

# Realism(s)

## Lecture 4: The Realist Synthesis

### 1) Famous Definitions of the Novel

### 2) Crisis?

### 3) The Realist Synthesis

#### a) What Is Realism?

#### b) Varieties of English Realism

#### c) The Evolution of Realism

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### 1) Famous Definitions of the Novel

**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik"**  
(1818-29, publ. 1835-38)

A novel in the modern sense of the word presupposes a world already prosaically ordered; then, on this ground and within its own sphere [...] it regains for poetry the right it had lost, so far as this is possible in view of that presupposition. Consequently, one of the commonest, and, for the novel, most appropriate, collisions is the conflict between the poetry of the heart and the opposing prose of circumstances and the accidents of external situations; this is a conflict resolved, whether comically or tragically, or alternatively it is settled either (i) when the characters originally opposed to the usual order of things learn to recognize in it what is substantive and really genuine, when they are reconciled with their circumstances and effective in them, or (ii) when the prosaic shape of what they do and achieve is stripped away, and therefore what they had before them as prose has its place taken by a reality akin and friendly to beauty and art. So far as presentation goes, the novel proper, like the epic, requires the entirety of an outlook on the world and life, the manifold materials and contents of which come into appearance within the individual event that is the centre of the whole.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, 1092-1093, cf. Bode 2017, 28.

## **Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans* (1920)**

[T]he novel form is, like no other, an expression of [...] transcendental homelessness. [...] The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality. [...] Thus, the novel, in contrast to other genres whose existence resides within the finished form, appears as something in process of becoming. That is why, from the artistic view-point, the novel is the most hazardous genre, and why it has been described as only half an art by many who equate *having a problematic* with *being problematic*. [...] The outward form of the novel is essentially biographical. [...] In the biographical form, the unfulfillable, sentimental striving both for the immediate unity of life and for a completely rounded architecture of the system is balanced and brought to rest: it is transformed into being. [...] The contingent world and the problematic individual are realities which mutually determine one another. [...] The novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God. The novel's hero's psychology is demonic; the objectivity of the novel is the mature man's knowledge that meaning can never quite penetrate reality, but that, without meaning, reality would disintegrate into the nothingness of inessentiality.

Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*. London: Merlin, 2006 [1971]: 41, 56, 72f., 77, 78, 88, cf. Bode 2017, 29.

### **Orientations of Meaning in Modern Fiction:**

#### **1) “objective” meaning**

- narrative suggests that meaning resides in the world and can be “discovered”
- key categories: probability/(the illusion of) reference
- narrative draws upon conventionalized/‘naturalized’ views of the world
- events seem to “speak for themselves”

#### **2) subjective meaning**

- narrative suggests that meaning is “constructed” by individuals
- key categories: experience/time
- subjective meaning can emerge either in accordance with “objective” orientations (> education, ‘Bildung’) or in revolt against them (> alienation, isolation)

#### **3) narrative meaning / literary meaning**

- narrative acknowledges that meaning is produced by plot structures and other narrative devices
- narrative devices can be supported by additional, specifically literary devices which can be either of traditional or of modern provenance
- reflexivity

#### **+ Artistic Ambition ↔ Popularity (cf. Reinfandt 2017)**

## 2) Crisis?

Fielding died in 1754, Richardson in 1761, Smollett in 1771, and Sterne in 1768. In only four decades the English novel had made some giant steps forward. After the work of these four great writers, a relatively barren period followed. Though the stream of fiction broadened continually, nothing of intrinsic literary value was written in the form of the novel.

Peter Wagner, *A Short History of English and American Literature*.  
Stuttgart: Klett, 1988: 73.

### The Novel in Transition:

Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67)  
Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (1752)  
Tobias Smollett, *Humphry Clinker* (1771)  
Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (1771)

### Gothic Novels/Oriental Tales:

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)  
Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron* (1777)  
William Beckford, *Vathek* (1786)  
Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)  
Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796)

William Beckford, *Modern Novel Writing* (1796)  
William Godwin, *Things as They Are, or The Adventures of Caleb Williams*  
(1794/1831)

Elizabeth Inchbald, *Nature and Art* (1796)

### Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1765)

#### Preface:

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if in the latter species Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances. The actions, sentiments, conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.

