Tsubouchi Shōyō’s first-person narrative “Tane hiroi” (Gleaning the seeds) opens with a writer who travels to the Kansai region to relieve writer’s block and, while crossing Lake Biwa on a steamboat, overhears a private conversation between two strangers. Serialized from October 1, 1887 in the Yomiuri shinbun with which he was closely affiliated, the story deviates significantly in both content and form from his previous efforts to embody the notion of the novel that he had come to espouse. As one of the strangers (a woman named Osumi) recounts her hard life to the other (a man named Masa), the narrator becomes completely engrossed and follows the strangers from place to place in hopes of eavesdropping the entirety of the tale. But before we get to the end of her story, the readers are told that everything was just a dream, and, in this sense, “Tane hiroi” follows the tradition in the vein of Kinkin sensei eiga no yume (Mr. Glitter ’n Gold’s dream of splendor; 1775), in which Kinbei, who is from the country, dreams of the rise and fall of his fortunes in Edo. Unlike this latter work, a kibyōshi picture book from the preceding Edo period (1600–1867), however, “Tane hiroi” does not end with the awakening of the protagonist. Rather, the story continues after the dream to tell the narrator’s discovery that Osumi’s life story, which he had dreamed to overhear, was actually a story—a tsuzukimono (serial)—that he had read in the newspaper during his recent trip.
The development of the newspaper medium will be discussed in more detail in the course of this chapter, but for now let us note that tsuzuki-mono emerged in the late 1870s when news began appearing over a multiple number of installments in story format. The favorite theme of tsuzuki-mono was the crime story based on actual cases, and, in particular, those involving immoral and often amorous women called dokufu-mono (poisonous women tales), that focused on the criminal and told the events leading up to the crime.\(^1\) Given its penchant for the spectacular and the scandalous that were made even more so through fictional embellishments, tsuzukimono quickly caught the interest of readers and, by the early 1880s, its various forms, including adaptations of Edo fiction in jitsuroku-mono style (sensational stories mixing facts and fiction), had become a dominant narrative form in Meiji Japan.\(^2\)

It was such proliferation of tsuzukimono and of these adaptations, in particular, that Shōyō criticized and set as his explicit objects of reform in his introduction to Shōsetsu shinzi:

With the restoration, writers of gesaku [so-called frivolous works] faded for a bit and so narrative fiction [shōsetsu] deteriorated, but recently it has seen a great revival . . . and thus various stories and tales are published and compete with each other on their novelty. The situation has reached such extremes that even newspapers and magazines carry adaptations of really old fiction, and the momentum being thus, the number of fictional stories of this country today knows no limit, being in the tens of millions. . . . From the long past, the custom of our country has been to think of fiction as one means of instruction, but while it has been proclaimed over and over that its object is to discipline evil and to encourage good, [people] in actual practice only enjoy bloody and cruel or extremely ob-

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1. For an English-language examination of dokufu-mono, see Marran, Poison Woman. For a comprehensive discussion of the development of tsuzukimono during the Meiji period, see Honda, Shinbun shōsetsu no tanjō.

2. As a result of the popularity of tsuzukimono, newspapers, whose primary purpose was the reporting of facts, were caught in a quandary, both seeking to maintain their claim as providers of truthful facts and needing to reflect readers' demand for the sensational and the scandalous in order to sell. In fact, newspaper serialization, discontinuation of serialization, and the completion of the story in the form of yomibon (literally, "reading books," which were fictional stories produced for entertainment) would be a common course of development for dokufu-mono. For example, "Torioi Omatsu no den" (The story of actress Omatsu), serialized in Kanayomi shinbun from December 10, 1877 and said to have been the work that brought popularity to the genre, discontinued its serialization on January 11, 1878, stating that the story would be made into a yomibon. For more information, see Oku, Sukyandaru no Meiji, 75.
scene stories, and it is rare to see people who even give a glance to a plot that is more serious. . . . And because they follow the trends of society, [the authors] cannot shed the pretext of intending to encourage good, so they distort human feelings, bend social conditions, and create impossible plots to incorporate the object of encouraging good.3

Lamenting the state of narrative fiction, which was gaining popularity at the cost of quality in Meiji society, this passage criticizes the predilection of contemporary authors and readers for immoral stories that distort reality and calls for their reform. According to Shōyō, whose treatise was one of the first organized efforts in the world to argue for the artistic value of narrative fiction, the key to such reform was the rejection of the didactic framework (kanzen chōaku or “encouraging virtue and chastising vice”), which prevents the accurate portrayal of the true subjects of the novel that are made clear by the treatise’s most famous proclamation: “The principal object of the novel is human feelings [ninjō]; social conditions [setai] and customs [fūzoku] come next” (68).

When considered within Shōyō’s critical position toward extant Meiji narratives exemplified by tsuzukimono, “Tane hiroi” presents itself as a contradictory work within his literary project that exposes his ambivalence toward the literary genre he sought to reform through Shōsetsu shin’zui. As suggested by the plot summary of the story given above, the ending of “Tane hiroi” demands a radical reinterpretation on the part of readers in making sense of the story. No longer is the work just about a writer who eavesdrops on a strange conversation to use it as the “seed” for his next story, but it also becomes a story that suggests the powerful effect that tsuzukimono exercises on the imagination of its readers and the allure of the act of eavesdropping that is at the source of such imagination. To the extent that it is a dream, the narrator is free to assume any character position that he desires within the story-world. Yet, the narrator of “Tane hiroi” finds himself in the position of an eavesdropper within the conspiratorial framework between the narrator and the reader of tsuzukimono: the identification of the narrator-as-character of “Tane hiroi” was with the gaze of the narrator-as-perspective, who, standing outside the story’s events, perceived and described the private affairs of individuals as if he were an eavesdropper existing inside the story-world.

But while it may appear as a contradiction and an aberration within Shōyō’s literary project, there is no denying that “Tane hiroi” took up the

3. Tsubouchi, Shōsetsu shin’zui, 40–42. All subsequent references to this source will appear in the text in parentheses.
project’s primary themes, namely, the desire to penetrate the private lives of people and the role of eavesdropping as an act, perspective, and technique that enables the fulfillment of such desire. Indeed, it was, as I argue in this chapter, Shōyō’s need to legitimate his relentless pursuit of these themes in Meiji society—that is, to dissociate the novel from a similar emphasis expressed as desire to eavesdrop by the narrators of tsuzukimono and “Tane hiroi” alike—that led to his experimentation with the detective fiction genre. Through the examination of his theoretical and fictional works in conjunction with the translated detective story Nisegane tsukai, this chapter reconsiders Shōyō’s literary project and makes clear the nature of the intricate connection between the novel and the detective story in their nascent stages of emergence. In so doing, this chapter illustrates how the detective story assisted in the establishment of a modern authorship suitable for the age of bunmei kaika, by functioning as a tool to address the inherent contradiction between Shōyō’s articulation of the novel based on the notion of the moral author and the potential of his endeavor to evoke the immoral eavesdropper.

Shōsetsu shinzui and the Two Gazes of the Novelist

Although the most famous passage in Shōsetsu shinzui is undoubtedly the aforementioned proclamation on “human feelings,” “social conditions,” and “customs,” we must also recognize that this statement, which epitomizes the commitment to verisimilitude and criticism of didactic framework that are often seen as the backbone of Shōyō’s treatise, was nothing new. As early as 1821, Tamenaga Shunsui (1790–1843), the pioneer of ninjō-bon (books on human feelings), used the phrase ninjō setai to describe the proper subjects of depiction for narrative fiction in the preface to his first work Akegarasu nochi no masayume (Prophetic dream after the morning crow). As Peter Kornicki has noted, moreover, various Meiji writers, including Kanagaki Robun (1829–1904), were naming the terms ninjō and setai as the goals of fiction during the late 1870s and early 1880s. These precedents clearly set Shōyō’s rhetoric within a pre-existing paradigm es-

4. In his seminal work on Shōsetsu shinzui, Kamei Hideo argues that one of the most distinctive characteristics of Shōyō’s literary theory “even if we compare it to the contemporaneous theories of the novel in English [was its emphasis on] the private realm and the ‘interior’ [naimen] as the reason of being for the novel” (“Shōsetsu” ron, 134).
5. Hiraoka, Nihon kindai bungaku no shuppatsu, 18.
established, in particular, by *ninjōbon* and suggest his attempt to utilize an indigenous model in developing his notion of the modern novel. Indeed, as I hope to show, the significance of Shōyō’s literary project had less to do with new terms or even new ways to construct fictional narratives and more to do with a new strategy to establish the social importance of the novel and its author, which was fundamental to the negotiation between past traditions of Japanese fiction and the newly emergent Western novels in the Meiji period.

The underpinnings of such an ideological project manifest themselves most clearly in the way that Shōyō couches the term *ninjō* within the visual dichotomy between the exterior (seen) and the interior (unseen), a dichotomy ubiquitous in the treatise. After the aforementioned proclamation, for example, Shōyō rearticulates *ninjō* as *jōyoku* (passions) and *hyaku-bachi bonnō* (108 earthly desires) and proposes their natural conflict with *dōri* (reason) and *ryōshin* (conscience) within the individual as the true subject of the novel, identifying the task of the novelist as relentless exploring and exposing of such conflict:

Humans should have two phenomena, external actions that manifest on the outside and thoughts that are hidden on the inside. . . . The likes of actions that can be seen on the outside have been depicted for the most part, but the likes of the thoughts that are contained on the inside can be diffuse, and it is rare to succeed in their depiction. To pierce the depth of this *ninjō* and to depict, in detail without missing anything, the inner workings of the inside of hearts . . . and to make human feelings manifest vividly—this is to be the duty of our novelists (69–70).

Significantly, Shōyō primes the vectored interpretation of this goal of the novel and the novelist by positioning it within the rhetoric of *bunmeikaika* and “the framework of Herbert Spencer’s theory of social Darwinism, which lay behind many Meiji period notions of modernization and westernization.”8 Rather than simply positing the Western novel as the

7. Literary scholars have pointed out Shōyō’s use of the terms *ninjō* and *setai*, among other factors, to discuss the fluidity that exists between the fictional narratives of the Edo and Meiji periods. For example, in recent years, Jonathan Zwicker has argued: “To take *Shōsetsu shinzi* as the starting point for investigating the semantic history of *shōsetsu* in Japanese not merely severs—artificially—this history at its midpoint, it also and perhaps more importantly misrecognizes the fact that this was the framework within which Shōyō was himself, quite self-consciously, working” (*Practices of the Sentimental Imagination*, 158).

The most advanced form of narrative fiction that Japanese writers should strive toward and ultimately surpass—no doubt echoing the popular slogan oitsuke oikose (to catch up and surpass) that was used to promote bunmei kaika—Shōyō instead delineates sociohistorical causes to explain the evolution of narrative forms, beginning with mythology and ending with the novel as the dominant art form of present society. And it is in the latest shift in this evolutionary process, “the decline of theater” and the blossoming of “the true novel,” that the dichotomy between the interior and exterior takes on explanatory power as the central cog of his ideological project (61). In an “uncivilized and unenlightened society,” Shōyō argues, people do not have much power to reason so their internal thoughts and emotions are expressed outwardly, and, thus, theater, which is a narrative form based on external expressions, flourishes (61). But the novel takes over “when the intellect advances” because, in an age of reason, “one tries to suppress one’s passions and tries not to show [them] clearly on one’s face” (62).

