At the Age of Seventeen : 田辺聖子「十七のころ」*

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At the Age of Seventeen
―田辺聖子「十七のころ」* ―

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要旨：主人公の泉は父平蔵、母とり子の一人娘で、4 年間の女学校を終えて洋裁学校に通っている。終戦間もない頃であるが、両親の住む戦前的・保守的な世界に守られて、泉は物質的には何不自由なく日々平穏に生活している。しかし、少女から大人の女性に成長する過程での旧世代的な思考をもつ両親との確執、また良子に象徴される戦後の新しい世界に対する夢と不安の間で、17 歳の泉は煩悶する。

キーワード：田辺聖子、翻訳、メタファー、異文化理解

Everyone was aware that Izumi was just an ordinary girl. She was very bashful, and when she talked with someone, she could not meet their eyes. According to her mother Toriko, Izumi was a “good for nothing” daughter. When she was asked to go shopping, there was always something wrong with the change. When she was asked to greet someone, she was always at loss for words and mumbled with her cheeks blushing bright red like the color of tomatoes. Everyone complimented her on her obedience, but her mother complained, grumbling that for a girl who was already 16 or 17 years old, Izumi was immature.[1]

“There will be trouble if she cannot exchange greetings with anyone properly. Well, girls her age are more mature. In the old days, girls of 17 were full-grown. Why is our daughter Izumi so timid, Heizo?”

Uncomfortable in the heat, Izumi’s fat[2] father sat in front of a table littered with dishes and remnants of meal, stripped to the waist and nervously picking his teeth with a toothpick, his pot belly sticking out. He was born and raised in Osaka City, and the dialect of this western city that vigorously rushed from his mouth, offended the ears of his Eastern-born wife, Toriko.

“Greetings? Why the hell do you care about greetings? Even if she doesn’t start training now, she can certainly do well when she gets older. You don’t have to worry about it.”

“Come on, honey,” Toriko muttered in frustration and started to clean up the mess on the table. Izumi listened to their conversation while looking vacantly at the dusky yard.

“Generally speaking, girls should...”

“There you go again.”

“She is our only daughter, so of course I am anxious about her future...”

“You just can’t stop pushing her with your ideas, can you? Leave her alone, and we will have nothing to worry about.”

He moved to the inner parlor which had already been swept clean, found his tobacco pipe, inhaled once, and looked around. He could not see Izumi anywhere, so he yelled toward the garden.

“Where are you, Izumi?”

“She’s already gone upstairs to her room.” Toriko replied.

“When did she go? That girl disappears like a fart.”

Heizo tapped his pipe against the edge of the ashtray, put it on the table, hacked, and spit phlegm into the garden. Then he put on his clothes. The wind was chilly this time of the day. The white clusters of flowers on the Japanese Meadowsweet bush near the veranda seemed illuminated in the

evening dusk.

Toriko turned on the radio in the living room and lively jazz music tumbled into the room, instantly making the atmosphere cheerful.

"Hey, Toriko," called Heizo without turning around.

"Yes. What do you want?"

"You are always playing garbage on the radio. Turn it off."

Toriko chuckled to herself and turned off the radio. Heizo liked the old-style storytelling and singing of stories, *rakugo* or *naniwabushi*. While Toriko was putting away the small folding dinner table, Izumi came downstairs and crouched casually beside her mother, saying in a small tone,

"Mom..."

"What?"

"I...I'd like to take the day off school tomorrow."

"Not again..."

Toriko stopped her work and looked Izumi square in the face. Izumi immediately blushed, mumbled something and looked away. After she had graduated from a women's college in March, she was made to go to a women's dressmaking school† against her will. She frequently skipped school because she was reluctant to do the boring and endless training for homemaking, such as flower arrangement or tea ceremony practice. She could not remember when it started, but Izumi often pondered on her monotonous and peaceful life. Her mother didn't know, and her father could not even imagine it. Even Izumi herself did not understand for sure, but at the end of a day that begins and ends without remark, suddenly at night, her innocent, naive and fragile spirit would be almost crushed under the pressure of profound hopelessness and a sense of dark emptiness. But, she could no longer be feebly resigned to it, as she had been until now. At any given time of day, she would start to feel as if her mouth was stopped, suffocated by an eerie, overwhelming and increasing sense of pressure which was aimed at her moments of peace, but at last she had decided to confront it face on. However, what could she do?[3] Her mother attempted to make her learn to sew kimonos, and her father bought her whatever she wanted. Between her parents, Izumi continued to live in anguish alone. She had not wanted to attend the dressmaking school or anything else since she had become doubtful about her future. Above all, she needed time and a place to think for herself.