The author of the following pages thought it possible to reconcile the two kinds. Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions.

### 3) The Realist Synthesis

Jane Austen

Sense and Sensibility

Volume I

Chapter I

The family of Dashwood had been long settled in Sussex. Their estate was large, and their residence was at Norland Park, in the centre of their property, where, for many generations, they had lived in so respectable a manner, as to engage the general good opinion of their surrounding acquaintance. The late owner of this estate was a single man, who lived to a very advanced age, and who for many years of his life, had a constant companion and housekeeper in his sister. But her death, which happened ten years before his own, produced a great alteration in his home; for to supply her loss, he invited and received into his house the family of his nephew Mr. Henry Dashwood, the legal inheritor of the Norland estate, and the person to whom he intended to bequeath it. In the society of his nephew and niece, and their children, the old Gentleman's days were comfortably spent. His attachment to them all increased. The constant attention of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood to his wishes, which proceeded not merely from interest, but from goodness of heart, gave him every degree of solid comfort which his age could receive; and the cheerfulness of the children added a relish to his existence.

By a former marriage, Mr. Henry Dashwood had one son: by his present lady, three daughters. The son, a steady respectable young man, was amply provided for by the fortune of his mother, which had been large, and half of which devolved on him on his coming of age. By his own marriage, likewise, which happened soon afterwards, he added to his wealth. To him therefore the succession to the Norland estate was not so really important as to his sisters; for their fortune, independent of what might arise to them from their father's inheriting that property, could be but small. Their mother had nothing, and their father only seven thousand pounds in his own disposal; for the remaining moiety of his first wife's fortune was also secured to her child, and he had only a life interest in it.

The old Gentleman died; his will was read, and like almost every other will, gave as much disappointment as pleasure. He was neither so unjust, nor so ungrateful, as to leave his estate from his nephew; - but he left it to him on such terms as destroyed half the value of the bequest. Mr. Dashwood had wished for it more for the sake of his wife and daughters than for himself or his son: - but to his son, and his son's son, a child of four years old, it was secured, in such a way, as to leave to himself no power of providing for those who were most dear to him, and who most needed a provision, by any charge on the estate, or by any sale of its valuable woods. The whole was tied up for the benefit of this child, who, in occasional visits with his father and mother at Norland, had so far gained on the affections of his uncle, by such attractions as are by no means unusual in children of two or three years old; an imperfect articulation, an earnest desire of having his own way, many cunning tricks,

and a great deal of noise, as to outweigh all the value of all the attention which, for years, he had received from his niece and her daughters. He meant not to be unkind however, and, as a mark of his affection for the three girls, he left them a thousand pounds a- piece.

Mr. Dashwood's disappointment was, at first, severe; but his temper was cheerful and sanguine, and he might reasonably hope to live many years, and by living economically, lay by a considerable sum from the produce of an estate already large, and capable of almost immediate improvement. But the fortune, which had been so tardy in coming, was his only one twelvemonth. He survived his uncle no longer; and ten thousand pounds, including the late legacies, was all that remained for his widow and daughters.

His son was sent for, as soon as his danger was known, and to him Mr. Dashwood recommended, with all the strength and urgency which illness could command, the interest of his mother-in-law and sisters.

Mr. John Dashwood had not the strong feelings of the rest of the family; but he was affected by a recommendation of such a nature at such a time, and he promised to do every thing in his power to make them comfortable. His father was rendered easy by such an assurance, and Mr. John Dashwood had then leisure to consider how much there might prudently be in his power to do for them.

He was not an ill-disposed young man, unless to be rather cold hearted, and rather selfish, is to be ill- disposed: but he was, in general, well respected; for he conducted himself with propriety in the discharge of his ordinary duties. Had he married a more amiable woman, he might have been made still more respectable than he was: - he might even have been made amiable himself; for he was very young when he married, and very fond of his wife. But Mrs. John Dashwood was a strong caricature of himself; - more narrow-minded and selfish.

