Detecting the Nation

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INTRODUCTION:
Imperial Detection

When Arthur Conan Doyle writes that Sherlock Holmes "takes my mind from better things," he is lamenting that Victorian England's most famous detective distracts him from writing in a more serious tradition: big historical novels that could bring the British Empire to life. Like Doyle, readers of detective fiction consider themselves distracted, though in their cases delightfully, from more serious fiction.[1] It is my contention that not only was detective fiction an important player in the arena of imperial literature, it both served and challenged the interests of Empire in a more direct way than either its status as fiction or the scholarship that declares it a minor genre wants to admit.[2] Criticism, particularly of detective fiction, has traditionally seen narratives of the domestic core and the imperial periphery in isolation from one another. As a result, two mysteries of Victorian national identity remain unsolved: (1) a shift over the course of the century from suspicion of to identification with the detective, and (2) a shift from insular lack of interest in to identification with the imperial project. Far from being a distraction from the grand motions of nineteenth-century history, nineteenth-century detective fiction, my study will demonstrate, helped a national readership imagine the British Empire in a way that was at once destabilizing and reassuring. The detective narrative turned national concerns about abuses of authority into a popular story about British authority in the contact zone of Victorian culture; this in turn allowed the detective and the imperial project to become extensions of rather than anathema to English national identity.

That the detective could serve as a representative of the British Empire—in Doyle's case a best selling representative—would have been impossible to imagine in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the police and imperial expansion evoked profound suspicion from the English public. [3] Both were seen to require a level of aggression incompatible with national values of liberty and restraint. Reformers so diverse as Edmund Burke, William Godwin, and James Mill argued that no less than the fate of the nation

required new stories about criminal justice and imperial expansion, stories that completely revised how the reading public saw these forms of government authority.[4] Detective fiction performed this revisionary work.

Over the course of a long nineteenth century, the detective narrative helped change public perception of domestic criminal justice and imperial expansion by producing a figure for the exercise of such power with whom English readers could identify. To succeed in this respect, the detective narrative had to reconcile the idea of individual liberty with the at times aggressive authority needed to maintain social order in a complex new imperial world. The modern detective was uniquely up to this task, I will argue, because his authority stemmed from knowledge rather than force and because this knowledge promised mastery of a specifically imperial world. As Thomas Richards has written, the fantasy of Empire is that it is "united not by force but by information" (1). The detective narrative provided a logical rationale for the precarious imperial project, which had to reconcile liberty with authority if the English public were to identify with the aims of imperial expansion.

Throughout the nineteenth century, as reformers established the boundaries of both the domestic crime problem and England's imperial authority, they invariably thought of one in terms of the other. As imperial expansion begot crime, the reasoning went, crime threatened the security and indeed the very character of Empire. As London's ports became host to an increasing number of ships bearing the goods of Empire, experts and intellectuals of various stripes argued that London was host to an increasing number of criminals, and this crisis inspired them to urge the British government to replace medieval systems of policing with a centralized and systematic force.[5] Contemporaneous debates about the transportation of criminals worked within the same domestic crime–imperial authority nexus. With the American Revolution preventing further transportation of convicts to America, England turned her sights to Australia and considered the opportunities that imperial expansion (in the form of a penal colony in New South Wales) provided for solving the domestic crime problem. Conversely, turn-of-the-century considerations of Empire focused on its criminal nature and made the same arguments for detection as criminal justice reformers.[6]