"You are absent from too many classes. Won't you fall behind your classmates?"

"Yeah, but...," Izumi looked down totally dejected.

Toriko did not want to cut her daughter any more slack as Izumi had already stayed away from school for more than a week.

"Well, I don't care whether you start again tomorrow or later, but you should go. I don't understand why we are paying the monthly lesson fee for nothing."

Although Izumi was dissatisfied with her mother's answer, Toriko talked in such a straightforward way that Izumi was not able to talk back to her. She nodded assent helplessly and went up to her room on the second floor.

"Izumi is a pain in the neck, Heizo. She doesn't want to go to dressmaking school at all. I'm worried about what kind of person she will become."

Toriko looked back at Heizo. He was leaning against a post[4] in the wall, reading the newspaper

"Well, leave her alone for a while. Sooner or later, if she feels like it, she will start to attend the class," he answered in a drowsy tone.

"You are certainly carefree," Toriko replied huffily. She closed the shutters along the balcony and looked up to a cool night sky. She could see millions of beautiful stars glittering in the night.

"Oh, I forgot to bring in the laundry. Izumi, please bring it in."

Toriko shouted out from downstairs. From the second floor came Izumi's clear reply, and then a bumping noise of the shutters being drawn and

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† In general terms, there are two kinds of dressmaking styles in Japan: one is Western style clothes making (yosai, 洋裁), and the other Japanese style (wasai, 和裁). Izumi was attending a western dressmaking school.

Izumi climbing onto the clothes-drying platform.

Heizo had already gone to bed. After cleaning the sink in the kitchen, Toriko was alone, putting her sewing on the tatami mat under the bright light and forgetting the time passing for a moment. All was quiet. The house was in the suburbs with no other houses nearby. Silent and tranquil.

Toriko, however, was feeling unhappy. She was discontented because, as usual, Izumi had gone up to her room and had not come down. She unfolded the fabric marking board and measured the cloth busily.[5] The clock in the living room began to strike and she counted the hours as they sounded. It was already ten. Then, she put the ruler on her knee and call out,

"Izumi, it's time you went to bed!"

There was no answer. Toriko dusted off her knees and went upstairs. Izumi was having a catnap on her back in front of the desk in her small room. When she saw Izumi's fragile and slender limbs,[6] Toriko was reminded of Izumi's immaturity. She called to her daughter in a small, soft tone and looked around her room. The bookshelf was stuffed full of books, the boxes full of colorful paper, and small pieces of cloth were beautifully piled up. The room was decorated with various things such as dolls, pictures, and embroidered tapestries on the wall; all were beautifully colored by the light from a yellow silk lampshade. Izumi was breathing peacefully as she slept soundly, but Toriko was filled with a somewhat indescribable anxiety and looked around vaguely for no apparent reason.

These days, Izumi had taken to being in her room upstairs and the chances for her to talk happily with her parents had become increasingly few. Izumi seemed to have entered into a whole new world. At this particular time of life, though this world was full of romantic hopes and wild fancies, girls often spent their days apart from their parents. Now, Toriko realized that her daughter had reached an age that Toriko could not understand. While thinking it over, she was perplexed and at a loss, as if she were a mass of cold water, within the beautiful, smooth, oily atmosphere of her daughter. Above all things, Toriko felt lonely when she saw her daughter swim away into another world.

The next day was beautiful and sunny. But slightly depressed, Izumi did not feel like getting out of the bed. After a while the clock struck six, and she had no choice but to get up and get dressed. Unexpectedly, lines from a poem came from her lips, "...brushing the surface of a rice paddy, stalks of rice are nodding..." More, she could not remember. The garden was clothed in bright lushness. A new growth of green—vivid in color.[7] After washing her face, Izumi put on foundation in front of the mirror, rouged her cheeks, and applied a pale lipstick. Then she meticulously combed out her hair, drew a white ribbon from a drawer, and, after a moment of hesitation, tied up her hair with care.

"The red ribbon looks better. The striped one."

Unnoticed by Izumi, Toriko had been standing behind her, and, without invitation, Toriko brought out a ribbon of flamboyant color. For Toriko, it was a pleasure to dress her daughter beautifully. Toriko believed that everything would be better if it looked gorgeous; she tied the ribbon in an excessive bow. In the mirror, Izumi found her face masked in depression struck by the doubt that again caught her like a bolt from out of the blue. The contrasting face of doubt and red ribbon seemed like a clown costume, *For what purpose, am I constantly applying makeup...*[8] However, to make her mother happy, Izumi came to the living room, which was filled with the savory smell of miso soup, her butterfly-shaped ribbon fluttering on her head. Hot, steaming rice was scooped into her bowl, when, with a rustling sound, came her father bringing in a newspaper smelling of fresh ink.