When he gave his promise to his father, he meditated within himself to increase the fortunes of his sisters by the present of a thousand pounds a- piece. He then really thought himself equal to it. The prospect of four thousand a-year, in addition to his present income, besides the remaining half of his own mother's fortune, warmed his heart and made him feel capable of generosity. - »Yes, he would give them three thousand pounds: it would be liberal and handsome! It would be enough to make them completely easy. Three thousand pounds! he could spare so considerable a sum with little inconvenience.« - He thought of it all day long, and for many days successively, and he did not repent.

No sooner was his father's funeral over, than Mrs. John Dashwood, without sending any notice of her intention to her mother-in-law, arrived with her child and their attendants. No one could dispute her right to come; the house was her husband's from the moment of his father's decease; but the indelicacy of her conduct was so much the greater, and to a woman in Mrs. Dashwood's situation, with only common feelings, must have been highly displeasing; - but in her mind there was a sense of honour so keen, a generosity so romantic, that any offence of the kind, by whomsoever given or received, was to her a source of immovable disgust. Mrs. John Dashwood had never been a favourite with any of her husband's family; but she had had no opportunity, till the present, of showing them with how little attention to the comfort of other people she could act when [...]

## Chapter II

Mrs. John Dashwood now installed herself mistress of Norland; and her mother and sisters-in-law were degraded to the condition of visitors. As such, however, they were treated by her with quiet civility; and by her husband with as much kindness as he could feel towards any body beyond himself, his wife, and their child. He really pressed them, with some earnestness, to consider Norland as their home; and, as no plan appeared so eligible to Mrs. Dashwood as remaining there till she could accommodate herself with a house in the neighbourhood, his invitation was accepted.

A continuance in a place where every thing reminded her of former delight, was exactly what suited her mind. In seasons of cheerfulness, no temper could be more cheerful than hers, or possess, in a greater degree, that sanguine expectation of happiness which is happiness itself. But in sorrow she must be equally carried away by her fancy, and as far beyond consolation as in pleasure she was beyond alloy.

Mrs. John Dashwood did not at all approve of what her husband intended to do for his sisters. To take three thousand pounds from the fortune of their dear little boy, would be impoverishing him to the most dreadful degree. She begged him to think again on the subject. How could he answer it to himself to rob his child, and his only child too, of so large a sum? And what possible claim could the Miss Dashwoods, who were related to him only by half blood, which she considered as no relationship at all, have on his generosity to so large an amount. It was very well known that no affection was ever supposed to exist between the children of any man by different marriages; and why was he to ruin himself, and their poor little Harry, by giving away all his money to his half sisters?

»It was my father's last request to me,« replied her husband, »that I should assist his widow and daughters.«

»He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten to one but he was light-headed at the time. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child.«

»He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my dear Fanny; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly suppose I should neglect them. But as he required the promise, I could not do less than [...]

## a) What Is Realism?

Jane Austen might almost be said to have provided the basic format for the later realist novel [...] She could have claimed, in a sense, to have reconciled the achievements of Fielding and Richardson and made possible a whole new kind of development in the English novel. Walter Scott's contribution was more dramatic and more quickly appreciated. He was the first to describe the forces at work in human society as a whole and to show the individual as the focal point of historical, economic and cultural forces beyond his control [...] he also managed to preserve his confidence in the possible harmony of man's experience and in his essential dignity [...] Consequently Austen and Scott must be understood to have contributed enormously to the development of the Realist novel of the mid-nineteenth century.  
(Williams 1974, 10f.)

