mecantilism](#). Born in Angers to a prosperous artisan family of Jewish origins, Bodin studied and taught Roman law at the university in Toulouse (around the time when [Navarrus](#) was there), before becoming a lawyer in Paris around 1561. Yet Bodin was no stale professional. He had a varied and insatiable intellectual curiosity, reading practically everything he could get his hands on. His first love, history, led to his 1566 tract on the philosophy of history.

Pasted from <<http://cepa.newschool.edu/het/profiles/bodin.htm>>

Obscurantism is opposition to extension or dissemination of [knowledge](#) beyond certain limits and to questioning [dogmas](#). Obscurantism is the opposite of [freethought](#) and is often associated with [religious fundamentalism](#) by its opponents. Indeed, it is a commonly raised accusation in debates on [academic freedom](#), with [anti-communists](#) and others associating it with the philosophy of [G. W. F. Hegel](#) and his followers (including [Karl Marx](#)) and recently and more recently with opponents of [Martin Heidegger](#) doing the same. The [Marquis de Condorcet](#) wrote profusely on the phenomenon.

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