ONE

# The Novel and the Police

## I

The frequent appearance of policemen in novels is too evident to need detecting. Yet oddly enough, the ostensive thematic of regulation thereby engendered has never impugned our belief that "of all literary genres, the novel remains the most free, the most *lawless*."[1] Though the phrase comes from Gide, the notion it expresses has dominated nearly every conception of the form. If a certain puritanical tradition, for instance, is profoundly suspicious of the novel, this is because the novel is felt to celebrate and encourage misconduct, rather than censure and repress it. A libertarian criticism may revalue this misconduct as human freedom, but it otherwise produces a remarkably similar version of the novel, which, in league with rebel forces, would bespeak and inspire various projects of insurrection. This evasive or escapist novel persists even in formalist accounts of the genre as constantly needing to subvert and make strange its inherited prescriptions. All these views commonly imply what Roger Caillois has called "the contradiction between the idea of the police and the nature of the novel."[2] For when the novel is conceived of as a

1. André Gide, *Les faux-monnayeurs*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. L. Martin-Chauffier, 15 vols. (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1932–39), 12:268. "De tous les genres littéraires . . . le roman reste le plus libre, le plus *lawless*."
2. Roger Caillois, *Puissances du roman* (Marseilles: Sagittaire, 1942), p. 140.

successful act of truancy, no other role for the police is possible than that of a patrol which ineptly stands guard over a border fated to be transgressed. In what follows, I shall be considering what such views necessarily dismiss: the possibility of a radical *entanglement* between the nature of the novel and the practice of the police. In particular, I shall want to address two questions deriving from this entanglement. How do the police systematically function as a topic in the "world" of the novel? And how does the novel—as a set of representational techniques—systematically participate in a general economy of policing power? Registering the emergence of the modern police as well as modern disciplinary power in general, the novel of the nineteenth century seemed to me a good field in which these questions might first be posed. Practically, the "nineteenth-century novel" here will mean these names: Dickens, Collins, Trollope, Eliot, Balzac, Stendhal, Zola; and these traditions: Newgate fiction, sensation fiction, detective fiction, realist fiction. Theoretically, it will derive its ultimate coherence from the strategies of the "policing function" that my intention is to trace.

## II

One reason for mistrusting the view that contraposes the notions of novel and police is that the novel itself does most to promote such a view. Crucially, the novel organizes its world in a way that already restricts the pertinence of the police. Regularly including the topic of the police, the novel no less regularly sets it against other topics of surpassing interest—so that the centrality of what it puts at the center is established by holding the police to their place on the periphery. At times, the limitations placed by the novel on the power of the police are coolly taken for granted, as in the long tradition of portraying the police as incompetent or powerless. At others, more tellingly, the marginality is dramatized as a gradual process of

marginalization, in which police work becomes less and less relevant to what the novel is "really" about.

Even in the special case of detective fiction, where police detectives often hold center stage, the police never quite emerge from the ghetto in which the novel generally confines them. I don't simply refer to the fact that the work of detection is frequently transferred from the police to a private or amateur agent. Whether the investigation is conducted by police or private detectives, its sheer intrusiveness posits a world whose normality has been hitherto defined as a matter of *not needing* the police or policelike detectives. The investigation repairs this normality, not only by solving the crime, but also, far more important, by withdrawing from what had been, for an aberrant moment, its "scene." Along with the criminal, criminology itself is deported elsewhere.

In the economy of the "mainstream" novel, a more obviously circumscribed police apparatus functions somewhat analogously to define the field that exceeds its range. Its very limitations bear witness to the existence of other domains, formally lawless, outside and beyond its powers of supervision and detection. Characteristically locating its story in an everyday middle-class world, the novel takes frequent and explicit notice that this is an area that for the most part the law does not cover or supervise. Yet when the law falls short in the novel, the world is never reduced to anarchy as a result. In the same move whereby the police are contained in a marginal pocket of the representation, the work of the police is superseded by the operations of another, informal, and extralegal principle of organization and control.

Central among the ideological effects that such a pattern produces is the notion of *delinquency*. For the official police share their ghetto with an official criminality: the population of petty, repeated offenders, whose conspicuousness licenses it to enact, together with the police, a normative scenario of crime

and punishment. To confine the actions of the police to a delinquent milieu has inevitably the result of consolidating the milieu itself, which not only stages a normative version of crime and punishment, but contains it as well in a world radically divorced from our own. Throughout the nineteenth-century novel, the confinement of the police allusively reinforces this ideology of delinquency. We may see it exemplarily surface in a novel such as *Oliver Twist* (1838). Though the novel is plainly written as a humane attack on the institutions that help produce the delinquent milieu, the very terms of the attack strengthen the perception of delinquency that upholds the phenomenon.