In reimagining detection as a modern and distinctly English methodology, the detective narrative promised a solution to the problem of excessive violence plaguing British authority at home and abroad. Whether starting from an argument about crime or from one about Empire, late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century writers emphasized the problem of England's aggressive authority. From the sadistic crimes alleged in the Hastings trial,

ground covered in chapter 1, to the naked aggression of Peterloo and the overly generous use of the scaffold, raw force appeared to be an uncomfortably frequent method of maintaining social control.[7] Nor was benign neglect an option for a forward looking nation; such a strategy would neither enable the acquisition and maintenance of territory on the peripheries nor ensure protection of the center.[8] The nation had to achieve a balance between the active authority necessary to maintain social order and the more restrained virtues valued by the English public. As reformers identified rules for the use of force at home and abroad, prevention of violence (explicitly criminal, implicitly governmental) quickly became the goal. Making prevention the first aim of government had two implications: (1) any government aggression could be represented as a response to violence and therefore defensive in nature, and (2) if English authority was to be distinguished by its defensive use of violence, a more proactive, everyday method of policing was necessary.[9] The detective story transformed archaic aggression into a more modern, benevolent authority by offering detection as the way of avoiding despotic displays of government authority.

By insisting that detective fiction offered readers participation in rather than a distraction from the grander tides of national history, my argument joins in the contemporary rethinking of the relationship between narrative and national identity—a relationship that will always be limited so long as we think of nations as distinct entities shaped from the inside out. Explicitly or not, such studies extend Benedict Anderson's crucial argument that print culture forges the "imagined community" of the nation, even as these studies also demonstrate that fiction challenges any sense of the nation as a distinct or homogeneous formation.[10] Traditional readings of detective fiction see the subgenre as particularly distinct and homogeneous. This understanding of the strict parameters of the detective story is as evident in such early considerations of the genre as Ronald Knox's ten commandments for the detective story ("A Detective Story Decalogue") and The Detection Club Oath's similar lists of *do*s and *don't*s, as it is in more contemporary treatments, such as John Cawelti's analysis of literary genres or D. A. Miller's considerations of it in *The Novel and the Police*.[11] I argue that this understanding of detective fiction has prevented our understanding the profound ways in which this fiction collaborated with other kinds of texts to shape national identity in Victorian England. I will be especially concerned to point out the continuities rather than the distinctions between the detective story and the colonial adventure story.

Before embarking on this argument, let me pause to specify what I mean by detective story. A good half of the texts I discuss are already classified as

seminal works in the tradition of detective fiction: *Caleb Williams, Bleak House, The Moonstone,* and the Sherlock Holmes stories. And these texts do contain what we now recognize as the basic characteristics of a detective story: "a mysterious event or crime . . . at first concealing the solution from the reader but finally revealing it through the successful investigations of the detective."[12] While today we tend to identify the formal and thematic commonalties among these stories, I will venture the hypothesis that the authors were far more aware of where they overlapped with and differed from an entirely different body of texts. For most of the nineteenth century, what we now recognize as an English detective story pure and simple had not yet acquired its distinction as such, so compelling were its intersections and imbrications with other writing, especially the imperial adventure story.[13] The detective story entered into collaboration with and gave popular credence to such emerging discourses as institutional reform (of the criminal justice system or prisons, for example) and science (ethnography early in the century and criminology and anthropology later on). In addition, as I will contend throughout the book, the language and structure of such narratives as histories, political argument, travel writing, and journalism share so much with the detective narrative as to make distinguishing between such types of texts not impossible but far more problematic than has heretofore been recognized. Detective fiction was locked in a most intense and—I believe—mutually formative relationship with such narratives as histories of British India, English accounts of the Indian practice of Thuggee, and Kipling's imperial fiction. These narratives occupy an almost equally significant place in my argument.

I want to call attention to the relationship between the rise of domestic police power and the expansion of the British Empire—the twin stories at the heart of the detective narrative. But the relationships between these narratives are various. Sometimes the work of detection and imperial administration are drawn together by a larger ideology, which, for example, makes James Mill's account of the trial of Warren Hastings and Godwin's creation of protodetective Caleb Williams part of the same emerging narrative about the modern nation and its dependency on the power of local knowledge. The relationship may be one of resemblance, such as that between Wilkie Collins's characters Inspector Cuff, the detective, and Murthwaite, the explorer, in *The Moonstone.* At other times the relationship is genealogical, giving us the prototype for the modern detective celebrated by Dickens's midcentury journalism decades earlier in the colonial administrators who become the Thug Police.