If Fielding and Richardson provide [...] the thesis against which Mackenzie [and others] attempt an antithesis, Austen and Scott must seem to offer the grand synthesis. And implicit value judgements lurk in such an ordering of the facts.  
(Spacks 1990, 238)

If the 'realistic' novel is taken to mean a kind of fiction that results when the artist and his audience share the same assumptions, [...] there will, of course, be different realisms at different times and in different contexts.  
(Loofbourow 1974, 257)

There is no doubt that the mid-Victorian novel rested on a massive confidence as to what the nature of Reality actually was [...] The most fundamental common element in the work of the mid-Victorian novelist [...] is probably the idea that human life, whatever the particular conditions, may ultimately be seen as unified and coherent.  
(Williams 1974, x/xiii)

[R]ealism is itself intimately and authoritatively connected to the modernist position [...] [N]ineteenth century writers were already self-conscious about the nature of their medium.  
(Levine 1981, 3/4)

The classic realist text [...] was characterized by a balanced and harmonized combination of mimesis and diegesis, reported speech and reporting context, authorial speech and represented speech.  
(Lodge 1984, 102)

## b) Varieties of English Realism

### Realist Novels (1): Synthesis > Reflexivity

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811),  
*Pride and Prejudice* (1813),  
*Emma* (1816)

Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814)

William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair, or, A Novel Without a Hero* (1848)

George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859),  
*Middlemarch. A Study in Provincial Life* (1871/72),  
*Daniel Deronda* (1876)

### William Makepeace Thackeray

#### Vanity Fair or A Novel without a Hero

#### Chapter I

#### Chiswick Mall.

While the present century was in its teens, and on one sunshiny morning in June, there drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, on Chiswick Mall, a large family coach, with two fat horses in blazing harness, driven by a fat coachman in a three-cornered hat and wig, at the rate of four miles an hour. A black servant, who reposed on the box beside the fat coachman, uncurled his bandy legs as soon as the equipage drew up opposite Miss Pinkerton's shining brass plate, and as he pulled the bell, at least a score of young heads were seen peering out of the narrow windows of the stately old brick house. Nay, the acute observer might have recognized the little red nose of good-natured Miss Jemima Pinkerton herself, rising over some geranium pots in the window of that lady's own drawing-room.

»It is Mrs. Sedley's coach, sister,« said Miss Jemima. »Sambo, the black servant, has just rung the bell; and the coachman has a new red waistcoat.«

»Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley's departure, Miss Jemima?« asked Miss Pinkerton herself, that majestic lady - the Semiramis of Hammersmith, the friend of Dr. ohnson, the correspondent of Mrs. Chapone herself.

»The girls were up at four this morning, packing her trunks, sister,« replied Miss Jemima; »we have made her a bow-pot.«



»Say a bouquet, sister Jemima - 'tis more genteel.«

»Well, a booky as big almost as a haystack. I have put up two bottles of the gillyflower-water for Mrs. Sedley, and the receipt for making it, in Amelia's box.«

»And I trust, Miss Jemima, you have made a copy of Miss Sedley's account. This is it, is it? Very good - ninety-three pounds, four shillings. Be kind enough to address it to John Sedley, Esquire, and to seal this billet which I have written to his lady.«

In Miss Jemima's eyes an autograph letter of her sister, Miss Pinkerton, was an object of as deep veneration as would have been a letter from a sovereign. Only when her pupils quitted the establishment, or when they were about to be married, and once, when poor Miss Birch died of the scarlet fever, was Miss Pinkerton known to write personally to the parents of her pupils; and it was Jemima's opinion that if anything could console Mrs. Birch for her daughter's loss, it would be that pious and eloquent composition in which Miss Pinkerton announced the event.

In the present instance Miss Pinkerton's 'billet' was to the following effect: -

»The Mall, Chiswick, June 15, 18-.

Madam, - After her six years' residence at the Mall, I have the honour and happiness of presenting Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents, as a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined circle. Those virtues which characterize the young English gentlewoman, those accomplishments which become her birth and station, will not be found wanting in the amiable Miss Sedley, whose industry and obedience have endeared her to her instructors, and whose delightful sweetness of temper has charmed her aged and her youthful companions.