By promoting the link between the objectives of the novel with the preconditions of its emergence in such a manner, Shōyō establishes the unique social position of the novel and the novelist in “the age of reason/civilization” (kaimei no yo) (56). On the one hand, the flourishing of the novel becomes a sign that a society and its people have embraced reason and, thus, are ‘civilized’ and ‘enlightened.’ In this sense, Shōyō’s treatise posits the production of fictional narratives that fit his articulation of the novel as a way to demonstrate the ‘civilized’ and ‘enlightened’ nature of Meiji Japan, and, as such, fictional writing, which was traditionally considered a frivolous pastime for entertainment of women and children, becomes elevated into a national project. On the other hand, to the extent

9. It can be argued that the developmental understanding of the novel is inconsistently applied in the course of Shōsetsu shinzui. For example, Shōyō argues that Bakin’s Hakkenden is a less developed work of fiction than Genji monogatari. However, this can be seen as Shōyō’s complex strategy to reconstruct the lineage of Japanese fiction in terms of native and not Chinese-influenced works. Atsuko Ueda provides a discussion of this strategy in her Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment, 28–33.

10. For more information on the understanding of fiction prior to Shōsetsu shinzui, see Tomi Suzuki, Narrating the Self, 15–32. We should note that the rise of the political novels in the early 1880s also played a significant role in changing the public’s view toward fictional narratives precisely because political novels, as a vehicle to spread the ideals of the Freedom and People’s Rights movement,
that Shōyō’s evolutionary view of narrative forms posits the suppression of passions by reason and the resulting cessation of their external expression in actual human beings as historical preconditions for the development of the novel, the task of the novelist rhetorically becomes what laypersons can no longer do in the society in which they live: to understand what is going on underneath the appearances of others. Fittingly, such an ideological framing of the novelist as a solver of a real-world problem finds support in the oft-cited phrases of Shōsetsu shinzi—“observe passively” (tada bōkan shite) and “depict as it is” (arinomama o mosha suru)—that present the novelist, albeit only figuratively, as an external observer who maintains critical distance from the object of depiction (71).

The privileged position of the novelist in the modern age in conjunction with the novelist’s façade as an observer, then, makes the detective the perfect metaphor for the novelist and, by extension, the narrator. Not only is the criminal, the object of the detective’s gaze, an extreme example of an individual who must suppress external manifestations of the interior through reason (as self-interest that such manifestations would lead to exposure), but the myth of the master detective is also founded upon his ability to read internal thoughts and emotions by means of external appearances and behavior. We only need to recall the famous scene in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) in which the detective Auguste Dupin reads the thoughts of the narrator, leading the latter to exclaim: “Tell me, for Heaven’s sake . . . the method—if method there is—by which you have been enabled to fathom my soul in this matter.”

Such a scene, which would be repeated in Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes tales, posits the detective as a master novelist, if we were to follow Shōyō’s definition. Of course, it is not the detective but the psychologist to whom Shōyō explicitly likens the novelist in Shōsetsu shinzi, urging the creation of characters according to “the logic of psychology” (70). But either way, the analogy does not seem to be a rigorously made clear the value of fictional narratives as educational tools and political motivators.

12. During his first and second year at Tokyo University, Shōyō attended psychology classes that focused primarily on the teachings of the evolutionary psychologist Alexander Bain (1818–1903). For Shōyō’s early influences, including that of Bain, see Ochi, “Shōsetsu shinzi no botai.”
ous one, for the primary task of the novelist as articulated in *Shōsetsu shinzui* lies not in being a true detective or a psychologist—that is, in understanding one’s interior through external appearances and behavior and, more specifically, in constructing a code that will make the exterior *legible* as effects of the interior—but rather in portraying the internal shift of thoughts and emotions in his characters as an entity with full access to them.\(^\text{13}\) The novelistic gaze, which ‘observes’ the interior, does not do so through the senses but through the power of imagination as an authority that offers imaginary or fictional access to a barrier ‘created’ by the breakdown of correspondence between interior and exterior.

But fittingly when considering the emphasis Shōyō places on the presentation of the novelist as an external observer, Shōyō’s use of the dichotomy between interior and exterior in *Shōsetsu shinzui* extends beyond the confines of what I have called the novelistic gaze to demarcate another level of the apparent and the hidden. Here the detective becomes a more apt metaphor than the psychologist; whereas a psychologist’s task is focused on the understanding of human psyche, the detective’s task is not restricted to connecting a person’s interior with the exterior. The detective had some dirty work to do as well. He had more hands-on tasks of collecting evidence, disguising himself to infiltrate the world of crime, eavesdropping on conversations, and, in most general terms, prying into people’s private lives and discovering their secrets. And the same seems to be the case for Shōyō’s novelist:

To freely dissect people’s hearts, which would be impossible in reality, to enter the bedroom of a dignitary’s wife, which is not to be entered without good reason, and write about her behavior and actions, or to depict the situations inside [the house] without considering whether the gates or sliding doors are closed—these are the freedoms of a novelist (149–50).

As this passage reveals, the novel operates on two different but interrelated levels of the invisible or the inaccessible, which Shōyō delineates without differentiation here. On the one hand, the novel “dissect[s] people’s hearts” to make visible the *ninjō* that is hidden beneath the exterior.

\(^\text{13.} \text{Shōyō writes: “So if [the novelist] wants to create a person and depict feelings, then [the novelist] should first stipulate temporarily that this person already possesses what is called passion. If such and such event were to take place to give this or that stimulation, what kind of feelings would be awoken in this person? Or would there be certain differences in the workings of such feelings, not to mention the nature of this person, according to his past education and the temperament of his occupation?” (74).} \)
On the other hand, the novel reveals the private affairs of people—the actions and behavior of a woman in her bedroom or goings-on behind closed doors—that those who are not family members or close acquaintances are restricted from knowing in real life. In this passage, then, Shōyō conflates the interior with the private life of individuals, thereby representing the epistemological dichotomy between interior and exterior as a spatial dichotomy between the public and the private.\(^{14}\)

Through the dual metaphor of the interior and the exterior, *Shōsetsu shinzui* presents the novelist as a bearer of two distinct gazes, which had contrasting literary significances in Meiji Japan. Rarely seen in fictional narratives of and before Meiji Japan but prevalent in Western fiction, a gaze that penetrates and portrays in detail the interior thoughts and emotions of characters is the explicit centerpiece in Shōyō’s articulation of what constitutes a modern novel. Not only does he make this gaze the characteristic privilege of the novelist but he also makes the need for this gaze the necessary condition for the emergence of the novel as the dominant narrative form of a given society in the first place.\(^{15}\) In contrast, the explicit manifestation of the gaze that penetrates into the private lives of characters was a carry-over from and a staple of Edo-period fiction, most notably the works of *ninjōbon*. Extensive depictions of the inner thoughts and feelings of characters being all but non-existent, this tradition most often presented the narrator as “an expressive subject who positions himself on the borderline that differentiates the inside and the outside of the scenes of a story-world [and] from there . . . ‘peeps’ and ‘eavesdrops’ on the actions and behavior of characters.”\(^{16}\)

Like his recycling of the terms *ninjō* and *setai* as the primary goals of the novel, these two gazes of the novelist make evident that Shōyō’s conceptualization of the novel involved an intricate negotiation between

\(^{14}\) As we will see in the next section, the spatial dichotomy between the public and the private had particular sociohistorical significance in the Meiji period that went beyond literary theory and narrative perspective.

\(^{15}\) As Maeda Ai states: “Meiji fiction gained the qualification as a modern novel when the narrator who talks about the interior of the Other was positioned solidly in the story-world” (“Meiji no hyōgen shisō to buntai,” 6).

\(^{16}\) Komori, *Kōzō to shiite no katari*, 166. Komori uses this explanation to compare the narrator of Futabatei Shimei’s *Ukigumo*, especially of the narrator in its first section, to the archetypal narrators of *ninjōbon*, but, as many scholars attest, *Tōsei shosei katagi*, discussed below, employs a similar narrator. For an example of such a discussion regarding the similarity of the narrator in these two works, see Yamada Yūsaku, *Gensō no kindai*, 116–30.
Japanese tradition, as exemplified by ninjōbon, and the Western realistic novel. In this sense, Shōyō’s decision to mix the old with the new in his first full-length fiction Tōsei shosei katagi (Manners and lives of contemporary students; 1885–1886), about a group of students at a private Tokyo school, is hardly surprising. At the most basic level, Tōsei shosei katagi, by telling the story of the student-protagonist Komachida Sanji and his relationship to the geisha Tanoji, mixes the new subject of the Meiji novel—the student—with the archetypal heroine of Edo fiction, the geisha. But more significantly, such mixing extends to the core of the story, on the level of narrative development and narration: to the extent that Sanji’s attraction to Tanoji comes into conflict with his ‘rational’ awareness that he would be better off without Tanoji, Tōsei shosei katagi explores how ninjō as passions come into conflict with and are ultimately suppressed by reason.

Yet, despite this choice to implement the new objective of the novel, Shōyō nonetheless chooses to employ the paradigmatic narrator of the pre-existing fictional narratives described above. Given the characteristics of such a narrator not to describe the inner thoughts and feelings of characters, however, it was natural, if not necessary, that satisfying the new objective of the novel through such a narrator proved itself as a difficult undertaking. For example, while the narrator of Tōsei shosei katagi occasionally makes visual observations in a similar manner to “how Sherlock Holmes deduces personal data from things like clothes that are observed by the eye,” the conclusions drawn from these observations remain superficial—such as age and social class—rarely divulging information regarding the internal state of characters.17 Thus, these attempts, rather than being sincere efforts on the part of Shōyō to produce a code to make the interior decipherable by means of the exterior, suggest his strategy to shed light on the limitations of this type of narrator and thereby pave the way for the emergence of a new narrator who embodies the privileged gaze of the novelist. In fact, after another such attempt at a detective’s analysis, the narrator concludes that “it is an arbitrary opinion based upon the observation of the author” and thereby relativizes the possible accuracy of his observation and the benefit of these attempts at being a detective.18

17. Yamada Yūsaku, Gensō no kindai, 133–34.
The story’s extensive use of dialogue, which is another characteristic of Edo fictions and reflective of the restrictions placed on the story’s narrator, also presents Shōyō with difficulties in reconciling the old and the new. On the one hand, the use of dialogue supported by narration is certainly a legitimate method, on the level of literary expression, to indirectly construct the internal turmoil of characters. On the other hand, dialogue, as an interchange of individual utterances through which characters attempt to express and share their internal passions, is precisely what has become difficult in “the age of reason” according to Shōyō’s understanding of ninjō in Shōsetsu shinzui. That is, if the text allows individual utterances by a character to give readers the sense of truthfully expressing internal thoughts and feelings, then it does so at the risk of presenting the character as an individual who is, at best, a bad representative of the age and, at worst, someone who is lacking in reason, the advancement of which prevents the expression of his or her internal passions.

And of course, the subject of this work—the students—are the modern rational individuals *par excellence* not only because of their knowledge of Western values and culture but also because they, having left their communities and flocked to the city for the purpose of education, represent the indecipherability of human beings in the modern age as they confront one another as complete strangers in the metropolis. In this sense, the illegibility of human beings, which founds Shōyō’s theory of the novel, is the flip side of Walter Benjamin’s comment that the detective story emerges with “the obliteration of the individual’s traces in the big-city crowd” that results from urbanization in the modern age. 19 Significantly for the case of early Meiji Japan, the materialization of this condition was sudden and substantial, thanks to the prompt lifting of restrictions on travel that was in effect during the Edo period coupled with new opportunities in the big cities after the Restoration. And as Shōyō highlights in the opening paragraph of *Tōsei shosei katagi*, the student was one of the most conspicuous groups in this process: “Saying that it is a metropolis, various people come from all directions, but above all others the most numerous are rickshaw drivers and students. . . . Everywhere there are drivers and students. There is a sign for a boarding house there; a lantern for a rickshaw house here. There is a private school for

Western learning in the side streets; there are rickshaws waiting for passengers at the intersections.”