If the continuities between the detective who detects crime and the explorer who performs the work of imperial administration are indeed more com-

pelling than scholarship has been willing to acknowledge, then we must ultimately question the critical-theoretical tendency to imagine the nation as a domestic core that was purely English and a colonial periphery that was foreign and racially marked. This tendency is itself a version of a Victorian self-fashioning that prevented the reader from acknowledging the manifold interdependencies between the two domains. Making a distinction between the epistemologies of domestic policing and imperial administration enabled a reassuring compartmentalization of what was in actuality threateningly interdependent. And so we continue to read detective fiction as a modern conception of the metropolitan center, personified and policed by Sherlock Holmes, and imperial fiction as an exotic rendering of the colonial periphery, personified and policed by Kim's Kimball O'Hara. This tradition of scholarship reads only that part of the detective story that shows the detective gradually becoming a familiar part of the English literary landscape and neglects to consider why this happens to be so: why, that is, the detective can become more English only as the world he patrols becomes increasingly foreign.[14] Thus Dickens's detectives become easier to imagine as one of "us" as Dickens's London is invaded by foreigners visiting the Great Exhibition or as the city becomes an almost unrecognizable wilderness to Mr. Snagsby, a lifelong London resident, in *Bleak House.* I propose to consider both fictions of detection and imperial narratives as mutually informing participants in a cultural project that by the time of Doyle and Kipling would be called the Great Game. To ignore this fact, as I have just suggested, is to reproduce a now-outdated fantasy of Victorian national identity, which imagined, according to Simon Gikandi, "that the connections between metropolitan center and its colonial periphery were loose and ephemeral, that the character of the island nation remained unaltered by its long and extensive contact with colonial spaces" (78). Mary Louise Pratt has famously described the "contact zone" generated by colonial encounter as a contested imperial space. While it means literally a colonial frontier, she defines a "contact" perspective as "that which emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized . . . not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (7). The mutual dependency of domestic and imperial narratives, such as the detective story and the colonial adventure story, provides a model of how Victorian culture became just such a contact zone, as it spread and incorporated other cultures.

Broadly speaking, this challenge requires me to show that such binary distinctions as center/periphery—like those that distinguish men from women,

normal from abnormal, or nature from culture—are the result of various cultural practices of classification. Because this argument is fundamentally about identity—that of cultural figures, readers, nations, and genres—I am situating my claims in the wider theoretical context of identity formation. My argument that two genres associated with seemingly distinct geographical and narrative spaces are in fact mutually informing aspects of the same project draws on the critical traditions of Michel Foucault on the one hand and Deconstruction on the other. To claim that Foucault and Deconstruction are headwaters of a single critical river is no doubt objectionable for reasons too numerous to go into here. My aim is not to ignore the different practices and problems of critics working with these theories, but rather to draw on what I see to be a shared interest in the paradoxical nature of identity formation. Critics ranging from Peter Stallybrass and Allon White to Judith Butler, Barbara Johnson, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and V. Y. Mudimbe turn the question of difference into a set of procedures that demonstrate how identity is formed on the basis of difference, whether difference of social position, gender, sexuality, race, or nationality.[15] These critics ask us to consider that while we need such concrete identity categories in order to imagine ourselves and our nation, these categories are not based on some truth—be it subject or object—prior to culture. These categories themselves—both those to which we belong and those to which we cannot belong and still be who we are—endow human beings with our most essential characteristics (gender or race, for example). Being almost foundationless, such categories are most unstable precisely when they appear to be the most concrete, when, as in the cases of gender or race, they appear to be features of the body itself. Stallybrass and White show how cultures achieve the appearance of internal coherence and continuity in time as they "think themselves" through oppositions: "The high/low opposition is a fundamental basis [of] . . . sense-making in European cultures" (3). In her work on gender identity, Butler similarly argues that such oppositions are necessary for "cultural intelligibility" (17). But even though, as she says, identity can only be consolidated in "the act of differentiating the two oppositional moments of the binary" (23), that does not mean that identity of any kind thereby achieves stability. In order to perform the foundational act of differentiation that gives an individual or nation its distinctive character as such, that individual or nation must incorporate precisely what it will henceforth locate outside as the external limit of itself: "each extremity structures the other, depends upon and invades the other in certain historical moments" (Stallybrass and White 3–4).

