



Assembly Rooms in Bath

**AUSTEN
LECTURE #3**
Thinking With
&
Thinking Against

Bath photos by Dr. Elizabeth Losh,
our writing director!

**I. THINKING
“WITH”**

(what we've mostly been
doing so far)



- A. Allying with the ironic narrator (in assessing characters, in understanding the “satiric field” and the necessity to “hit the mean,” etc.)
 - The novel’s coherence depends not just on narrative events but on the reader’s training in assessment (through irony) and on the moral patterning of the novel (persuadability as an Aristotelian “mean”).
- B. Responding to (cooperating with) generic conventions

**I. (CONT) MORE WAYS TO “THINK
WITH”**

- C. Seeing Bath as both a site for Austen’s critique of social rank and a site for unexpected conjunctions (which Anne and Wentworth benefit from).

I. MORE WAYS TO
"THINK WITH" (CONT)

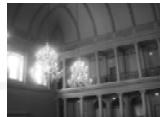
- D. Assessing the Navy: a meritocracy vs. an "ancient and respectable family" (46).
 - Compare the reading of the Navy lists (at the Musgroves') with the reading of the Baronetage.
 - Sir W's 2 foolish and foolishly undistinguished reasons for objecting to the Navy (59)
 - An ancient family (debt-ridden) replaced 'on the ground'-- i.e. 'on the land'--by a naval family (competent, energetic) (149).
 - The one worthy Elliot (Anne) is drawn out of her family and re-placed in a context of merit, setting aside customary thinking (think Descartes). Austen thinks new.

II. THINKING "AGAINST"

- A. Thinking in dissent against cultural norms and cultural agreement
 - Recognizing that literature—along with many cultural customs, including even our own family practices—"normalizes" attitudes and cultural agreements that conceal fundamental injustices in gender and racial relations of power.

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II. THINKING "AGAINST"



- B. Life on a ship – some details not compatible with Austen's idealized treatment
 - See "Supporting quotations for Lecture #3 on Austen.")
- C. "Jane Austen and Empire" - the Edward Said thesis in *Culture and Imperialism*
 - (See "Supporting quotations for Lecture #3 on Austen.")

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III. THINKING "WITH" & "AGAINST"

■ Examples from Lyme"

▶1. Social rank: "On quitting the Cobb, they all went indoors with their new friends . . . gratification" (127-8).

▶2. The work of hands: "Captain Harville was no reader; but he had contrived excellent accommodations, and fashioned very pretty shelves . . ." (128)

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IV. A PAGE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

- A. What do you think about Austen?
- B. How has your thinking changed since you first began reading the novel?
- C. What difference does it make to your reading of Austen that you have read Aristotle and Descartes in the same course?

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