In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needlework, she will be found to have realized her friends' fondest wishes. In geography there is still much to be desired; and a careful and undeviating use of the backboard, for four hours daily during the next three years, is recommended as necessary to the acquirement of that dignified deportment and carriage, so requisite for every young lady of fashion.

In the principles of religion and morality, Miss Sedley will be found worthy an establishment which has been honoured by the presence of The Great Lexicographer, and the patronage of the admirable Mrs. Chapone. In leaving the Mall, Miss Amelia carries with her the hearts of her companions, and the affectionate regards of her mistress, who has the honour to subscribe herself,

Madam, your most obliged humble servant,  
BARBARA PINKERTON.

P.S. - Miss Sharp accompanies Miss Sedley. It is particularly requested that Miss Sharp's stay in Russell Square may not exceed ten days. The family of distinction with whom she is engaged desire to avail themselves of her services as soon as possible.«

This letter completed, Miss Pinkerton proceeded to write her own name and Miss Sedley's in the fly-leaf of a Johnson's Dictionary - the interesting work which she invariably presented to her scholars on their departure from the Mall. On the cover was inserted a copy of »Lines addressed to a young lady on quitting Miss Pinkerton's school, at the Mall; by the late revered Doctor Samuel Johnson.« In fact, the Lexicographer's name was always on the lips of this majestic woman, and a visit he had paid to her was the cause of her reputation and her fortune.

Being commanded by her elder sister to get 'the Dictionary' from the cupboard, Miss Jemima had extracted two copies of the book from the receptacle in question. When Miss Pinkerton had finished the inscription in the first, Jemima, with rather a dubious and timid air, handed her the second.

»For whom is this, Miss Jemima?« said Miss Pinkerton, with awful coldness.

»For Becky Sharp,« answered Jemima, trembling very much, and blushing over her withered face and neck, as she turned her back on her sister. »For Becky Sharp: she's going too.«

»MISS JEMINA!« exclaimed Miss Pinkerton, in the largest capitals; »are you in your senses? Replace the Dixonary in the closet, and never venture to take such a liberty in future.«

»Well, sister, it's only two and ninepence, and poor Becky will be miserable if she don't get one.«

»Send Miss Sedley instantly to me,« said Miss Pinkerton. And so, venturing not to say another word, poor Jemima trotted off, exceedingly flurried and nervous.

Miss Sedley's papa was a merchant in London, and a man of some wealth; whereas Miss Sharp was an articted pupil, for whom Miss Pinkerton had done, as she thought, quite enough, without conferring upon her at parting the high honour of the Dixonary.

Although schoolmistresses' letters are to be trusted no more nor less than churchyard epitaphs; yet, as it sometimes happens that a person departs this life who is really deserving of all the praises the stonecutter carves over his bones; who is a good Christian, a good parent, child, wife, or husband; who actually does leave a disconsolate family to mourn his loss; so in academies of the male and female sex it occurs every now and then that the pupil is fully worthy of the praises bestowed by the disinterested instructor. Now, Miss Amelia Sedley was a young lady of this singular species, and deserved not only all that Miss Pinkerton said in her praise, but had many charming qualities which that pompous old Minerva of a woman could not see, from the differences of rank and age between her pupil and herself.

For she could not only sing like a lark, or a Mrs. Billington, and dance like Hillisberg or Parisot; and embroider beautifully; and spell as well as a Dixonary itself; but she had such a kindly, smiling, tender, gentle, generous heart of her own, as won the love of everybody who came near her, from Minerva herself down to the poor girl in the scullery and the one-eyed tart-woman's daughter, who was permitted to vend her wares once a week to the young ladies in the Mall. She had twelve intimate and bosom friends out of the twenty-four young ladies. Even envious Miss Briggs never spoke ill of her; high and mighty Miss Saltire (Lord Dexter's grand-daughter) allowed that her figure was genteel; and as for Miss Swartz, the rich woolly-haired mulatto from St. Kitts, on the day Amelia went away, she was in such a passion of tears, that they were obliged to send for Dr. Floss, and half tipsify her with sal volatile. Miss Pinkerton's attachment was, as may be supposed, from the high position and eminent virtues of that lady, calm and dignified; but Miss Jemima had already whimpered several times at the idea of Amelia's departure; and, but for fear of her sister, would have gone off in downright hysterics, like the heiress (who paid double) of St. Kitts. Such luxury of grief, however, is only allowed to parlour-boarders. Honest Jemima had all the bills, and the washing, and the mending, and the puddings, and the plate and crockery, and the servants to superintend. But why speak about her? It is probable that we shall not hear of her again from this moment to the end of time, and that when the great filigree iron gates are once closed on her, she and her awful sister will never issue therefrom into this little world of history.