According to this tradition of thinking, such categories of identity are consequently governed by a chiasmatic logic that defines two terms in opposition

to one another. To do so, this logic incorporates each term in its opposite and then expels it to define each term by virtue of its not being the other. As Johnson explains, "each is already inhabited by the other as a difference from itself" (35). Mudimbe's work is especially helpful in bringing this logic to bear on the colonialist project.[16] To show that "colonializing structures" are particularly given to producing a "dichotomizing system," he explains how the chiasmus of identity formation operates in a colonial situation: "The African has become not only the Other who is everyone except me, but rather the key which, in its abnormal differences, specifies the identity of the Same" (12). The fantasy of a clear distinction promised by such a dichotomy is continually broken down. As Ian Baucom explains, the Empire "is the place onto which the island kingdom arrogantly displaces itself and from which a puzzled England returns as a stranger to itself" (3).[17]

I will follow this logic as it unfolds historically in relation both to a Victorian national identity predicated upon an opposition between center and margin and to the formulation of "opposing" literary categories—detective fiction and imperial adventure narratives—which have shaped and continue to shape our understanding both of that national identity and of the role that literature plays in shaping it. The notion of identity as the product of the construction and deconstruction of oppositional categories is central to my work here as I consider how something marginal—the foreign figure of the turn-of-the -century detective—gets repositioned at the core of modern metropolitan society. Grasping the chiasmatic logic of identity formation offers a way of addressing these questions:

How did the police, specifically called "not English" at the moment of their creation in 1829, become English?[18]

How did English acceptance of the police provide a vehicle for the acceptance of the then equally suspect imperial project?

How does identification on the part of the English public with both the police and the Empire demonstrate how that which is marginal becomes the key to specifying the identity of the center?

Criticism traditionally sees detective fiction as offering comforting resolutions to such questions, partly because these accounts tend to validate rather than challenge traditional accounts of the rise of the police or the rise of Empire.[19] Thus, we are encouraged to read the detective narrative in allegorical relation to Whig historians' accounts of the homegrown emanation of the police from English values.[20] I will focus instead on the confusing omnipresence of an imperial narrative within the detective story. The peaceful order of England, for example, is confounded by Empire in what T. S. Eliot called the "first and greatest of English detective novels": Collins's *The Moonstone.* As the

novel's main narrator, Gabriel Betteredge, complains, "here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond" (36). The diamond leaves the house, but never the novel; a detective figure tracking it to the wilds of India literally has the last word. Similarly, Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* cannot tell a story of English crime without placing an account of the Indian Mutiny at its center.

While the mutually defining relationship of center and periphery is a now-standard observation in Postcolonial Studies, Victorian Studies, in particular scholarly work on detective fiction, has been more reluctant to take the principle to heart.[21] This tendency has been aggravated by the influence of *Discipline and Punish,* Michel Foucault's account of the role of surveillance in modern formations of power, particularly his theory of panopticism, as well as an enormously influential application of that theory in D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police*. Lauren M. E. Goodlad has recently called on scholars working in Victorian Studies to "modify Foucault's analysis" (2003, 545). Goodlad makes a very sensible argument that as *Discipline and Punish* is not about Victorian Britain—with the exception of the Panopticon, Foucault's focus is on French history—it cannot be an accurate lens through which to look at the Victorian past.[22] Her point is not that the manifest interest Victorian Studies has in Foucault is limiting, but rather that we have been interested in only a limited Foucault. Goodlad steers scholars toward Foucault's later works on "governmentality" with good reason. But my point here is that we need, particularly in the wake of Miller's persuasive placement of the "police" at the heart of the Victorian novel, to take a closer look at panopticism and how the rise of the detective in Victorian literature and culture questions principles central to these powerful readings.