Given the theoretical hurdles associated with combining old literary perspectives with the new themes and goals of the novel, how does the narrator of Tōsei shōsei katagi attempt to depict ninjō? An example of such an attempt can be seen in Shōyō’s employment of a specific form of speech, namely, confession—an act in which the external speech sincerely describes the internal thoughts and feelings of a character—exemplified in Section 13 of the text when Komachida confesses to Tanoji his thoughts regarding their relationship. Importantly, it is here that the narrator becomes most like a character who is eavesdropping on a private conversation outside “sliding doors,” as the identities of the interlocutors are not disclosed, designated only as “man” and “woman,” and the narrator, besides the few stage-direction-like comments inserted parenthetically within the dialogue, disappears in his narration.

In this scene, then, Shōyō juxtaposes the incidence of the character’s attempt at a sincere expression of the interior with the narrator’s penetration into the private and thereby utilize the eavesdropping gaze of the narrator to take on the function of enhancing the appearance of the confession’s truthfulness and earnestness. More specifically, the narrative technique in this scene actively invokes a barrier between the interlocutors and the narrator through its continuous ‘failure’ to provide the readers with visual cues, and, in so doing, confession as a voluntary expression of the interior by a character becomes reframed and reclaimed as a ‘hidden’ interior that is actively exposed by the narrator who penetrates the barrier via the act of eavesdropping. Through the employment of this narrative technique, moreover, Shōyō actively places the narrator in the position of the unknowing, promoting the façade that the narrator and the readers share the same knowledge regarding what is being ‘overheard.’ Thus, this scene reiterates the receptive framework of ninjōbon, which, as Yamada Shunji has noted, consisted of “a kind of fictitious community where [readers] can form a conspiratorial relationship with the narrator that they had met in the process of weaving a text.”

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20. Tsubouchi, Tōsei shōsei katagi, 223.
21. As Yamada Shunji notes, a similar technique was employed in Tamenaga Shunsui’s Shungyō bachiman game (1836–1838) (“Tōsei shōsei katagi ni okeru ‘sakusha’ no ichi,” 10).
22. Ibid.
Considering its profound implications within Shōyō’s discussion of the novel and the novelist in Shōsetsu shinzi, it was only natural that the act of eavesdropping, highlighted in the above example from Tōsei sho-sei katagi, would quickly become a major preoccupation in his fictional writings. As his next work Imotose kagami (Mirror of marriage; 1885–1886) clearly illustrates, Shōyō’s experimentation with eavesdropping was broad in scope, not confined to the realm of literary practices and narrative techniques that he explored in his first work. Instead, it involved a negotiation with the rapid sociohistorical changes taking place in Meiji Japan, which imbued this old practice with new conceptual significances that would bring to light the fundamental contradiction within Shōyō’s articulation of the modern novel.23

Eavesdropping and the Paradox of the Novel in Imotose kagami

Written during a similar time frame as Tōsei sho-sei katagi, Imotose kagami in many ways is a complement to its immediate predecessor.24 Whereas

23. Of course, eavesdropping not only served as a commonly used technique of past and contemporary Japanese fictions but also constituted, as Ann Gaylin illustrates, a fundamental part of the novel (she states: “Eavesdropping has existed in the novel as long as the novel has existed”), most notably in nineteenth-century novels such as Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights, the sensational novels by Wilkie Collins, and the numerous novels by Honoré de Balzac (Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust, 1). This fact, it could be argued, was significant for Shōyō’s literary project that grasped literary development within an evolutionary framework, for, to the extent that it was a common narrative technique in both Western and Japanese fictional narratives, eavesdropping provided evidence of the ‘evolutionary’ link between the two.

24. Imotose kagami tells the story of the bureaucrat Misawa Tatsuzō who hopes to wed Oyuki, a refined daughter of a high government official. Upon discovering that Oyuki has no feelings for him, he instead marries Otsuji, a fish dealer’s uneducated daughter whom he fancied as a student. Soon after, during a business trip to Kansai, Misawa encounters a woman named Sawae whom his father had wronged in the past by not repaying a debt that her daughter Kouno (who has since died) had paid on his behalf. Shocked by her story, Misawa vows to rescue Wakazato, Sawae’s younger daughter, who has been sold to a Nezu brothel as a result of the debt of Misawa’s father. Upon returning to Tokyo, Misawa contacts Wakazato to convince her to let him pay for her freedom. Because of her husband’s repeated lateness in coming home and a letter sent to him by a mysterious woman (Wakazato), Otsuji begins to worry that Misawa is having an affair. Realizing her feelings, Misawa explains to her the story of
the narrator of the former insisted on maintaining its position as an outside observer and an eavesdropper—even employing specific narrative techniques to emphasize such a position—the narrator of *Imotose kagami* is not as adamant, freely moving from transmissions of characters’ conversations to depictions of their internal thoughts and feelings in the form of internal monologues. While the employment of the privileged gaze of the novelist may mitigate the story's need to use eavesdropping as a narrative technique like its predecessor, this is not to say that *Imotose kagami* does not share the interest in the notion of eavesdropping with *Tōsei shōsei katagi*. Rather, the exploration of the concept of eavesdropping occurs elsewhere in *Imotose kagami*, its most striking quality being the central role played by eavesdropping not as narrative perspective but as concrete story-events for plot development. Overhearing a conversation between Otsuji and Oyuki makes the protagonist Misawa believe that Oyuki has no interest in him and decides to marry Otsuji; listening in on a conversation of gossiping servants at a restaurant about Oyuki’s unhappy marriage to Tanuma, a friend of Misawa, forces Misawa to realize his mistake about Oyuki’s feelings for him and pushes him to harbor misdirected resentment toward Otsuji. And it is the reporter’s eavesdropping of a conversation between Otsuji’s sister Oharu and the geisha Wakazato that leads to a false gossip-column account of the intention behind their meeting and to the story’s tragic ending as Misawa is dismissed from his official post and Otsuji commits suicide.

Given such prevalence of eavesdropping, it is not surprising that this characteristic of *Imotose kagami* did not go unnoticed by Shōyō’s contemporaries. In his essay “*Imotose kagami* o yomu” (Reading *Mirror of marriage*; 1887), Ishibashi Ningetsu (1865–1926), one of the leading literary critics of the Meiji period, objects to Shōyō’s repeated use of eavesdropping as “one method of abbreviation,” going as far as to state that the story “begins with eavesdropping, ends with eavesdropping, and it is possible to say that the story’s central framework is found in eaves-

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Wakazato, but, egged on by her sister Oharu, Otsuji continues to harbor her suspicions, ultimately enlisting Oharu to go to the brothel to talk to Wakazato. While there, a newspaper reporter in the next room overhears Oharu’s conversation with Wakazato and prints an article regarding Misawa’s infidelity with Wakazato. As a result of this article, Misawa is forced to leave his government post, and he, in turn, realizes Otsuji’s involvement and divorces her. Devastated by this turn of events, Otsuji kills herself.
dropping.” While Ningetsu’s objection may be warranted, his criticism that the act of eavesdropping functions as a ‘lazy’ way for Shōyō to develop the story seems to miss the import of this act within Imotose kagami. As many scholars have noted, the act of eavesdropping in Imotose kagami provides information to characters in general and to Misawa in particular, inciting specific reactions, both internal and external, that determine the course of the narrative. Or to put it in terms of Shōyō’s literary theory, the various acts of eavesdropping enable the production of causal relationships between story-events where a peek into the private world of others causes internal turmoil between ninjō and reason, which, in turn, leads to external action, and, in so doing, Shōyō synthesizes the two realms that are to be the proper subject of the novel: the interior and the private.

But crucial here is the fact that external actions arrived through such course of development produce one tragedy after another in Imotose kagami precisely because information obtained through the various acts of eavesdropping turn out more often than not to be false, as highlighted by the source of all tragedies in the story, namely, the eavesdropping by Misawa of a private conversation between Oyuki and Otsuji. In this conversation, Oyuki tells Otsuji that she does not like Misawa, stating: “I hate people like that. Even if father and mother told me to become his wife, I have . . . no intention of becoming his wife.” Upon hearing these harsh words, Misawa gives up his hope of marrying Oyuki and turns his interest toward Otsuji. And as we later discover, Oyuki’s mother, who had been hoping to wed Oyuki to Misawa, was also eavesdropping on this conversation, and she too abandons her plan to pursue Misawa as Oyuki’s husband. But as we later learn through the peculiar narrative technique

26. In his discussion of Imotose kagami, Maeda Ai states that the act of eavesdropping in this work functions as “a device that expands the conflict between the ‘exterior’ and the ‘interior’ and accelerates the misunderstanding and mistrust not only by Misawa but by all the characters in the story” (“Meiji no hyōgen shisō to buntai,” 9). In a similar fashion, Komori Yōichi states that eavesdropping in this story functions as that which “not only produces misunderstanding, but also provides the opportunity for people who have been grasped by the feeling of jealousy to make a false step from ‘reason’ that they should have preserved” (Kōzō to sbite no katari, 189).
27. Tsubouchi, Imotose kagami, 185. All subsequent references to this source will appear in the text in parentheses.
of the “magic mirror”—named as such in the text—that reflects the true thoughts of a person, Oyuki had in fact been hoping to become Misawa’s wife.\textsuperscript{28} The magic mirror reveals:

When I first heard about this [her mother trying to marry her to Misawa], I was so happy that I could jump, but I was embarrassed to show my feelings. And if Misawa wasn’t handsome, then there would be no reason to be embarrassed, but I didn’t want people to say that I took fancy to his appearance, so I behaved myself and acted as if it was nothing. And when Otsuji said this and that [about Misawa], I said such bad things that were not in my heart because I didn’t want her to vie for his attention (217).

As disclosed to the readers some chapters later in such a manner, it was because Oyuki saw Otsuji as her rival for Misawa’s affection and was embarrassed to admit her feelings for him that she said what she said about Misawa on that fateful day. In short, Oyuki lied out of self-interest.

Importantly, other narrative details frame Oyuki’s falsehood—and succeed in making others believe it as true—as a behavior in accordance with her disposition, which is explicitly characterized as indecipherable. For example, when the narrator introduces her for the first time: “The older sister [Oyuki] was by nature prudent and had a character short on affability from the beginning. So even on occasions when she was deeply happy, her happiness was not conspicuous to the eyes of others, and on occasions when she was very angry, she endured and did not express it in words” (178). And a comment by Oyuki’s servant girl Okama regarding Oyuki’s reaction to her mother’s suggestion that she wed Tanuma instead of Misawa: “Oh, what a strange girl! I have no idea if she’s unhappy or happy. With her proud temperament, she might be feigning ignorance regarding her [marriage] to Tanuma because, although she is happy inside, she feels ashamed to be seen by others as such” (216).

Not only do these passages present Oyuki as a person who is difficult to understand, but they also present her as a person who actively suppresses her internal emotions from manifesting on the outside because of the belief that to do so would be embarrassing or shameful. Although the text of \textit{Imotose kagami} does not explain how she has come to hold this belief (except perhaps to say it was “by nature”), we must note the undeniable resemblance between the description of Oyuki’s disposition and \textit{Shōsetsu shinzui}’s description of the changes that take place as a soci-

\textsuperscript{28} For details on the “magic mirror,” see Maeda, “Meiji no hyōgen shisō to buntai,” 10–11.
ethy enters into ‘civilization and enlightenment.’ The following is the longer version of a previously cited fragment regarding this change:

As mental capacities advance, people suppress their passions, trying not to display them frankly on their faces. For example, even when they are very angry, they deliberately soften their expressions and converse calmly; or even when they are extremely sad, they sometimes don’t shed a tear. Human feelings change in such a way, and passionate behaviors and appearances gradually disappear (62).

Oyuki then is an indecipherable figure—the ‘mystery’ to be solved—who is, at least in *Imotose kagami*, the closest embodiment of an individual in “the age of reason” that Shōyō describes in his *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Through the awkward technique of the magic mirror, Shōyō singles out and emphasizes Oyuki’s indecipherability, suggesting that even a novelist—whose uncanny ability to penetrate through external appearances that have become impenetrable for the ordinary man in the age of reason sets him apart in society—cannot access her internal thoughts and emotions without the help from the un-modern supernatural tool.