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But as we are to see a great deal of Amelia, there is no harm in saying, at the outset of our acquaintance, that she was a dear little creature; and a great mercy it is, both in life and in novels, which (and the latter especially) abound in villains of the most sombre sort, that we are to have for a constant companion so guileless and good-natured a person. As she is not a heroine, there is no need to describe her person; indeed I am afraid that her nose was rather short than otherwise, and her cheeks a great deal too round and red for a heroine; but her face blushed with rosy health, and her lips with the freshest of smiles, and she had a pair of eyes which sparkled with the brightest and honestest good-humour, except indeed when they filled with tears, and that was a great deal too often; for the silly thing would cry over a dead canary-bird; or over a mouse, that the cat haply had seized upon; or over the end of a novel, were it ever so stupid; and as for saying an unkind word to her, were any persons hard-hearted enough to do so - why, so much the worse for them. Even Miss Pinkerton, that austere and godlike woman, ceased scolding her after the first time, and though she no more comprehended sensibility than she did Algebra, gave all masters and teachers particular orders to treat Miss Sedley with the utmost gentleness, as harsh treatment was injurious to her.

So that when the day of departure came, between her two customs of laughing and crying, Miss Sedley was greatly puzzled how to act. She was glad to go home, and yet most woefully sad at leaving school. For three days before, little Laura Martin, the orphan, followed her about, like a little dog. She had to make and receive at least fourteen presents - to make fourteen solemn promises of writing every week: »Send my letters under cover to my grandpapa, the Earl of Dexter,« said Miss Saltire (who, by the way, was rather shabby): »Never mind the postage, but write every day, you dear darling,« said the impetuous and woolly-headed, but generous and affectionate, Miss Swartz; and the orphan little Laura Martin (who was just in round-hand), took her friend's hand and said, looking up in her face wistfully, »Amelia, when I write to you I shall call you Mamma.« All which details, I have no doubt, JONES, who reads this book at his Club, will pronounce to be excessively foolish, trivial, twaddling, and ultra-sentimental. Yes; I can see Jones at this minute (rather flushed with his joint of mutton and half-pint of wine) taking out his pencil and scoring under the words »foolish, twaddling,« etc., and adding to them his own remark of »quite true.« Well, he is a lofty man of genius, and admires the great and heroic in life and novels; and so had better take warning and go elsewhere.

Well, then. The flowers, and the presents, and the trunks, and bonnet-boxes of Miss Sedley having been arranged by Mr. Sambo in the carriage, together with a very small and weather-beaten old cow's-skin trunk with Miss Sharp's card neatly nailed upon it, which was delivered by Sambo with a grin, and packed by the coachman with a corresponding sneer - the hour for parting came; and the grief of that moment was considerably lessened by the admirable discourse which Miss Pinkerton addressed to her pupil. Not that the parting speech caused Amelia to philosophize, or that it armed her in any way with a calmness, the result of argument; but it was intolerably dull, pompous, and tedious; and having the fear of her schoolmistress greatly before her eyes, Miss Sedley did not venture, in her presence, to give way to any ebullitions of private grief. A seed-cake and a bottle of wine were produced in the drawing-room, as on the solemn occasions of the visits of parents, and these refreshments being partaken of, Miss Sedley was at liberty to depart.

