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Quiz 2

1. 1. Watsuji Tetsuro's Climate and CultureWhat are the key points in Watsuji's statement on the relationship between climate and culture in Japan?

Tetsuro states that climatic patterns are historical events, and can thus be described as historical patterns as well. Weather and surroundings are an integral part of man’s history. Being largely products of our history and surroundings, immersion in these climatic patterns will influence our development, behavior, and culture. In his main point, Tetsuro argues that the Japanese people have grown to become like the monsoon’s that race across the countryside in the rainy season. Men grow vegetables and rice for sustenance, which can always be suddenly wiped away by a strong monsoon. This eternal conflict with the storm, with food and sustenance on the line, has played a strong role in shaping the Japanese people. In one way, the Monsoon becomes a man’s enemy, and because it springs up, raging quickly but intensely, the Japanese must come to meet the Monsoon with the same pointed intensity. The Japanese people then come to display brief bursts of emotional or physical intensity, in the same manner as the quick typhoon. On the other hand, most Japanese farmers know the monsoon to be unstoppable and not combatable. This has taught the Japanese people to know when to give up and can respect a situation to which they see no successful outcome. They possess an honesty in the face of defeat, taught by the brief and unstoppable fury of the storm.

2. Higuchi Ichiyo's *Growing Up*and Nagai Kafu's A Strange Tale from the East of River  
First, give a one-line description of the story (choose one of the two) in a way that shows the main theme of the story. Then describe how the temporality and spatiality of Tokyo contribute to the main theme.

*Growing Up*, by Higuchi Ichiyo, depicts the conflict between the main street gang, and their rival, the backstreet gang; symbolizing the class conflict in the city and social immobility.

Immediately, the cast is divided into their gangs by their home street. The poorer back street kids jostle for power with the rich main street gangs. Their place within the Yoshiwara district immediately determines their lot in life. Their class and social standing is as immobile as the foundation of a house or of a city street. So immobile, that when Sangoro, a back street resident, joins the main street gang, he is beaten senseless by his old back street friends. He is badly injured in some sort of karmic retribution earned by the attempt to leave his social station. The children are locked against each other by their location in space, and also locked to view their futures in the adults around them. Located in the playground and gathering place of adults, all of the children can see the future they are destined to step into. Midori sees her sister’s role as a courtesan, breaking down in the end of the story as she realizes the implications of this position, and the inevitable truth that she will become one too. Shota lives with his lonely grandmother, whose money cannot bring her happiness or bring Shota’s parents back. Shota knows that he will be well off financially, but his actual happiness is clouded. The children have a bleak view of time and their futures because of the adults living out equally bleak lives in Yoshiwara.