But *Imotose kagami* does not turn out as tragically as it does simply because of Oyuki’s indecipherability. It is also the result of Misawa’s belief, and to certain extent the belief of Oyuki’s mother, that he had understood Oyuki’s feelings through his eavesdropping of the conversation between Oyuki and Otsuji. For, the fact that such eavesdropping leads to his decision to marry Otsuji and not Oyuki requires his rejection of the possibility that Oyuki may have ulterior motives (which she does) for saying what she said. As highlighted by his comment after he overhears the conversation, the rejection is subconscious and instantaneous, for such a possibility does not even occur to Misawa: “I see, Oyuki hates me

29. This marks the seemingly obvious but nonetheless peculiar conflation between the object of desire and of knowledge that will have profound effects on the development of the Japanese novel. Although I argued earlier in this chapter that the student presents himself as an emblem of the illegibility of human beings because of his education and of his uprooted condition, it is the woman who is actually presented as a mystery in *Imotose kagami* as well as in other canonical works of modern Japanese literature, including Osei in *Ukigumo* and Yoshiko in *Futon*. Within the context of this argument, the woman as mystery is a result of a projection of the suspicion that the student has for his own kind, a suspicion whose admission would force the student to realize that he is not only a subject of suspecting but also inevitably the object of suspicion. This issue of projection will resurface in the course of the development of the Japanese novel, and I will revisit this issue in the conclusion to Chapter 6.
to this extent on the inside [naishin]” (185). To put it in terms of Shōsetsu shinzui once again, Misawa believes the external actions (words) of Oyuki as a reflection of her internal feelings, an ‘anti-modern’ belief that goes against the understanding of human beings as indecipherable in the age of reason. Fittingly, the text makes sure to emphasize the gap that exists between the gullible Misawa and duplicitous others driven by self-interest. For example, after visiting Oyuki’s house where Misawa reencounters Otsuji, Misawa’s friend Tanuma praises Otsuji and recommends that Misawa take her for his wife, a recommendation which Misawa takes to heart. However, we later find out that this recommendation was a ploy to prevent Misawa from courting Oyuki whom Tanuma hopes to have—and soon takes—as his wife.30

Shōyō also provides examples of instances in which truthful utterances are met with suspicion, reiterating the state of communicative breakdown or uncertainty that characterizes the world of Imotose kagami and, by extension, contemporary society. Upon realizing that Otsuji has begun to harbor suspicions that he is having an affair, Misawa confesses his involvement with Wakazato to her by explaining the story of his father’s wrongdoing to Wakazato’s family and by reading the letter written by Wakazato to prove that he is merely trying to help Wakazato leave the brothel. But these efforts do not dissolve Otsuji’s suspicions because the letter, despite merely thanking Misawa for his “kindness” (goshinsetsu), can be interpreted in more than one way. The narrator states: “Depending on the reader’s interpretation, the word ‘kindness’ can mean ‘humanity’ [gi] or ‘love’ [ai]” (226). Although the narrator leaves Otsuji’s interpretation of this word as a mystery, her subsequent actions show that it was the latter. That is, while Misawa made an honest confession, Otsuji doubts its truthfulness due to the multiple possibilities for interpretation inherent in language.

In Imotose kagami, Shōyō presents a world where an accurate assessment of whether a certain utterance is true or false proves difficult. The act of eavesdropping by various characters produces scenes that are exemplary of such a state of communication breakdown where the desire of the eavesdropper to know and the eavesdropped to hide his or her true feelings or thoughts are at irreconcilable odds. Through these eavesdropping scenes in which the truth-value of information has a negative

30. In his social ambition and duplicity, Tanuma can be seen as the forerunner to Honda Noburu in Ukigumo. For passages that portray Tanuma’s character, see Tsubouchi, Imotose kagami, 213–16.
relationship to how it is obtained (through an act of eavesdropping) and where it originates (behind closed doors), *Imotose kagami* problematizes the epistemological validity of the conflation of the private and the interior, all the while synthesizing them causally on the level of plot through the act of eavesdropping.

This problematization then functions to undermine the narrative technique employed in the critical scene of *Tōsei shosei katagi* that juxtaposes the confessions of characters with the narrator who presents the story as if he were an eavesdropping character. In this previously discussed scene, a conscious attempt is made to augment the appearance of truthfulness and earnestness of the confession by presenting it as a conversation behind “sliding doors” captured through the act of eavesdropping. In *Imotose kagami*, the opposite is the case: eavesdropping, rather than being the means to access truthful information, is exposed as an act that only produces the illusion of such access precisely because of the way in which the information is obtained. And if *Imotose kagami* points out the shortcoming of eavesdropping as an act that leads to truthful information, then it presents such shortcoming as a social disease by ending the string of eavesdropping by various characters with an act of eavesdropping as a professional task. This, of course, is the eavesdropping by a newspaper reporter of a conversation between Oharu and Wakazato that leads to a false report in a gossip-column account, called *zappō*, of the relationship between Misawa and Wakazato directly responsible for the story’s tragic end.

Developing rapidly from the early 1870s, the newspaper, as many have argued, functioned as the most effective medium for the inculcation of the public on the ways of *bunmei kaika*.

31 The Newspaper Ordinance (Shinbunshi jōrei) issued in July 1871 made this function of the newspapers explicit, stating that “the goal of the newspaper should be the guiding of people’s wisdom” which meant “breaking stubbornly narrow minds to guide them to the state of civilization and enlightenment.”

32 One newspaper that took this official guidance to heart, at least on the surface, was the *Yomiuri shinbun*, whose inaugural issue on November 2, 1874 contained the following announcement: “This newspaper intends to take up matters that will serve as a lesson for women and children so

31. There was a popular song in the early Meiji period that went: “To those who don’t know *bunmei kaika*, boil a newspaper and make them drink it” (cited in Nakanome, “Bunmei kaika no jidai,” 220).

please earnestly arrange nearby matters that are of benefit into a story and send it to us with your name and place.”³³ Befitting this didactic intention and its target—the ordinary citizens of Tokyo and its surroundings—the Yomiuri deviated from both the kanbun-style writing and the focus on political, economic, and foreign matters that were found in such newspapers as the Yokohama Mainichi shinbun (first issue, December 8, 1870), Tōkyō Nichinichi shinbun (first issue, February 21, 1872), and Yūbin Höchi shinbun (first issue, June 10, 1872), and employed colloquial language to take up news around town. These differences in the Yomiuri and the newspapers above would later lead to the distinction between koshinbun (small newspapers) and ōshinbun (large or prestige newspapers), named as such for the size of the paper that was used.³⁴

And it was within the numerous koshinbun that quickly blossomed in the latter half of the 1870s that the zappō (literally, “miscellaneous report”) column emerged to become their mainstay, attracting the interest of the general public. Consisting of reports that might be thought of as a combination of today’s tabloid news and neighborhood gossip, zappō columns ran stories of a public and private nature—from crime reports to acts of infidelity and from admonition of superstitions to commemoration of filial piety—that were sent in by readers or were gathered by reporters called tanbōsha. The targets (or victims) of such news included not only the rich and the famous or geishas and prostitutes but also ordinary people from next door. The panoptic intention of this gossip column can be discerned, for example, in the first issue of the Yomiuri shinbun, which warned the readers that “all things good and bad will be known by the newspaper so you won’t even be able to have a fight between husband and wife carelessly.”³⁵ This warning was no lie, as reports by eavesdropping neighbors exposing the minutiae of everyday life filled the pages day after day while others wrote in letters expressing the fear

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³³ Yomiuri shinbun, November 2, 1874.
³⁴ It has been traditionally understood that the readership of koshinbun, which targeted the ordinary citizen, and ōshinbun, which targeted the intellectuals, did not overlap until the mid-Meiji 10s, but Yamada Shunji suggests that there were many people who read both koshinbun and ōshinbun. For details, see Yamamoto, Shinbun to minshū, 43–55 and Yamada Shunji, Taishō shinbun ga tsukuru Meiji no “Nihon,” 35–36.
³⁵ Yomiuri shinbun, November 2, 1874.
that any criminal or immoral act would be discovered by the newspaper for all the world to read.\textsuperscript{36}

Within the discursive construct of \textit{zappō} columns, correspondents and reporters alike were to spy on the private lives of people and expose the good and evil (but mostly evil) that had previously gone unnoticed with the newspaper passing judgments based on its position as the harbinger of \textit{bunmei kaika}. The result was that the \textit{zappō} column fostered—and legitimated as socially responsible and culturally productive—the desire to transgress the boundary between public and private spheres and expose what lay behind closed doors. But this is not to say that the production of such desire was the sole doing of the newspapers. Rather, such desire—as well as Shōyō’s seemingly obsessive exploration of the topic of eavesdropping—must also be considered in conjunction with the radical changes taking place in the early Meiji period regarding the significance of private and public spheres that provided the conceptual framework within which the desire of the eavesdropper exerted its power.

The primary impetus behind this change took the form of government intervention via various regulations—most systematic of which was the Ordinance of Transgressions and Negligence (Ishiki kaii jōrei) issued in Tokyo prefecture on November 13, 1872—that prohibited such things as sale of erotic prints, nudity, mixed bathing, display of tattoos, urination, and fighting in public spaces.\textsuperscript{37} And it was through articulation of the spaces where these regulations took effect—the sphere of enforcement—that the public/private distinction, which was undifferentiated in the Edo period for the most part, became emphasized and bifurcated. Makihara Norio states:

For the common people, there was still not a clear differentiation between the inside and outside of a house, and the alley was nothing but an extension of the earthen entrance [\textit{doma}]. Therefore, if “the focus of the regulations was on the streets—to make peaceful streets, clean streets, and ‘civilized’ streets”—then this meant the exfoliation of the streets as a “public” space from a community where the house and the alley were fused. The streets were no longer owned by the people, and “private life” became gradually confined into the house.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} For examples of such letters, see Yamada Shunji, \textit{Taishō shinbun ga tsukuru Meiji no “Nihon,”} 199–219.
\textsuperscript{37} For details of the ordinance, see Ogi, Kumakura, and Ueno, \textit{Fūzoku sei}, 3–29.
\textsuperscript{38} Makihara, “Bunmei kaika ron,” 256.
Through restrictions placed on acts performed in the streets, including small alleyways, people were forced to differentiate between a space where regulations would be applied and a space where they would be free to continue their ‘uncivilized’ customs. To the extent that these regulations were primarily concerned with the view (as it relates to the vision and to the opinion) of the Westerner, this differentiation was fundamentally visual in nature.\(^{39}\) Whether something was considered public—and, thus, restricted by law—or private was determined first and foremost by what was accessible to the eyes of strangers, officials, and Westerners. Thus, public space became a stage where the Japanese would perform according to the externally determined criteria of decorum and the private a realm to where ‘uncivilized’ activities were expelled.\(^{40}\)

As this overview makes clear, government regulations and \textit{zappō} columns were intimately linked in their utilization of the rhetoric of \textit{bunmei kaika} to actively construct and separate the public and private spheres in the 1870s and beyond. If government regulations sought to remove ‘uncivilized’ activities from the public realm, then the \textit{zappō} column emerged as their flip side, exposing the ‘uncivilized’ activities that had been expelled to the private realm and making them into public spectacle for the purposes of education and entertainment. And if the regulations strengthened the demarcation between public and private spheres through their prohibition of certain activities in specific areas, then the \textit{zappō} columns did the same by presenting the private sphere as something that required transgression and exposure.\(^{41}\) Indeed, we could argue

\(^{39}\) A prime example of the visual nature of these regulations can be seen in one of the earliest and most detailed regulations of the early Meiji, which related to the issue of skin exposure, whether it involved taking off one’s shirt in public or mixed bathing. And it was the characteristic of Japanese people not to be sensitive about nudity that impressed or surprised the Westerners most. For details on regulations on nudity and its relationship to the Western gaze, see Imanishi, \textit{Kindai Nihon no sabetsu to sei bunka}, 120–80. Also see Oku, \textit{Bunmei kaika no minshū}, 5–13, 159–67.