A large part of the moral shock *Oliver Twist* seeks to induce has to do with the *coherence* of delinquency, as a structured milieu or network. The logic of Oliver's "career," for instance, establishes workhouse, apprenticeship, and membership in Fagin's gang as versions of a single experience of incarceration. Other delinquent careers are similarly full of superficial movement in which nothing really changes. The Artful Dodger's fate links Fagin's gang with prison and deportation, and Noah Claypole discards the uniform of a charity boy for the more picturesque attire of Fagin's gang with as much ease as he later betrays the gang to become a police informer. Nor is it fortuitous that Fagin recruits his gang from institutions such as workhouses and groups such as apprentices, or that Mr. and Mrs. Bumble become paupers "in that very same workhouse in which they had once lorded it over others."[3] The world of delinquency encompasses not only the delinquents themselves, but also the persons and institutions supposed to reform them or prevent them from forming. The policemen in the novel—the Bow Street runners Duff and Blathers—belong to this

3. Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 414. In the case of works cited more than once, page references to the edition first noted will be thereafter given parenthetically in the text.

world, too. The story they tell about a man named Chickweed *who robbed himself* nicely illustrates the unity of both sides of the law in the delinquent context, the same unity that has allowed cop Blathers to call robber Chickweed "one of the family" (227). Police and offenders are conjoined in a single system for the formation and re-formation of delinquents. More than an obvious phonetic linkage connects the police magistrate Mr. Fang with Fagin himself, who avidly reads the *Police Gazette* and regularly delivers certain gang members to the police.

In proportion as Dickens stresses the coherence and systematic nature of delinquency, he makes it an *enclosed* world from which it is all but impossible to escape. Characters may move from more to less advantageous positions in the system, but they never depart from it altogether—what is worse, they apparently never want to. With the exception of Oliver, characters are either appallingly comfortable with their roles or pathetically resigned to them. An elsewhere or an otherwise cannot be conceived, much less desired and sought out. The closed-circuit character of delinquency is, of course, a sign of Dickens's progressive attitude, his willingness to see coercive system where it was traditional only to see bad morals. Yet one should recognize how closing the circuit results in an "outside" as well as an "inside," an "outside" precisely determined as *outside the circuit*. At the same time as the novel exposes the network that ties together the workhouse, Fagin's gang, and the police *within* the world of delinquency, it also draws a circle around it, and in that gesture, holds the line of a *cordon sanitaire*. Perhaps the novel offers its most literal image of holding the line in the gesture of *shrinking* that accompanies Nancy's contact with the "outside." "The poorest women fall back," as Nancy makes her way along the crowded pavement, and even Rose Maylie is shown "involuntarily falling from her strange companion" (302). When Nancy herself, anticipating her meeting with Rose, "thought of the wide contrast which the small room would in another moment contain, she felt burdened with the sense of

her own deep shame, and shrunk as though she could scarcely bear the presence of her with whom she had sought this interview" (301). Much of the proof of Nancy's ultimate goodness lies in her awed recognition of the impermeable boundaries that separate her from Rose Maylie. It is this, as much as her love for Bill Sikes (the two things are not ultimately very different), that brings her to say to Rose's offers of help: "I wish to go back. . . . I must go back" (304). Righteously "exposed" in the novel, the world of delinquency is also actively occulted: made cryptic by virtue of its cryptlike isolation.

Outside and surrounding the world of delinquency lies the middle-class world of private life, presided over by Oliver's benefactors Mr. Brownlow, Mr. Losberne, and the Maylies. What repeatedly and rhapsodically characterizes this world is the contrast that opposes it to the world of delinquency. Thus, at Mr. Brownlow's, "everything was so quiet, and neat, and orderly; everybody was kind and gentle; that *after the noise and turbulence in the midst of which* [*Oliver*] *had always lived*, it seemed like Heaven itself"; and at the Maylies' country cottage, "Oliver, *whose days had been spent among squalid crowds, and in the midst of noise and brawling*, seemed to enter on a new existence" (94, 238; italics added). No doubt, the contrast serves the ends of Dickens's moral and political outrage: the middle-class standards in effect, say, at Mr. Brownlow's dramatically enhance our appreciation of the miseries of delinquency. However, the outrage is limited in the contrast, too, since these miseries in turn help secure a proper (relieved, grateful) appreciation of *the standards themselves*. It is systematically unclear which kind of appreciation *Oliver Twist* does most to foster. Much as delinquency is circumscribed by middle-class private life, the indignation to which delinquency gives rise is bounded by gratitude for the class habits and securities that make indignation possible.