The Blindspots of Panopticism

"Panopticism" is, by definition, a hard idea to resist. Foucault characterizes it as "an indefinitely generalizable mechanism" (216). In his discussion of panopticism as a disciplinary mechanism, Foucault is certainly not concerned with detective fiction;[23] neither is it Miller's central focus. While the novels Miller considers feature detectives and detective work, he is more interested in the police as a theme and a strategy: "This work centers not on the police, in the modern institutional shape they acquire in Western liberal culture during the nineteenth century, but on the ramification within the same culture of less visible, less visibly violent modes of 'social control'" (viii). Indeed, a major part of Miller's argument is that the actual police, as characters in the

novels, are limited and confined as the power they stand for becomes more generalized in an increasingly carceral culture. But Foucault's and Miller's readings of discipline in nineteenth-century culture and literature have helped cast the image of the detective and the discipline he would seem to embody as a sure-footed symbol of an always already policed world. I remain persuaded by both *Discipline and Punish* and *The Novel and the Police* that surveillance has as much power as raw force in modern culture; there is much evidence across the vast array of Victorian writing to support Foucault's argument that the history of the nineteenth century shows a shift from "violent forms of power" toward a multiplicity of "subtle, calculated technolog[ies] of subjection" (221). Certainly, my argument about a gradual public acceptance of and identification with the police is greatly indebted to Foucault's representation of how a society becomes disciplined; the nineteenth-century detective, who acquires his cultural authority through knowledge rather than force, owes much to Foucault's equation of knowledge and power; and, finally, my argument that the detective is a figure whose authority needs to be read as operating both at home and in the far reaches of the British Empire requires that power be "generalizable." But there are two chief problems in applying the work of Foucault and Miller to both the literary and cultural figures of the detective and, moreover, to the operations of power in a colonial context: (1) the representation of power as opposing itself to "mixture," and (2) a representation of knowledge as a complete body or, to use Thomas Richards's term, "comprehensive."[24]

Foucault begins his chapter on panopticism with a fascinating discussion of the plague and how society responded to the threat by enclosing individuals in their houses and subjecting them to unprecedented investigation: "Against the plague, which is a mixture, discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis" (197). Along the same lines, Foucault later suggests that "one of the primary objects of discipline is to fix; it is an anti-nomadic technique. . . . It arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion" (218–19). Through investigation, then, discipline works to separate, contain, and fix, hence the appeal of architecture: Bentham's idea of the Panopticon. What this powerful argument does not take into account, perhaps cannot take into account, is the historical specificity of the English detective. As I argue in the following chapters, the English detective, seemingly an ideal agent of a disciplinary regime of investigation and analysis, is himself a mixture, a site of profound cultural struggle over the meaning of English authority. From early suspicions about the English detective that he was a Frenchified spy hostile to the values of liberal culture to lingering concerns over the quasi-military nature of such a force (English society is still debating

whether bobbies should carry arms), the contested or "contact" figure of the English detective was always straddling the very binaries that Foucault has discipline policing: "mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal" (199). As Miller explains, "discipline is interested in putting in place a perceptual grid in which a division between the normal and the deviant inherently imposes itself" (18).