\(^{40}\) The need on the part of the government to show Westerners that Japan was a civilized nation stemmed largely from Japan’s desire to renegotiate the unequal treaties, which Japan was forced to sign with the Western nations during the late Edo and early Meiji periods.

\(^{41}\) But this is not to say that the government was satisfied with merely regulating what happened on the street, as the door-to-door surveys (\textit{toguchi chōsa}) by police officers went into full effect in 1876. As a report made by the Tokyo police in 1879 reveals, this practice was intended not only to monitor the identi-
that the visual barrier necessitated by the government regulations produced a prohibitive rift between the inside and the outside, and this rift (as Lacanian distance) in turn produced the desire to know what existed on the inside. In this context, the eavesdropper, as a presence existing at the boundary between the public and the private—literally, under the eaves just outside house walls—functions as the marker that actively produces and reproduces the demarcation between public and private spheres. For, while the eavesdropper satisfies the desire to transgress the barrier by gaining access to what is going on behind the barrier, he also refuses to penetrate the barrier directly via physical or visual means, thereby maintaining his distance to the object of desire. Instead of being a direct penetration of the barrier, the access gained through eavesdropping is a linguistic substitution via auditory means of a visual desire.

That such a nonvisual ‘gaze’ succeeded in addressing the desires of the reading public can be surmised from the growing popularity of koshinbun from the late 1870s into the 1880s—fueled by zappō columns and their longer, more narrative and fictional form tsuzukimono discussed earlier in this chapter—as its counterpart ōshinbun deteriorated.42 In treating the subject of eavesdropping, then, Shōyō’s Imotose kagami took up a subject and a discursive framework that had become embedded within the popular consciousness of his readers through their encounter with the zappō column on a daily basis. As we have seen, however, the story’s position on eavesdropping is a highly negative one, and it seems only fitting that Shōyō sought to explicitly make this point the moral thrust of the story through a narrator’s intrusion near the end of the story:

There is nothing more sinful than overhearing [tachigiki] . . . it is the same as eavesdropping [nusumigiki] on an important secret without the person’s consent. Even if one does not become a criminal by law, what is it but a theft of morality? In the world of today in which one is free in general to do as he pleases as long as one does not violate the rights of others, does one have to endure the finger pointing of others into private matters relating to one’s intimate affairs? (241).

ties and occupations of people living in a specific address but also to determine their characters and beliefs. For the details of this practice, see Obinata, Nihon kindai kokka no seiritsu to keisatsu, 200–203.

42. In 1880, daily circulation of ōshinbun (36,024) accounted for 42 percent and koshinbun (49,410) 58 percent of Tokyo newspapers. In 1885, the number was 28 percent for ōshinbun (28,686) and 72 percent for koshinbun (73,924) (figures are from Tsuchiya, Taishūshi no genryū, 157).
Although Shōyō goes on to discuss the evils of eavesdropping from a variety of angles—from human psychology to the structure of Japanese houses—the cited passage, which begins the rant on eavesdropping as an immoral act, frames the ensuing discussion within the ethical framework of privacy.43 Employing the fashionable terminology of the Freedom and People’s Rights movement, the passage posits the private sphere as an untouchable space where one should be “free [jīyū] in general to do as he pleases” as long as what occurs behind closed doors “does not violate the rights [kenri] of others.” In so doing, Shōyō indirectly criticizes the zappō columns and the ‘gaze’ of the eavesdropper that they promote, offering a different understanding of the private sphere in the process. Rather than being a space for ‘uncivilized’ and ‘unenlightened’ activities that need to be exposed and admonished (zappō columns) or hidden away from view (government regulations), Shōyō presents the activities of the private sphere in positive terms as an “important secret” and “intimate affairs” and, thus, as something to be respected.

But Shōyō runs into a problem here, for the goal of the novel is precisely to expose what happens in the most private of the private, and, in this sense, a respect for privacy is exactly what the novel does not have. As we have seen, Shōyō’s notion of the novel is founded upon the detailed depiction of the private lives of its characters, which he couches in the rhetoric of relentless exposing by a novelist who “observe[s] passively” and “depict[s] as it is.” Albeit metaphorical, these epitomes of Shōyō’s realism prescribe the treatment of characters as if they were real human beings and present the novelist as an eavesdropper regardless of

43. The rant continues as follows: “Unlike the people of other countries who live in solid stone houses and lock their doors without fail, people of our country live in houses that are thin-walled and bunched up closely . . . not to mention the sliding doors and paper doors, if one decides to eavesdrop, it is easy to know the private affairs of others. So people of our country, since they are not sages, cannot gain a sense of relief, and they cannot even talk to themselves from the fear of being heard by others. . . . After all, I wouldn’t think to criticize the act of overhearing so much if it remained with the hearing of truths, but overhearing is for the most part mishearing, and from the old days, to become falsely accused of a crime is normally the result of a mistake in overhearing. . . . when overhearing, everyone holds his breath with all his effort, worries not to be noticed by others, and listens with all his might. Thus, the mind is probably in a frenzy, missing parts here and there, and upon encountering places that are hard to understand or hear, he thinks that it is probably this way or that way with groundless suspicion and bias” (241–42).
whether the narrator assumes a perspective of the eavesdropper, as was the case in Tōsei sbosei katagi. Thus, such a diatribe draws attention to this potential of the novelist and, by extension, the inherently paradoxical nature of Shōyō’s formulation of the novel, which Maeda Ai has succinctly described as “the contradiction between modern civil ethics that respects the privacy of individuals and the logic of a modern novel that delves boldly into the internal life of individuals.”

By bringing attention to this paradox of the novel, Imotose kagami’s vehement criticism of eavesdropping may appear to be an instance of Shōyō shooting himself in the foot. But I would argue that it is also possible to see it as the opposite: the moral criticism of eavesdropping not only evokes the paradox of the novel but also represents Shōyō’s attempt to resolve this paradox. Might not the structure of Imotose kagami—the over-reliance on eavesdropping for narrative development followed by an extensive narrator’s intrusion that criticizes this act from all angles—be seen as Shōyō’s attempt to foreground and tackle this paradox? By telling a story in which the various acts of eavesdropping lead to misinformation and ultimately tragedy, the narrator positions himself to explicitly criticize such acts and the invasion of privacy that they represent, thereby retaining his moral high ground all the while suggesting his difference from the eavesdropping characters in the story. The aforementioned problematization of the conflation between the private and the interior on the part of the characters makes clear their inability to cut through appearances despite their desire, unlike the novelist who is, by Shōyō’s definition, someone who can do precisely what they as ordinary people cannot do. The eavesdropping characters assert, albeit negatively, the privileged position occupied by the novelist in the age of reason.

In ‘chastising’ the act of eavesdropping as a ‘vice’ in order to inculcate his readers, however, Shōyō also seems to be walking a fine line between implementing the educational role of the novel, which he espouses in Shōsetsu shinzui, and operating within the framework of kanzen chōaku, which he vehemently criticizes in the same treatise. No doubt, Shōyō is treading dangerous waters, but when we consider the following passage from Shōsetsu shinzui, we see the way in which the rejection of the

45. Atsuko Ueda provides an insightful discussion of the significance of kanzen chōaku during the Meiji period (Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment, 44–48).
didactic framework that paves the way for the realistic novel gives rise to a new type of a moral framework. Shōyō writes:

Because this society in which we live still is in the position of half-civilization, there are many cruel people, and occasionally there are obscene incidents. If, just because one selfishly disliked these [people and incidents], one disregarded them, the story that will be depicted would be a thing that is based on the author’s ideals and cannot be said to be the conditions of the period. . . . Obscene love stories should be written, cruel incidents should be told, but when one writes these [stories] it requires that the author’s heart is pure and unmotivated. . . . If the author himself enjoys exposing and writing about secret love affairs, the inner thoughts of the author will unknowingly manifest themselves on the page, and discerning readers will not be able to persevere and will stop reading (136–37).

In this passage criticizing contemporary Meiji fictions for employing the didactic framework as a moral license to tell obscene or immoral stories, we see that Shōyō’s concern does not lie with their content (the immoral incidents or behaviors that are depicted within the narrative) but in their execution (the authorial attitude toward the objects of depiction). In order to present a realistically depicted story, Shōyō admits that “obscene” and “cruel” incidents, which are part of contemporary Japanese society, need to be taken up. His qualm with extant narratives of Meiji Japan exemplified by *tsuzukimono*—the objects of his reform—is the lack of distance shown by the authors in depicting these incidents, as reflected in the eavesdropping narrator who fosters a conspiratorial relationship with the readers. According to him, the “author’s heart” must be “pure” and “unmotivated” in describing these incidents, a sentiment that is echoed in his introduction to the second half of *Tōsei shosei katagi* where he writes: “However vulgar and base in nature the human feelings, social conditions, or words [that are depicted in the story] may be, if their spirit is not vulgar, then [one] should not denounce them as base.”

46. Tsubouchi, *Tōsei shosei katagi*, 331. Indeed, such belief expressed by Shōyō went beyond paratexts and literary theories, for he had consciously been incorporating the world of *zappō* columns and *tsuzukimono* into the world of the novel. For example, Maeda Ai hypothesizes that the romance between Komachida and Tanoji may have been influenced by the newspaper serial “Asao Yoshie no rireki” (The life of Asao Yoshie), which appeared in *Tokyō eiri shinbun* from April 26 to August 5, 1882 (Maeda, “Gesaku bungaku to *Tōsei shosei katagi*,” 116–33). And in *Imotose kagami*, Shōyō explicitly notes in the text (203) that he had gained the idea for the story of Wakazato’s mother Sawae—of how she was wronged by
But how are we to recognize whether the author’s “spirit” is “vulgar” or not? According to Shōyō, such a determination is an easy one for “discerning readers” because “the inner thoughts of the author will unknowingly manifest themselves on the page.” But this comment certainly does not provide us with a method to discern the immorality or non-immorality of a given text on the practical level of fiction writing and reading. As we have seen, the extensive narrative intrusion in Imotose kagami, which criticizes the act of eavesdropping, attempts to maintain the author’s “pure” and “unmotivated” stance toward what he narrates and provides an example of the difference in authorial stance between the novel and contemporary fictional narratives whose author “enjoys exposing and writing about secret love affairs.” In so doing, the modern novel—whose emergence depends, according to Shōyō, on the rejection of the didactic framework—gives birth, paradoxically, to a moral author whose nonvulgar “spirit” is guaranteed by the critical distance he keeps from the content of his depiction.

Such ‘resolution’ of the paradox of the novel in Imotose kagami seems to have not been a satisfactory one for Shōyō, however. Clearly discernable from his relentless pursuit of the subject of eavesdropping in his fictions, the paradox of the novel continued to be a fundamental theoretical problem of his literary project. And it was, I would argue, the preoccupation with this paradox and the search for the moral “spirit” that prompted his experimentation with the detective fiction genre in Nisegane tsukai.