The "alternative" character of the middle-class community depends significantly on the fact that it is kept free, not just from noise and squalor, but also from the police. When this

freedom is momentarily violated by Duff and Blathers, who want to know Oliver's story, Mr. Losberne persuades Rose and Mrs. Maylie not to cooperate with them:

> "The more I think of it," said the doctor, "the more I see that it will occasion endless trouble and difficulty if we put these men in possession of the boy's real story. I am certain it will not be believed; and even if they can do nothing to him in the end, still the dragging it forward, and giving publicity to all the doubts that will be cast upon it, must interfere, materially, with your benevolent plan of rescuing him from misery." (225)

The police are felt to obstruct an alternative power of regulation, such as the plan of rescue implies. Not to cooperate with the police, therefore, is part of a strategy of surreptitiously assuming and revising their functions. Losberne himself, for instance, soon forces his way into a suspect dwelling in the best policial manner. In a more central and extensive pattern, Oliver's diabolical half-brother Monks is subject to a replicated version of a whole legal and police apparatus. There is no wish to prosecute Monks legally because, as Mr. Brownlow says, "there must be circumstances in Oliver's little history which it would be painful to drag before the public eye" (352). Instead Brownlow proposes "to extort the secret" from Monks (351). Accordingly, Monks is "kidnapped in the street" by two of Brownlow's men and submitted to a long cross-examination in which he is overwhelmed by the "accumulated charges" (372, 378). The Bumbles are brought in to testify against him, and the "trial" concludes with his agreement to render up Oliver's patrimony and sign a written admission that he stole it.

We would call this vigilantism, except that no ultimate conflict of purpose or interest divides it from the legal and police apparatus that it supplants. Such division as does surface between the law and its supplement seems to articulate a deeper congruency, as though the text were positing something like a doctrine of "separation of powers," whereby each in its own

sphere rendered assistance to the other, in the coherence of a single policing action. Thus, while the law gets rid of Fagin and his gang, the amateur supplement gets rid of Monks. Monks's final fate is instructive in this light. Retired with his portion to the New World, "he once more fell into his old courses, and, after undergoing a long confinement for some fresh act of fraud and knavery, at length sunk under an attack of his old disorder, and died in prison" (412). The two systems of regulation beautifully support one another. Only when the embarrassment that an initial appeal to the law would have created has been circumvented, does the law come to claim its own; and in so doing, it punishes on behalf of the vigilantes. A similar complicitousness obtains in the fate of the Bumbles. Although the reason for dealing with Monks privately has been to keep the secret of Oliver's parentage, it is hard to know on what basis the Bumbles are "deprived of their position" at the end, since this would imply a disclosure of their involvement in Monks's scheme to the proper authorities. Even if the confusion is inadvertent, it attests to the tacit concurrence the text assumes between the law and its supplement.

The two systems come together, then, in the connivance of class rule, but more of society is covered by the rule than outsiders such as Fagin or monsters such as Monks. Perhaps finally more interesting than the quasi-legal procedures applied to Monks are the disciplinary techniques imposed on Oliver himself. From his first moment at Mr. Brownlow's, Oliver is subject to incessant examination:

> "Oliver what? Oliver White, eh?"
>
> "No, sir, Twist, Oliver Twist."
>
> "Queer name!" said the old gentleman. "What made you tell the magistrate that your name was White?"
>
> "I never told him so, sir," returned Oliver in amazement.
>
> This sounded so like a falsehood, that the old gentleman looked somewhat sternly in Oliver's face. It was impossible to doubt him; there was truth in every one of its thin and sharpened lineaments. (81)