The detective would seem to embody the Foucaultian equation of knowledge and power in which, from the eighteenth century on, "the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process" (224).[25] But Foucault's representation of knowledge is too general in *Discipline and Punish.* While Foucault's representation of power is mobile, always circulating, it does so in order to form "a body of knowledge" (220). While knowledge is partial—indeed Foucault is famously interested in "the infinitely small of political power" (214), "the infinitesimal level of individual lives" (222)—it ultimately hangs together in an "infinitely minute web" (224). In "order to be exercised," Foucault explains, "this power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible" (214). Knowledge is always ultimately centralizable. The Panopticon's central tower is never too far away.

One of the things that this influential representation of knowledge does, Erin O'Connor has recently argued, is "to conflate knowing with containing, classifying, and controlling" (242). In his discussion of *Oliver Twist,* Miller writes that "the story of the Novel is essentially the story of an active regulation" (10). Too often the figure of the nineteenth-century detective is that of the Panopticon's central tower with legs. Some recent critical work does consider the larger social context in which the detective story emerges. Nevertheless, these critics, writing in the wake of *The Novel and the Police,* still provide a too-tidy explanation of the rise of the detective figure in which both imperial and police power are almost effortlessly panoptical, and the detective the embodiment of this power.[26] Ronald R. Thomas calls *Bleak House*'s Bucket a "benevolent panoptical machine" (1997, 135). But it was my perception, when first reading these texts years ago, that all of this knowledge gathering done by detectives and imperial explorers was as threatening to the idea of control as it was a demonstration of control. One only has to think of

Dickens's celebrated detectives having their pockets picked on the way home from the Household Words offices to understand that the knowledge/power of the detective is partial. The red herrings and false accusations of fictions of detection suggest that knowledge, as Richards explains, "ran off in many

directions like the hedgehogs in Alice's game of croquet" (4). The idea of a comprehensive knowledge is always compromised, if also abetted, by its local quality.

In all manner of discourse, from courtroom speeches to colonial treatises to works of fiction, detection was represented as the acquisition and centralization of "local knowledge," a ubiquitous phrase in these texts. Local knowledge was the product of rigorous observation aided by familiarity with the people and circumstances observed. Familiarity bred not contempt so much as understanding, which had the advantage of being a nonviolent form of crime prevention.[27] But while representing policing as knowledge gathering seemed to solve the problem of excessive violence for the Victorians, the emphasis on knowledge troubled the consolidation of imperial authority in ways that challenge the terms in which we understand Victorian epistemology. The British Empire was built on the imperial gaze as embodied by Bentham's Panopticon, the British survey of the Indian subcontinent, and all the visual technologies that remade the Empire a single world in miniature. At the same time, Victorian knowledge like Victorian realism was based on an accumulation of details, any of which might be either essential or inconsequential. These epistemologies, paradigmatic and local, or comprehensive and positive, were far more dependent on one another than cultural theory has heretofore been willing to acknowledge. Local knowledge allowed propolice reformers—in England and India—to win public favor for the centralized authority necessary for effective policing. Samuel Smiles's article titled "The Police of London" explains that policemen were directed "to make themselves roughly acquainted with the geography of their respective sections . . . the police-constable is even expected to possess such a knowledge of the inhabitants of each house as to enable him to recognize their persons" (101). On the one hand, this description made centralized authority seem reassuringly English. Indeed, Smiles goes on to explain that the constable needed to recognize people in order "to render assistance when he is called upon to do so." At the same time, this article paradoxically suggests that first-hand information was somehow truer knowledge than that which was administered if not gathered from afar. My own argument attempts to return a sense of this paradox to the figure of the detective, to return him to the contact zone from which he has been removed.