Nisegane tsukai and the Transformation of a Bungling Detective

“Let us leave aside its value as a novel, but from the point of view of the impression it leaves, there is nothing more interesting.”\textsuperscript{47} So Shōyō writes in his introduction to Nisegane tsukai, the translation of XYZ (1883) by

\begin{itemize}
  \item Misawa’s father, forcing Sawae to sell Wakazato’s services to a brothel—from a serialized report entitled “Geigi no kontan” (Complicated circumstances of a geisha), which appeared in the zappō column of Yomiuri shinbun during February 1884. Shōyō’s incorporation of the world of zappō and tsuzukimonono into the world of the novel could be understood as an attempt to present a “vulgar” story in a non-vulgar manner.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{47}. Tsubouchi, Nisegane tsukai, 662. All subsequent references to this source will appear in the text in parentheses.
Anna Katharine Green (1846–1935). Appearing on November 27, 1887 in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, this first installment foreshadows the sentiment expressed by the *Kokumin no tomo* editorial in 1893 (discussed in the Introduction): detective fiction, while interesting as a form of entertainment, has no literary value, even or especially in a country which has just begun its path toward the modern novel. No doubt Shōyō, who had just completed his *Shōsetsu shinzui*, in which he reconsidered the cultural role of fiction and sought to position the Western realistic novel as the model toward which Japanese authors should strive, had to be careful of the examples he posited. He did not want Japanese authors to mistake *Nisegane tsukai* for an exemplar of the novel he sought. But unlike in the *Kokumin no tomo* editorial, Shōyō does not see this example of detective fiction as an useless form of entertainment. Arguing that plot must come before the investigation of ninjō because a good plot is what makes people read, Shōyō concludes the first installment of *Nisegane tsukai* with the proclamation to embark on his translation of Green’s highly “interesting” text in order to “study the workings of plot” as a part of his training to become a novelist (662).

Significantly, as the plot from which Shōyō sought to learn clearly reveals, Anna Katharine Green’s *XYZ* is, in short, a *failed* detective story, and its narrator-detective no Sherlock Holmes. True, he solves a crime

48. Shōyō uses a citation from a French writer in his argument: “Eight or nine out of ten animals of reading society read with their eyes. There are barely any that read with their hearts. If an author hopes for a good reputation, he should put tangible things first and intangible ninjō second. More specifically, put plot before unsurfacing. The first thing to do is to change what lies immediately before their eyes” (661).

49. *XYZ* tells a story of a government detective who is dispatched to Brandon, Massachusetts, on a money counterfeiting case to investigate suspicious letters being mailed to “X.Y.Z.” and picked up by a mysterious recipient at its post office. There, the narrator discovers a letter—with code-like language designating a meeting place and a password (“counterfeit”)—that he alters so that he can take the place of the intended recipient to rendezvous with the letter’s sender in the garden of the millionaire Benson’s mansion on the night it will host a costume ball. Acting as the letter’s recipient, the narrator makes the appointment and successfully infiltrates the ball, but he soon realizes his mistake. The plot involving the letter turns out not to concern a counterfeiting scam but the reuniting of Benson and his disowned son Joe, assisted by Joe’s brother Hartley and sister Carrie. Before the narrator can rectify the situation, however, Hartley escorts him to the library for a meeting with Benson who quickly drops dead upon entering the room after drinking from the wineglass that was on the table.
in this story—the murder of the millionaire Benson—but this crime has no relationship to the money counterfeiting case that the government ordered him to investigate and is encountered as a consequence of a critical misstep in his treatment of the suspicious letters addressed to “X.Y.Z.” In a flash, the narrator decides that one of these letters is the letter he is looking for, although the narrator (as well as the readers) should already recognize at this point that the lead which brought him to this town was a false one, as the letters that caught the authorities’ attention—the letters that are picked up every night by the same individual who is not the mysterious recipient of the letter—were unrelated to the counterfeiting case. Nonetheless, the narrator proceeds to alter the meeting place designated in the letter so that he, and not its intended recipient, will rendezvous with the letter’s sender at the costume ball held at Benson’s mansion. Thus, while it is true that this rash decision enables the narrator to solve a murder case, the accomplishment is nothing but an accidental result of the narrator’s misunderstanding and mishandling of evidence. In fact, such incompetence on the part of the detective would be the norm in this story, promoting the understanding of the narrator-detective as a dupe rather than a hero.

As such, it is no wonder that Green’s XYZ employs a first-person narrative to tell a confessional story, for it is this mode of narration that is particularly suited to depict the sense of self-reflection—including the feeling of shame—that might naturally arise in the process of recounting such ineffectiveness on the part of the detective. In the course of the narrative being told at a future time when the narrator has had a chance to reflect upon his past actions, a clear distinction develops between the narrated self, the rash detective, and the narrating self who is repenting the actions of the former self. The following comment at the story’s end succinctly summarizes the narrator’s feeling regarding his involvement in the Benson affair: “I was too much ashamed of the curiosity which was the mainspring of my action to publish each and every particular of my conduct abroad.”

Hartley immediately arrives at the scene, and the narrator understands all. Hartley, thinking that the narrator was Joe, has framed him for the murder of their father. In the investigation that follows, Hartley cleverly guides the discussion to incriminate his brother, but the narrator reveals his identity by discarding his disguise and incriminates Hartley for the murder of his father instead.

50. Green, XYZ, 97. All subsequent references to this source will appear in the text in parentheses.
Given the archetypal nature of Green’s first-person narrative, it seems quite fitting that Shōyō decided to translate this story when he did, for, as Komori Yōichi notes, 1887 was the year when a sudden interest in the first-person narration form arose among Japanese writers.\(^51\) While the specific import of this form for Shōyō will be discussed a bit later, it is clear from his literary endeavors in 1887 that he was one of the first and most enthusiastic writers of the boom in first-person narration. In January 1887, he published the essay “Jitsuden ron” (Theory of autobiography), which called for the writing of autobiographical confessions, and, from October 1 to November 9, 1887, he serialized “Tane hiroi,” with which we began this chapter, in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, just prior to his serialization of *Nisegane tsukai*.\(^52\) Moreover, two translations of Edgar Allan Poe’s stories—“The Black Cat” and “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”—by Aeba Köson (1855–1922) appeared in the supplementary issues of the *Yomiuri shinbun* in the late months of 1887 when *Nisegane tsukai* was being serialized in the main issues of the same paper, the latter of these stories suggesting the intimate connection between Japanese authors’ interests in first-person narration and detective fiction.\(^53\)

But Shōyō surprises us given such historical circumstances: rather than continuing his experimentation with the first-person narrator, Shōyō replaces Green’s first-person narrator with the third-person in the process of translation. Green’s XYZ is a recounting of the narrator’s past investigation. In contrast, *Nisegane tsukai* is told as an unfolding of a continuous present, and Shōyō takes care in his translation to eliminate the narrative framework of self-reflection, which constitutes Green’s text. No longer

\(^{51}\) Komori, *Kōzō to shite no katari*, 301.

\(^{52}\) In 1889, moreover, Shōyō would posit the detective explicitly as a metaphorical double of the ideal narrator/novelist, a connection implicit in his *Shōsetsu shinzui*, by stating that the first-person narrator “should be like an observant detective” who provides “objective observations and subjective feelings” of what he/she sees and hears (“Eikoku shōsetsu no hensen,” 5).

\(^{53}\) Other works appearing in 1887 that employ or discuss the first-person narration were Morita Shiken’s essay “Shōsetsu no jijotai kijutsutai” (First person narration and descriptive style of the novel; September 1887), Shiken’s translation *Kinro monogatari* (The tale of the golden donkey; January–February 1887), Yoda Gakkai’s original work *Kyōbijn* (Chivalrous beauty; July and November 1887), and Aeba Köson’s essay “Jiden o kakubeshi” (Write an autobiography; June 1887). For Komori’s complete analysis of the first-person narration during the Meiji 20s, including an illuminating discussion of Aeba’s translations of Poe’s stories, see Komori, *Kōzō to shite no katari*, 301–54.
present in *Nisegane tsukai* is the aforementioned ending of *XYZ*, in which the narrator-detective expresses his shame for the curiosity that led to his involvement in the Benson’s case. Also eliminated are the many clues in Green’s text that suggest curiosity as the motivating force behind the narrator-detective’s actions. For example, the narrator employs phrases such as “moved by a sudden impulse” (9), “seized by an intense desire” (18), and “so my adventurous curiosity decided” (19) at critical junctures of the narrative to describe how something beyond his control is pushing him to delve deeper and deeper into the mystery at hand.\(^5^4\) In Shōyō’s translation, however, these phrases are nowhere to be seen, replaced in all instances by a variation of the verb *omoitsuku* (to think of), which is less nuanced to say the least (668, 674, 675).

As these changes in the translation should make clear, Shōyō suppresses any evidence of curiosity’s grasp on the narrator—and the resulting shame—all the while presenting a story whose original had curiosity as its driving force.\(^5^5\) Unlike the narrator-detective of Green’s text, Kuriisu Masamichi, the protagonist of *Nisegane tsukai*, is not motivated by his sense of curiosity and is presented as a consummate professional: he does what is expected of him by the government. The fact that he goes astray from his original mission is not his fault but rather his fortune. This point is emphasized in the introduction to *Nisegane tsukai* where Shōyō has this to say about the story: “because the occupation of the secret detective, in always looking to detect and expose criminals, requires that he disguise appearances or sneak into people’s houses to investigate hidden things, there are times when he unexpectedly discovers

\(^{54}\) Fittingly, the first of these examples occurs when the narrator is altering the meeting place designated in the letter at the post office.

\(^{55}\) Here we must say that Shōyō makes a conscious decision not to employ *Nisegane tsukai* as a work that represents his notion of the novel, which aspires to describe realistically the inner conflict between reason and desire. But it is also true that Shōyō made some changes to Green’s text in order to better position *Nisegane tsukai* within his understanding of the novel. For example, as Takahashi Osamu notes, Shōyō casts Sadamune (Hartley in *XYZ*) as a son of the millionaire Amako (Benson) and his mistress, and a half-brother of Jōjirō (Joe) and Karku (Carrie). Takahashi interprets this change as Shōyō’s way to provide a framework within which Sadamune’s ill will toward Jōjirō can be understood: “Shōyō’s translation consciously creates a psychological drama between half-brothers and positions this ‘conflict’ as the ‘coherent thread’ that flows beneath the novel. This should be interpreted as a direct reflection of Shōyō’s novelistic method” (“‘Hon’yaku’ to iu jiko genkū,” 78–79).
secret wrongdoings” (662). In this way, Shōyō replaces XYZ’s textual framework of shame regarding the detective’s curiosity with a paratextual framework through which the readers will view the actions of Kurisu’s involvement in the murder of the millionaire Amako (Benson in XYZ) not as a shameful accident but as a characteristic, albeit extraordinary, consequence of a detective doing his duty.

But Shōyō does more than offer such an interpretative framework constructed via paratexts. Through making other changes to Green’s text, Shōyō emphasizes Kurisu’s sense of duty and delineates what this duty of the detective entails. After altering the letter addressed to “123” (X.Y.Z. in the original) with the intention of taking the place of its proper recipient, Kurisu goes to the train station to gather information on the wealthy Amako family whose garden is to be the meeting place between the mysterious stranger and the “counterfeiter.” Here is Kurisu’s train of thought regarding his decision:

Since my duty [yakume, written as shokushō which is a more official word meaning “charged function”] is to gather information that may be of use, however uncertain it might be, and to determine without exception whether they are fact or fiction, I must do that without fail. Generally where people gather, rumors of famous people flow, so a waiting room at a train station would be perfect. I will mix in with the crowd and listen (670–71).

In contrast, the corresponding section in Green’s text runs as follows: “business is business, and no clue, however slight or unpromising in its nature, is to be neglected when the way is as dark as that which lay before me” (13). As this comparison reveals, Shōyō explicitly uses the word “duty,” highlighting the awareness on the part of Kurisu regarding what he is expected to do, which in this instance is the collecting of rumors surrounding the suspect through the act of eavesdropping and the determining of their truthfulness. In addition to this delineation of the expected actions of the detective’s duties, Shōyō emphasizes the detective’s sense of duty, expressed in the phrase “I must do that without fail.”