However "impossible" Oliver is to doubt, Brownlow is capable of making "inquiries" to "confirm" his "statement" (96). The object of both interrogation and inquiry is to produce and possess a *full account* of Oliver. "Let me hear your story," Brownlow demands of Oliver, "where you come from; who brought you up; and how you got into the company in which I found you" (96). With a similar intent, when Oliver later disappears, he advertises for "such information as will lead to the discovery of the said Oliver Twist, or tend to throw any light upon his previous history" (123). It is clear what kind of narrative Oliver's "story" is supposed to be: the continuous line of an evolution. Not unlike the novel itself, Brownlow is seeking to articulate an original "story" over the heterogeneous and lacunary data provided in the "plot." It is also clear what Oliver's story, so constructed, is going to do: it will entitle him to what his Standard English already anticipates, a full integration into middle-class respectability. Another side to this entitlement, however, is alluded to in Brownlow's advertisement, which concludes with "a full description of Oliver's dress, person, appearance, and disappearance" (123). The "full description" allows Oliver to be identified and (what comes to the same thing here) *traced*. And if, as Brownlow thinks possible, Oliver has "absconded," then he will be traced *against his will*. To constitute Oliver as an object of knowledge is thus to assume power over him as well. One remembers that the police, too, wanted to know Oliver's story.

The same ideals of continuity and repleteness that determine the major articulations of this story govern the minor ones as well. The "new existence" Oliver enters into at the Maylies' cottage consists predominantly in a routine and a timetable:

> Every morning he went to a white-headed old gentleman, who lived near the little church: who taught him to read better, and to write: and who spoke so kindly, and took such pains, that Oliver could never try enough to please him. Then, he would walk with Mrs. Maylie and Rose, and hear them talk of books; or perhaps sit near them, in some shady place, and listen whilst the young lady read: which he could

have done, until it grew too dark to see the letters. Then, he had his own lesson for the next day to prepare; and at this, he would work hard, in a little room which looked into the garden, till evening came slowly on, when the ladies would walk out again, and he with them: listening with such pleasure to all they said: and so happy if they wanted a flower that he could climb to reach, or had forgotten anything he could run to fetch: that he could never be quick enough about it. When it became quite dark, and they returned home, the young lady would sit down to the piano, and play some pleasant air, or sing, in a low and gentle voice, some old song which it pleased her aunt to hear. There would be no candles lighted at such times as these; and Oliver would sit by one of the windows, listening to the sweet music, in a perfect rapture. (238)

This "iterative" tense continues to determine the presentation of the idyll, whose serenity depends crucially on its legato: on its not leaving a moment blank, or out of consecutive order. "No wonder," the text concludes, that at the end of a very short time, "Oliver had become completely domesticated with the old lady and her niece" (239). No wonder indeed, when the techniques that structure Oliver's time are precisely those of a domesticating pedagogy. Despite the half-lights and soft kindly tones, *as well as by means of them*, a technology of discipline constitutes this happy family as a field of power relations. Recalling that Blathers called Chickweed "one of the family," conjoining those who work the police apparatus and those whom it works over, we might propose a sense—only discreetly broached by the text—in which the family itself is "one of the family" of disciplinary institutions.

## III

*Oliver Twist* suggests that the story of the Novel is essentially the story of an active regulation. Such a story apparently requires a double plot: regulation is secured in a minor way along

the lines of an official police force, and in a major way in the working-through of an amateur supplement. As an example of high-realist fiction, Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* (1873) reverses the overt representational priorities of *Oliver Twist*. Trollope is much more concerned to explore his high-bourgeois world than he is to portray delinquency, which he seems prepared to take for granted. Thus, by way of shorthand, the novel will illustrate both the generality and the continuity of the doubly regulatory enterprise I've been discussing in Dickens. What needs regulation in *The Eustace Diamonds*, of course, is Lizzie's initial appropriation of the diamonds. The very status of the "theft" is open to question. Lizzie cannot clearly be said to "steal" what is already in her possession, and her assertion that her late husband gave her the diamonds cannot be proved or disproved. Although the family lawyer, Mr. Camperdown, is sure that "Lizzie Eustace had stolen the diamonds, as a pickpocket steals a watch," his opinion is no more a legal one than that of the reader, who knows, Trollope says, that Mr. Camperdown is "right."[4] In fact, according to the formal legal opinion solicited from Mr. Dove, the Eustace family may not reclaim the diamonds as heirlooms while there are some grounds on which Lizzie might claim them herself as "paraphernalia."