Putting the detective in the contact zone, however, does not necessarily keep us from the problem of panopticism. So generalizable is the theory of panopticism that it has been almost equally attractive to critics of imperial literature as to those of detective fiction. While I will explore this tendency in more detail in subsequent chapters, such as in recent treatments of the phenomenon of

Thuggee or of Kipling's writing, it is important here to note the relationship between some of the foundational work of Colonial/Postcolonial Studies and Foucault's characterizations of discipline. "I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault," Said writes in his ground-breaking *Orientalism.* Drawing in part on *Discipline and Punish,* Said explains that "without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (3). What happens when the theory of panopticism travels to a colonial context is that the center watchtower becomes the metropolitan center and the penitentiary's periphery becomes the native population. Panoptic discipline becomes a model of us versus them. We see this in Said's subsequent description of Victorian writing, which, he notes, is indebted to Foucault's ideas in *Discipline and Punish:*

> For every idea about 'our' art spoke for by Arnold, Ruskin, Mill, Newman, Carlyle, Renan, Gobineau, or Comte, another link in the chain binding 'us' together was formed while another outsider was banished. Even if this is always the result of such rhetoric, wherever and whenever it occurs, we must remember that for nineteenth-century Europe an imposing edifice of learning and culture was built, so to speak, in the face of actual outsiders (the colonies, the poor, the delinquent), whose role in the culture was to give definition to what they were constitutionally unsuited for (1993, 228).

A colonial context amplifies the paradox at the heart of panopticism: "One sees everything," Foucault explains, "without ever being seen" (202). Scholars, such as Timothy Mitchell, have applied Foucault's formulation to the imperial scene. Mitchell discusses the point of view of a European observer in the Middle East: "the point of view was not just a place set apart, outside the world or above it. Ideally, it was a position from where, like the authorities in Bentham's panopticon, one could see and yet not be seen" (306). But Mitchell goes on to recognize the paradox of such a subject position: "There was a contradiction . . . between the need to separate oneself from the world and render it up as an object of representation, and the desire to lose oneself within this object-world and experience it directly" (307). This paradox is even more pronounced for the detective or colonial administrator who is having an official rather than—or in addition to—an aesthetic experience. The distance implied by panopticism's invisibility must be continually broken down by the detective's constant forays into the unstable domain of the local. In short, contrary to the logic of the Panopticon, the power of sur-

veillance supplies a vital link between center and periphery as much as it reifies a difference between them. By tracking the power of surveillance as it emerges in the form of the detective, I intend to challenge the "us–them" model of panopticism presently associated with imperial authority, Victorian national identity, and the figure of the detective. Like the opposition of us–them, literary criticism, by opposing detective stories to imperial narratives, replays the Victorian hope that the detective will do the work of England and not the work of Empire, so that the two—England and her Empire—can remain separate and distinct. But even as these detective narratives at times gratify our taxonomic fantasy, they never fail to reveal the murky relation between island nation and sprawling empire that such a fantasy presupposes. They record in fact how central is a knowledge of the imperial world to the work of the New Police and how it is the involvement in this new imperial world that, paradoxically, is the detective's ticket home to English respectability. In making an English virtue of an imperial necessity, detective fiction not only set off a shift in national identification with both the detective and the imperial project, but also refashioned Englishness as an imperial instead of an insular identity. Itself a product of heated debates about national character, detective fiction made that which was beyond England's borders essential to defining what was within.

To demonstrate how the detective narrative shaped this complex new imperial reality for a Victorian readership, my chapters focus for the most part on writers traditionally understood to represent, if not diametrically opposed positions in the debate about English authority, then at least significantly different ones: Godwin and Mill; Dickens and Wilkie Collins; and Kipling and Doyle. Because the detective narrative works to provide a story sufficiently coherent as to enable the English reader's identification with the detective, my readings will stress the foundational assumptions concerning identity in general and English identity in particular on which these opposing camps must agree in order to disagree with one another. My point is to show that the necessity for the detective was the end result of at least two very different lines of argumentation. Like the national identity he came to embody, the figure of the modern detective came into being as the means of reconciling contesting opinions about English authority.[28] The critical division of labor that would make them opposed, rather than mutually dependent, forms of writing, like the distinction between center and periphery itself, only preserves the production of Victorian nationalism as an unsolved mystery. The following chapters strive to reverse that literary-historical tendency.