No doubt, the collection of rumors through eavesdropping is but one of many actions a detective is expected to take in the course of his investigation. Considering the importance that eavesdropping has within Shōyō’s understanding of the novel, however, it is no surprise that the emphasized relationship between the demands of the profession and this act can be seen elsewhere as well. Upon visiting the Amako estate in order to be hired as a guard to serve at the costume ball, Kurisu overhears a conversation between Sadamune (Hartley in XYZ) and Karuko
(Carrie), although Kurisu does not know to whom the voices belong. First, a look at the corresponding section from **XYZ**:

The sound of voices reached my ear from the next room. A man and woman were conversing there in smothered tones, but my senses are very acute, and I had no difficulty in overhearing what was said.

“Oh, what an exciting day this has been!” cried the female voice. “I have wanted to ask you a dozen times what you think of it all. Will he succeed this time? Has he the nerve to embrace his opportunity, or what is more, the tact to make one? Failure now would be fatal. Father—” (21–22).

And here is **Nisegane tsukai**:

From the next room leaked voices of people whispering. Straining his ears to listen, he realized that it was the voices of a man and a woman conversing stealthily, but Kurisu by nature had good ears, which was indeed a necessary professional trait, so although the voices were faint they were clearly audible.

The woman’s voice said, “Really, there was not a day that I worried like today. Although I wanted to ask you, I couldn’t because there’s an ear on every wall. So I worried alone. . . . What do you think? Will he accomplish it successfully? I cannot but worry. A great opportunity like this will not come again, but will he do it boldly? Even if he has the courage to do so, he must also have tact or else he will be exposed before . . . Father” (677; ellipses in the original).

That Shōyō sought to augment the element of eavesdropping in Green’s text can clearly be seen in the changes he makes in the passage. Made explicit in the translation is the awareness on Karuko’s part of the possibility that her conversation with Sadamune may be eavesdropped. But even more important for our purposes here is the alteration Shōyō makes in the role played by the detective in the scene. While the text of **XYZ** makes the narrator a passive listener who overhears the conversation, Shōyō’s translation gives Kurisu an active role: although he has good ears, Kurisu must make the decision to listen actively (“straining his ears”) to ascertain what is being said in the next room. Moreover, Shōyō presents Kurisu’s acute hearing as a necessary qualification for being a detective, intimating that eavesdropping is a crucial function of the profession.

Indeed, this connection between the duty of the detective and the act of eavesdropping goes beyond Shōyō’s alterations. In both **XYZ** and **Nisegane tsukai**, the detective is an eavesdropper. It is who he is and all he does. And this is nowhere clearer than in the second half of the story when Kurisu infiltrates the costume ball disguised as Jōjirō (Joe in **XYZ**), the second son of Amako and the mysterious recipient of the letter that Kurisu has altered. While his choice to impersonate the suspect may appear as a clever way to get into the heart of the criminal gang and to take
on an active role in the investigation, it does nothing of the sort. Once he dons the costume provided by the suspect, Kurisu, despite his desire to ask questions that will lead him to the truth of the case, is forced to become a completely passive subject, for to speak would mean that he would be exposed as a fake. Thus, he becomes a listener to a barrage of disguised partiers who accost him at every turn to discuss the sordid affairs surrounding the Amako family with the understanding that he is Jōjirō. This situation clearly marks Kurisu as an eavesdropper to the extent that eavesdropping is an intrusion by a third party on a dialogue that is taking place within an ‘I-you’ relationship where those involved are unaware of the existence of a third party who is neither a recognized addresser nor an addressee of utterances in a dialogue.

At this point in the discussion, it is easy to see that the intrusion by a third party on an ‘I-you’ relationship is what drives the entire narrative of Nisegane tsukai, for the root of all ‘evil’ in the story, its Pandora’s box—the letter—also exists within this structure of eavesdropping. The letter is a statement made by its sender to be communicated to its recipient, and, in this regard, it is the same as an utterance in a dialogue made possible within an ‘I-you’ relationship. Thus, a letter that is read by a third party shares the same fate as an utterance overhead by an eavesdropper. Or rather, an intercepted letter is an example par excellence of the structure of eavesdropping. The eavesdropper is provided with some extra-linguistic factors—emotions and accents that can be discerned from the voice, for example—that assist him/her in giving meaning to what is being said. Moreover, the eavesdropper always has the context of the scene of a conversation, which enables him/her to interpret certain utterances within the flow of a dialogue between interlocutors. But such factors do not exist in the case where a letter is read by a third party, for the letter is a monologue that is always out of context, its place of writing always different from the statement it makes.

And now, the mechanism of Nisegane tsukai that is produced as the result of the changes effected by Shōyō in the process of translation of Green’s text begins to surface. On the one hand, Green’s XYZ presents

56. The sordid affairs of the Amako family involve the story of how Jōjirō became estranged from the family after he was accused of the theft of Amako’s money and bonds. Kurisu’s conversations with family members suggest that it was not Jōjirō but Sadamune who was guilty of this theft. The knowledge of this family story then serves to promote the understanding of Sadamune as an evil person who is deceitful and disloyal to his father and, thus, capable of patricide.
eavesdropping as an act where the detective-narrator’s curiosity manifests itself, and, in this sense, the feeling of shame that he experiences at the end of the story is a direct result of his repeated indulgence in this act, which reflects his desire to pry into people’s private lives in the name of the law. On the other hand, there is no judgment passed in *Nisegane tsukai* on the actions of the detective Kurisu, either by the detective himself or by the third-person narrator. Instead, Shōyō highlights eavesdropping as a crucial function of the detective and presents him as an exceptional eavesdropper whose actions are not dictated by his curiosity but by the demands of his profession. It is not that the detective wants to eavesdrop; it is just that he must. Through the presentation of the detective as the rightful and fitting subject of eavesdropping whose motivation derives from his sense of duty to expose the truth of the case at hand, Shōyō provides an example of the moral and objective gaze that is required of the novel’s narrator who must explore and depict the most interior and private without any ‘personal’ interest or investment: the detective becomes the metaphorical double of the ideal narrator and, by extension, the novelist.

But Shōyō’s strategy to establish the foundations for the novel in Meiji Japan through the articulation of a new type of writer—the novelist—went beyond the promotion of such doubling, extending to the employment of practical strategies to establish the narrator as the authorial substitute of the novelist at the level of the text. And here again, the shift in perspective from first- to third-person narration plays a critical role. As a mode of narration in which the narrator is assumed to exist as a character within the story-world, the first-person narration must adhere to the limited perspective of the narrator who lacks the privileged gaze of the novelist to cut through appearances. Because of this characteristic, the first person posits itself as a suitable mode of narration for the detective story whose success is highly dependent on the ability of its narration to maintain suspense as the primary mechanism of readers’ enjoyment. Most often, such narration takes the form of what Komori Yōichi calls “the companion-style,” where the narrator is not the detective but rather his sidekick, a clueless observer—exemplified by Watson of Sherlock Holmes tales—who only knows to record everything without understanding the significance of anything and, thus, is incapable of divulging the case’s mysteries ahead of the detective.57

57. Komori, *Kōzō to shite no katari*, 332. The narrator of Poe’s Dupin trilogy also employs this type of first-person narration, as Meiji readers would have
Of course, Green’s XYZ does not employ such a sidekick, for the detective himself is a clueless observer who does not pose a threat as narrator to destroy the suspense of the text as Dupin or Holmes might. This characteristic of XYZ, thus, makes the story conducive for a reformulation into third-person narration because there is no need to deal with the narrator-sidekick who would become a superfluous narrative element after such a change in narrative perspective, enabling the translator to focus on maintaining suspense critical to the detective story. In this sense, Shōyō’s Nisegane tsukai can be seen, as Takahashi Osamu does, as Shōyō’s attempt to utilize the generic demands of detective fiction to achieve the limited third-person narration that he deemed necessary for the development of the modern novel. But if such was the case, then I would also argue that this attempt involved Shōyō’s engagement with XYZ not as a typical detective story but as a parodic text keenly aware of the narrative dynamic and implications of the classical detective story, as manifested not only in the fact that the story’s narrator is the once-clueless detective but also in the way he comes to solve the Benson case.

After the death of Benson, Joe—or rather the man in a yellow domino who is believed to be Joe—is accused of poisoning Benson based on the testimony of his servant who claims to have seen the man in a yellow domino holding the wineglass in which the poison was poured. But such an accusation, of course, does not trouble the narrator-detective who simply takes off the yellow domino to reveal his identity to the crowd and clears the accusation against him. It is not because the narrator is not Joe and, thus, does not have a motive for killing Benson that suspicion against the narrator is cleared. In fact, Hartley, upon seeing a total

known through Kōson’s translation of Poe’s “The Murder in the Rue Morgue” in December 1887. This type of narration would also be employed in Futabatei Shimei’s “Aibiki” (The rendezvous; 1888) and “Meguriai” (The encounter; 1888), translations of Ivan Turgenev that had a major impact on the future generation of Japanese writers.

58. Takahashi understands Nisegane tsukai within the development of Shōyō’s notion of the modern novel that finds its fruition in the 1889 story Saikun, a story that employs the limited third-person narration. He states: “It can be said that to consciously translate the detective novel XYZ, which employs a first-person narration that necessitates by nature a methodological construction of a restricted scope of consciousness, into Nisegane tsukai as a third-person narration was the ultimate experiment in theory of expression by Shōyō to achieve a stable ‘place of narration’ based upon the ‘perspective’ of third-person narration, which was necessary for the modern novel” (“Hon’yaku’ to iu jiko genkyū,” 83).
stranger appear from under the yellow domino, accuses the narrator of having been sent by Joe to commit this crime. Rather, suspicions against the narrator are cleared by the fact of his being a government detective and, hence, of his being someone who is ‘incapable’ of committing such a crime irrespective of the evidence that may have incriminated the man in the yellow domino. Applying his authority—that is, his reliability as a witness—to full effect, the narrator turns the circumstantial evidence of the servant’s testimony, which had been used against the man in the yellow domino, to incriminate Hartley: the narrator testifies that it was Hartley who told him to inspect the wineglass to determine whether Benson had gone to bed or not and thereby holds Hartley accountable for trying to frame him for Benson’s murder.

In XYZ, then, it is not the actions of the detective that lead to the actual solving of the case but merely the fact that the narrator-detective disguises himself as Joe while maintaining his authority/identity as a government official that proves critical, for this authority guarantees the truthfulness of the first-person witness account that he experienced as Joe’s double. But significantly, it is precisely this authority that the narrator himself problematizes through his other first-person narrated account, namely, his confession that is XYZ, as highlighted by the previously cited ending of the original work. The first time around, this passage was read as evidence of the narrator’s deep sense of shame regarding his curiosity that motivated him to get involved in the Benson affair, which had nothing to do with the counterfeiting case. This time around, however, let us focus somewhere else, namely, his admission that he did not tell us everything. Why? Because he was “too much ashamed.” What he ‘left’ out, we will never know, although it might actually change our interpretation of his story. In fact, this might be the reason for his ‘omissions.’ The ending of Green’s text reminds us that the narrator who exists in the story-world is hypothetically bound to the same sense of self-interest that ‘prevented’ Imotose kagami’s Oyuki from expressing her true feelings about Misawa. While the autobiographical recounting style of narration may ‘ensure’ the reality of the experiences it tells by claiming direct experience, it also exposes the possibility of their untruthfulness, omissions, and manipulations, putting into question the very authority that it invokes regarding the truthfulness of the narration’s content and the sincerity of its presentation.59

59. Thus, XYZ’s narrator-detective reveals the inherent artificiality of the first-person narrated story, including the sharing of perspectives between the
The employment of the third-person narration in *Nisegane tsukai* forecloses such possibilities of doubt arising on the part of the readers regarding the reality and authenticity of the detective’s story by acting as a metalanguage that exists outside the story-world. And here the novel and the detective conspire to legitimate each other’s authority. On the one hand, the detective draws on his authority as a government official to function as an example of an ‘objective’ and ‘moral’ bearer of the gaze of the eavesdropper or voyeur that Shōyō deemed necessary in the narrating of the modern novel. On the other hand, the third-person narration, in describing the actions of the detective from an extra-diegetic position, functions as an authority that ensures, in turn, the authority of the detective and his ‘objective’ and ‘moral’ nature. The production of the figure of the detective as the metaphorical double of the ‘moral’ and ‘objective’ novelist simultaneously involves the emergence of the third-person narrator as an authority figure who ensures such morality and objectivity on the part of the detective.