Part of what places Lizzie's theft in the interstices of the law is her position as Lady Eustace. It is not just that John Eustace refuses to prosecute on account of the consequent scandal, or that Lizzie is invited and visited by the best society. The law does not cover a lady's action here for the same reason that Mr. Camperdown is ignorant of the claim for paraphernalia:

> Up to this moment, though he had been called upon to arrange great dealings in reference to widows, he had never as yet heard of a claim made by a widow for paraphernalia. But then the widows with whom he had been called upon to deal, had been ladies quite content to ac-

4. Anthony Trollope, *The Eustace Diamonds*, 2 vols. in 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1:252.

cept the good things settled upon them by the liberal prudence of their friends and husbands—not greedy, blood-sucking harpies such as this Lady Eustace. (1:254)

If, as Dove's opinion shows, the legal precedents about heirlooms do not clearly define the status of Lizzie's possession of the diamonds, it is because a similar question has not previously arisen. In the world Lizzie inhabits, the general trustworthiness of widows of peers has been such that it didn't need to arise. Nor—a fortiori—have the police been much accustomed to enter this world. As Scotland Yard itself acknowledges, at a later turn in the story, "had it been an affair simply of thieves, such as thieves ordinarily are, everthing would have been discovered long since;—but when lords and ladies with titles come to be mixed up with such an affair,—folk in whose house a policeman can't have his will at searching and browbeating,—how is a detective to detect anything?" (2:155).

The property whose proper ownership is put in doubt is the novel's titular instance of the impropriety that comes to rule the conduct of Lizzie, characterize her parasitical friends (Lord George, Mrs. Carbuncle, Reverend Emilius), and contaminate the otherwise decent Frank Greystock. Significantly, Lizzie's legally ambiguous retention of the diamonds opens up a series of thefts that—in certain aspects at least—resemble and prolong the initial impropriety. First, the notoriety of the diamonds in her possession attracts the attentions of professional thieves, who attempt to steal the diamonds at Carlisle, but (Lizzie's affidavit to the contrary) fail to obtain them. Their failure in turn generates a later attempt in London, in which the diamonds are successfully abstracted. In part, Trollope is no doubt using the series to suggest the "dissemination" of lawlessness. But if one theft leads to another, this is finally so that theft itself can lead to *arrest* within the circuit of the law. Subsequent thefts do not simply repeat the initial impropriety, but revise it as well, recasting it into what are legally more legible terms.

The plot of the novel "passes on," as it were, the initial offense until it reaches a place within the law's jurisdiction.

Thus, the last theft is very different from the first. It involves a breaking and entering by two professional thieves (Smiler and Cann), working in collaboration with Lizzie's maid (Patience Crabstick) and at the behest of a "Jew jeweller" (Mr. Benjamin), who exports the stolen diamonds and has them recut. In short, theft finally comes to lodge in the world of delinquency: within the practice of a power that binds thieves and police together in the same degree as it isolates the economy they form from the rest of the world represented in the novel. In the circulation of this economy, nothing is less surprising than that Lizzie's maid should pass from a liaison with one of the thieves to a marriage with one of the thief-takers, or that the other thief should be easily persuaded to turn Crown's evidence. Even in terms of the common idiom they speak, police and thieves are all closer to one another than they are to Frank Greystock and Lord Fawn. Yet if theft now has the transparent clarity of pickpocketing a watch, it also has some of the inconsequence. As it is moved down to a sphere where it can be legally named, investigated, and prosecuted, it becomes—in every respect but the magnitude of the stolen goods—a *petty theft*: committed by petty thieves and policed by petit-bourgeois detectives, all of whom are confined to the peripheral world of a subplot. The impropriety which gave rise to the narrative is arrested on so different a terrain from the novel's main ground that, even after the police investigation has solved its "pretty little mystery," the larger question of Lizzie herself must remain:

> Miss Crabstick and Mr. Cann were in comfortable quarters, and were prepared to tell all that they could tell. Mr. Smiler was in durance, and Mr. Benjamin was at Vienna, in the hands of the Austrian police, who were prepared to give him up to those who desired his society in England, on the completion of certain legal formalities. That Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Smiler would be prosecuted, the latter for the rob-

bery and the former for conspiracy to rob, and for receiving stolen goods, was a matter of course. But what was to be done with Lady Eustace? That, at the present moment, was the prevailing trouble with the police. (2:261)