»You'll go in and say good-bye to Miss Pinkerton, Becky!« said Miss Jemima to a young lady of whom nobody took any notice, and who was coming downstairs with her own hand-box.

»I suppose I must,« said Miss Sharp calmly, and much to the wonder of Miss Jemima; and the latter having knocked at the door, and receiving permission to come in, Miss Sharp advanced in a very unconcerned manner, and said in French, and with a perfect accent, »Mademoiselle, je viens vous faire mes adieux.«

Miss Pinkerton did not understand French; she only directed those who did; but biting her lips and throwing up her venerable and Roman-nosed head (on the top of which figured a large and solemn turban), she said, »Miss Sharp, I wish you a good-morning.« As the Hammersmith Semiramis spoke she waved one hand, both by way of adieu, and to give Miss Sharp an opportunity of shaking one of the fingers of the hand which was left out for that purpose.

Miss Sharp only folded her own hands with a very frigid smile and bow, and quite declined to accept the proffered honour; on which Semiramis tossed up her turban more indignantly than ever. In fact, it was a little battle between the young lady and the old one, and the latter was worsted. »Heaven bless you, my child,« said she, embracing Amelia, and scowling the while over the girl's shoulder at Miss Sharp. »Come away, Becky,« said Miss Jemima, pulling the young woman away in great alarm, and the drawing-room door closed upon them for ever.

Then came the struggle and parting below. Words refuse to tell it. All the servants were there in the hall - all the dear friends - all the young ladies - the dancing-master who had just arrived; and there was such a scuffling, and hugging, and kissing, and crying, with the hysterical yoops of Miss Swartz, the parlour-boarder, from her room, as no pen can depict, and as the tender heart would fain pass over. The embracing was over; they parted - that is, Miss Sedley parted from her friends. Miss Sharp had demurely entered the carriage some minutes before. Nobody cried for leaving her.

Sambo of the bandy legs slammed the carriage-door on his young weeping mistress. He sprang up behind the carriage. »Stop!« cried Miss Jemima, rushing to the gate with a parcel.

»It's some sandwiches, my dear,« said she to Amelia. »You may be hungry, you know; and Becky, Becky Sharp, here's a book for you that my sister - that is, I - Johnson's Dictionary, you know; you mustn't leave us without that. Good-bye. Drive on, coachman. God bless you!«

And the kind creature retreated into the garden, overcome with emotion.

But, lo! and just as the coach drove off, Miss Sharp put her pale face out of the window and actually flung the book back into the garden.

This almost caused Jemima to faint with terror. »Well, I never!« - said she - »what an audacious -« Emotion prevented her from completing either sentence. The carriage rolled away; the great gates were closed; the bell rang for the dancing lesson. The world is before the two young ladies; and so, farewell to Chiswick Mall.

## **Realist Novels (2): Subjective Emphasis**

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)  
Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (1849/50)  
*Great Expectations* (1860/61)  
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

## **Realist Novels (3): Condition of England Novels (“obj.”)**

Benjamin Disraeli, *The Young England Trilogy*:  
*Coningsby, or The New Generation* (1844)  
*Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845)  
*Tancred, or The New Crusade* (1847)  
Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton. A Tale of Manchester Life* (1848)  
*North and South* (1855)  
Charles Dickens, *Hard Times. For These Times* (1854)

## **c) The Evolution of Realism**

### **“Objective” Reality?**

- “objectivity”, science, naturalism
- the marginality of naturalism in England
- Thomas Hardy as an example for the preservation of literary meaning on a naturalistic basis

### **The Subjective Perception of Reality**

- the discontinuity of consciousness and reality
- Henry James’s anatomy of subjective identities cut loose from social context/community (e.g. Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* 1880/81)
- the subjectivization of narrative acts (e.g. Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the Narcissus* 1897, *The Heart of Darkness* 1902)
- limitations of narrative authority are compensated by artistic self-confidence

### **The Literary Representation of Reality**

- synthesis as an effect of literary conventions
- problems of accessibility/difficulty
- literature as one specialized discourse among others, but still claiming general significance

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