But this is not to say that Shōyō expected the shift in narrative perspective to be enough for such an emergence, as it can be surmised from the paratextual moves that he made in the process of translation—including a title change—which function strategically to establish the authority of the narrator all the while maintaining key aspects of a detective story intact. *XYZ*, the title of Green’s text, is the ‘name’ of the recipient of the mysterious letters, the ‘name’ that the detective-narrator assumes in order to infiltrate Benson’s costume ball. It is a fitting title, no doubt, for it reflects the desire on the part of the detective to experience an alternative subjectivity—the criminal—and, as such, is at the source of the detective’s curiosity. In contrast, the title of Shōyō’s translation has a double meaning: it is the reason that Kurisu was sent to investigate as well as the password included in the letter that becomes the critical clue drawing Kurisu into the Amako affair. And the title change, narrator and the reader that assists in the production of suspense by enabling the readers see what the narrator sees and join the latter in analyzing the case that unfolds before them. While the text may promote the sense that the narrator and the readers are going through the investigation together, this conspiratorial relationship is only a result of the conscious and active directing and mis-directing of the readers by the first-person narrator. As Rosemary Jann writes of Conan Doyle’s first-person narrator: “since Watson narrates all Holmes’s cases after the fact, in the telling he must suppress his knowledge of how they turned out in order to re-create the puzzlement and surprise he felt at the time” (*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, 24).
as Takahashi Osamu states, had an important effect of prompting the story to be read in a certain way: “The readers will read the story by bringing together the various information given in the novel around the word ‘nisegane tsukai’ with the expectation that at some point the whole picture of ‘nisegane tsukai’ will be made clear and that they will be given clues to that end.”

To the extent that to “bring together the various information” around the word “nisegane tsukai” is exactly what Kurisu does in his investigation, the change in title functions to reinforce the sharing of perspective and expectation—the conspiratorial relationship—between Kurisu and the readers that may have been mitigated by the shift from XYZ’s first-person narration to Nisegane tsukai’s third-person narration.

At the same time, Nisegane tsukai’s third-person narrator distances himself from this conspiratorial relationship between the detective and the readers by utilizing to full effect the fact that this work, first and foremost, is a work of translation. As many scholars have noted, 1887 was the year in which the translation industry saw its first prewar peak after a sudden boom the previous year. Naturally, this phenomenon brought on a number of essays regarding the nature of translation in various media including the Yomiuri shinbun, in which Takada Sanae’s “Hon’yaku no kairyō” (Reform of translation; March 26, 1887) and Ryōgoku Dōjin’s “Hon’yaku-sho no dokusha ni ichigen su” (A word to the readers of translations; October 25, 1887) appeared. Driven by desire to improve the level of translation in Meiji Japan, these essays like many others attacked the loose adaptation–style of translation that was customary at the time for being insincere to the original text and immature as a work of translation.

Interestingly, Shōyō, who was no doubt aware of these criticisms, nonetheless employs a variety of such criticized translation techniques in the early pages of Nisegane tsukai’s main text, explicitly situating the narrator as a Japanese translator who is introducing an American work to his Japanese readers. Like many translations at the time, Nisegane tsukai substitutes Japanese names for Western names; it also emphasizes the substitution as a conscious decision on the part of the translator, in both the translator’s introduction and the main text: “for convenience,

60. Takahashi, “‘Hon’yaku’ to iu jiko genkyū,” 78.
61. For example, see the chart constructed by Hirata Yumi that plots the number of literary works in the National Diet Library by year (“‘Onna no monogatari’ to iu seido,” 179). Takahashi Osamu also discusses the relationship between Nisegane tsukai and translation in “‘Hon’yaku’ to iu jiko genkyū,” 84–85.
I will make it a Japanese name and call him Kurisu Masamichi” (665). Moreover, the narrator begins the story in a comparative mode, likening Washington D.C. to Tokyo of “our country” as well as explaining the American postal system to provide the readers with the cultural knowledge necessary to digest this foreign text (663–64).

Yet, despite these changes to reframe the story for the Japanese readers, Shōyō does not forget to make the claim that he has decided to translate Green’s text “as it is” (arinomama) in the introduction (663), evoking his use of the same phrase in Shōsetsu shinzui regarding the presentation of the novelist as an external observer who “depict[s] as it is” (arinomama o mosha suru). Although it can be argued that such a comment by Shōyō reveals his understanding of translation at the time, it also plays an important role in establishing the authority of the narrator via the translator. That is, the phrase “as it is” emphasizes the translator’s role as a mediator who stands in between the Western text and the Japanese readers, passively relaying information from the former to the latter. In this sense, the translator evokes the eavesdropper who also stands at the border of information and its wanting consumers, but, unlike the eavesdropping narrator who tries to convey the sense that he and the readers are sharing the same information, the narrator-as-translator, as seen in above examples, underscores his difference from the readers. To the extent that the Japanese readers of the general public have no access to the original text nor can they understand it, the third-person narrator-as-translator is placed in a privileged position of the knower who provides access to the usually inaccessible. And within the context of bunmei kaika, the translation of a Western text allows for the presentation of the content of Kurisu’s story—of prying into people’s private lives—not as entertainment but as something important for the education of the Japanese reading public. Like the detective and in contradistinction to the eavesdropper, the translator promotes the understanding of the novelist as an authorial figure by providing information inaccessible to the readers through the use of his special skills and through emphasizing education and duty as opposed to curiosity and entertainment as his motivating factors.

But here, we must also recognize the precarious position in which the translator finds himself, a position that evokes the eavesdropper in

62. Or to put it in another way, translating is a mode of narration that presupposes and projects the existence of privileged information worth translating on the other side rather than a simple tale for entertainment.
another way. As mentioned above, various foreign books—whether classics from the past or recently published pulp fiction—flooded into Japan toward the end of the 1880s, and we can imagine that Japanese intellectuals were lacking in the knowledge of Western literary histories and of the source countries that would assist in contextualizing and understanding the ‘meaning’ of these texts: appearing all at once, these books must have seemed to the Japanese readers as being out of time and place. And such sociohistorical conditions most likely had some influence on Shōyō’s decision to translate a first-person narrative into a third-person one, for it must have been difficult for him to be interpellated by the “you” that is addressed by the “I” in Green’s XYZ. Like the narrator-detective whom he will rename Kurisu Masamichi, Shōyō usurps a text that was not ‘intended’ for him and intrudes upon an ‘I-you’ relationship in an attempt to decipher the meaning of a text whose context he has no way of knowing fully. In so doing, Shōyō attempts to synthesize the two extremes of writing—the first-person narration that ‘ensures’ the reality of its events by recounting the personal experiences of the narrator and a work of translation in which the translator knows nothing about the reality of story events—to produce a narrative that mediates the two realities that are Japan and the West.

Central to Shōyō’s strategy to reform the extant fictional narratives of Meiji Japan was the articulation of a ‘moral’ gaze of the novelist, which differed from the ‘vulgar’—nonobjective and emotionally invested—gaze embodied in such stories. As a rightful and fitting subject of eavesdropping whose actions are dictated by his sense of duty to expose the truth of the case at hand, the figure of the detective enables the explicit articulation of the ‘objective’ and ‘moral’ nature of this gaze. Thus, he personifies the theoretical difference emphasized by Shōyō between the modern novel and the objects of his reform, offering itself as a metaphorical surrogate of the novelist. At the same time, Shōyō’s rendering of the detective story enabled him to do much more than legitimize the task of the novelist metaphorically. By the shift from first- to third-person narration

63. Of course, this does not mean that the readers, through their identification with the detective, must adopt the ‘objectivity’ and ‘morality’ of this gaze. Rather, the figure of the detective merely offers a justification, an apology, for the curiosity that drives the reading process.
as well as through the narrator establishing himself explicitly as a trans-
lator, *Nisegane tsukai*’s narration extricates itself from the conspiratorial
relationship with the readers promoted by *XYZ*’s narration and asserts its
role as a metalanguage that treats the story events as objects of knowl-
edge. In the process, the third-person narrator emerges as an authority
figure who, as someone occupying the position of the knower, simply re-
lays ‘reality’ to the readers in an ‘objective’ manner, all the while maintain-
ing the conspiratorial relationship necessary to entice the readers in the
reading process through the surrogate of the detective. The translated
detective story presented itself as a perfect tool to legitimize the inherent
contradiction in Shōyō’s articulation of the novel as a medium that pro-
motes itself as the harbinger of ‘civilized’ and ‘enlightened’ values, includ-
ing that of privacy, and, yet, draws its reason for being in the desire to
penetrate what has become impenetrable in the age of modernity.

As history would have it, however, it was not Tsubouchi Shōyō but
Kuroiwa Ruikō who would maximize this potential of the Western de-
tective story for the Japanese translator and novelist to carve out the
authorial position and perspective necessary within Shōyō’s formulation
of the novel.64 As we will discuss in detail in the next chapter, the content
of Ruikō’s stories reflects this connection, as he introduced to the Japa-
nese readers a world filled with characters who were gossipers, eaves-
droppers, and, most of all, those who sought to penetrate the private lives
and internal thoughts of the characters. Quite ironically, considering the
1893 editorial of *Kokumin no tomo* with which we began this book, Ruikō’s
detective stories functioned as the immediate heirs to the legacy of
Shōyō’s literary project, and it could be argued that the popularity and
dissemination of the detective story in the late 1880s and the early 1890s
was what made possible the rise of the novel as a socially viable and re-
spectable art form in Meiji Japan. Indeed, as Nakayama Akihiko points
out, the rhetoric and terminology of *Shōsetsu shinzui*, or what Nakayama

64. *Saikun*, published in January 1889 in *Kokumin no tomo* marked Shōyō’s last
serious attempt to write narrative fiction, but he would continue to dabble with
translations of Western stories, including his *Daisagishi* (The swindler), a story
with a mystery-novel flavor which was serialized during 1892 in the *Miyako shin-
bun*. Interestingly enough, the *Miyako shinbun* at this time was looking for works
that would successfully fill the void created by Ruikō when he left the new-
paper in August of the same year and quickly approached Shōyō. For details of
Shōyō’s *Daisagishi*, see J. Scott Miller, *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji
Japan*, 77–110.
calls “Shōyō-esque clichés,” only began to manifest themselves in the Japanese literary histories in the early 1890s, displaying the influence and rooting of Shōyō’s literary worldview in Meiji Japan and concomitant with them the spreading of the belief in the artistic nature of the novel.65

The vehement criticism of detective fiction in the Kokumin no tomo editorial, which may appear as an instance of historical blindness regarding the developmental link between the novel and the detective story, begins to make sense in light of this correlation between the rise of “Shōyō-esque clichés” and the popularity of Ryūkō’s detective stories. The detective, as a metaphorical double of the novelist within the story-world, may have legitimated the novelist’s ‘objective’ and ‘moral’ stance, but he also pointed to the need for such legitimation in the first place due to the inherent paradox of Shōyō’s formulation of the novel that left the novelist with the potential to revert back to an immoral eavesdropper. Thus, the detective was a bandage over a wound that protects it from exposure and further damage but constantly serves as a reminder that there existed a wound beneath. As such, the intimate connection between the novel and the detective story had to be suppressed, just as the former was taking root as an art form, and conscious effort had to be made to present the latter instead as the enemy of and foil against the novel. Nonetheless, or precisely because of this, the detective story as the novel’s Other would cast a dark shadow over the Japanese novel, exerting a profound effect on its developmental trajectory in modern Japan.