Ultimately, however, it is a trouble *only* with the police. Though Lizzie is never punished by the law, never even has to appear at Benjamin and Smiler's trial, she does not quite get off the hook. For the novel elaborates a far more extensive and imposing principle of social control in what Trollope calls the "world." The coercive force of the "world" shows up best in the case of Lord Fawn, who, if asked what his prevailing motive was in all he did or intended to do, "would have declared that it was above all things necessary that he should put himself right in the eye of the British public" (2:247). Under this principle, Fawn first tries to break off his engagement to Lizzie, when it looks as though the world will disapprove of her holding on to the Eustace diamonds. Later when, in the person of Lady Glencora Palliser, the world takes up Lizzie and considers her a wronged woman, Fawn is once again willing to marry her. The coercion exercised by public opinion in the novel is purely mental, but that apparently suffices. The social order that prevents Frank Greystock from dueling with Fawn—"public opinion is now so much opposed to that kind of thing, that it is out of the question"—allows him to predict with confidence, "the world will punish him" (1:216). As Stendhal might say, society has moved from red to black: from the direct and quasi-instantaneous ceremonies of physical punishment to the prolonged mental mortifications of a diffuse social discipline. Trollope's obvious point in the novel about the instability of public opinion (taking up Lizzie to drop her in the end) should not obscure its role as a policing force. Lizzie may fear the legal consequences of her perjury at Carlisle, but what she actually suffers is the social humiliation of its being publicly known. It

is enough to exile her to an untouchable *bohème* in which there is nothing to do but marry the disreputable Reverend Emilius. The Duke of Omnium, whose interest in Lizzie had extended to the thought of visiting her, is at the end quite fatigued with his fascination. "I am afraid, you know," he declares to Glencora, "that your friend hasn't what I call a good time before her" (2:375).

The understatement is profoundly consistent with the nature of discipline. What most sharply differentiates the legal economy of police power from the "amateur" economy of its supplement is precisely the latter's policy of *discretion*. It would be false to see Trollope or Dickens engaged in crudely "repressing" the policing function carried on in everyday life, since, as we have seen, the world they create exemplifies such a function. Yet it would be equally misleading to see *Oliver Twist* or *The Eustace Diamonds* advertising such a function. Though both novels draw abundant analogies between the official police apparatus and its supplementary discipline, they qualify the sameness that such analogies invite us to construe with an extreme sense of difference. When in *The Eustace Diamonds*, for example, Lizzie's gardener Andy Gowran is brought before Lord Fawn to attest to her misbehavior with Frank Greystock, he sees this situation in the legal terms of a trial: "This was a lord of Parliament, and a government lord, and might probably have the power of hanging such a one as Andy Gowran were he to commit perjury, or say anything which the lord might choose to call perjury" (2:175). But the naive exaggeration of the perception ironically repudiates the metaphor it calls into play. The metaphor is more tellingly repudiated a second time, when Fawn refuses to solicit what Gowran has to say. "He could not bring himself to inquire minutely as to poor Lizzie's flirting among the rocks. He was weak, and foolish, and, in many respects, ignorant,—but he was a gentleman" (2:177). "Gentlemanliness" is thus promoted as a kind of social security,

defending the privacy of private life from its invasion by policelike practices of surveillance. Yet there is a curious gratuitousness in Fawn's principled refusal to hear Gowran. Though Gowran never makes his full disclosure to Fawn, the latter can hardly be in any doubt about its content. That he already knows what Gowran has to tell is precisely the *reason* for his shamed unwillingness to hear it. Octave Mannoni, following Freud, would speak here of a mechanism of *disavowal* (*Verleugnung*): "Je sais bien, mais quand même . . ."—"Of course I know, but still. . . ."[5] By means of disavowal, one can make an admission while remaining comfortably blind to its consequences. The mechanism allows Fawn to preserve his knowledge about Lizzie together with the fantasy of his distance from the process of securing it. In more general terms, the discretion of social discipline in the Novel seems to rely on a strategy of *disavowing the police*: acknowledging its affinity with police practices by way of insisting on the fantasy of its otherness. Rendered discreet by disavowal, discipline is also thereby rendered more effective—including among its effects that "freedom" or "lawlessness" for which critics of the Novel (perpetuating the ruse) have often mistaken it. Inobtrusively supplying the place of the police in places where the police cannot be, the mechanisms of discipline seem to entail a relative *relaxation* of policing power. No doubt this manner of passing off the regulation of everyday life is the best manner of passing it on.

## IV

What has been standing at the back of my argument up to now, and what I hope will allow me to carry it some steps further, is the general history of the rise of disciplinary power,

5. See Octave Mannoni, "Je sais bien, mais quand même . . . ," in his *Clefs pour l'imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), pp. 9–33.