"Family suicide, again. It happens a lot these days."

"Really? Again?"

Toriko concentrated, listening to what Heizo was saying while eating. Heizo continued to read the newspaper aloud.

"The era of 'competition for survival' will come

at last. In that era, the poor that are defeated will die. The poor sustain the rich," he commented on the article.

Izumi stared at her father as if he were living in another world. Heizo was smacking his lips as he ate gluttonously, gulping loudly as he wolfed down the miso soup. Truly, her father made a lot of noise when he ate. For the first time in her life, Izumi, cast a cold, scornful eye at his father's thick short neck, his flaccid and protruding belly, his short hairy fingers, his muddy eyes, his balding head...disregarding the thought that he was her father. But Izumi turned her eyes away from her father feeling somewhat cruel and inhuman. She could not help but sigh, trying to hide it. She sat straight and gently closed her eyes, her hands resting on her knees, holding her chopsticks.

Toriko was giving noncommittal responses to Heizo about the news of a few acquaintances. During that time, the clatter of bowls and the sound of boiling water for making tea could be heard, along with the twitter of sparrows, which was borne on the fresh, early summer breeze. Izumi could not bear to live in peace and tranquility like this. Her youthful power from within was always trying to madly jump out, about to explode from her. *Can this really continue to be my life?* Izumi thought looking around apprehensively.

"What the hell are you doing, Izumi? Keep your eyes on your meal and eat up."

Heizo urged his daughter to eat in a casual manner, but she changed color in shock. In any case, her soul was severely damaged and suffering, struggling in the place that was utterly beyond her parents' understanding. She wondered if her material happiness made the matter worse — She was seeking a spiritual mother like an injured fawn.

Coral bead-like strawberries, which were taking on color day by day, grew in the shadow of the dew-covered leaves. The wheat was tall and grew golden, garden peas produced numerous pods like green ships. A field of onion lay stretched far. Lively sound came from the local lumber mill in the Ikehata Area and disturbed the pale golden air. In the lumberyard, inside a bamboo fence, lay numerous square timber logs, exposed to rain without cover. The weeds crushed under them had an equally beautiful green color. Clouds were floating like steam above the tops of tall poplar trees, spreading over the mountain range far away. The sky extended endlessly, it had the transparency of a sheet of glass which one was looking through sideways, and far beyond the highway, the colored roof tiles of an apartment building were shining. A blessed morning in May. A gentle breeze was blowing and birds were singing. Izumi was struck by happiness.

Without realizing it, Izumi forgot the refreshed feeling from the morning as she got off the packed train and was carried away by the faceless crowd on the platform. When she took a breath idly in the dusty air of the station, someone suddenly patted her firmly on the shoulder. She turned around and found that it was an older friend of hers who attended a women's medical college. Yoshiko was tall, well-built and suntanned. She was generally accepted by herself, and others, as brilliant.

"Long time no see, Izumi. How have you been?"

"Oh dear... It's been a long time, huh,...

Izumi mumbled and blushed fiery red as always because she was startled by the suddenness of the interaction.

"Yeah, it's been a while. I know you live around here. What are you up to now?"

"Nothing special..."

"Oh, is that so?"

Yoshiko nodded. Yoshiko had the habit of not listening to people closely. Izumi knew it, but the words she swallowed stuck in her heart, though she didn't know why. It seemed to Izumi that Yoshiko might be the very person who had the key to open the door to the new life she hoped for.

"Are you busy with school?"

"Yeah, very! But, you know, it's enjoyable and fulfilling."

Yoshiko replied quickly and vigorously. Izumi was overpowered by such a strong spirit. Yoshiko continued on to say that she had joined a social-

science club, attended an introductory lecture on Marxism, and as a member of the "Student League for Assisting Overseas Families," supported the medical corps for repatriates.† Various words such as "Marx" and "Engels" which she didn't know rushed toward Izumi like a flood, and overwhelmed her.

"Wow, Yoshiko. You're doing so much."

"No, not really. But, there are so many things I want to know. I'm overwhelmed. I want to know much more, and I'm happy because the world has been getting brighter to me, full of pleasure and meaning. By the way, I'm making a presentation at the Literature Association next week. I am honored and grateful to be invited to speak there, you know.

"I see..."

Yoshiko thought to herself, *Is she even listening*? and continued, "There will be a student union debate tomorrow afternoon, at XX-hall. If you would like to come, I have an extra ticket. Would you like it? The topic will be humanism."

Izumi fell into a state of complete self-deprecation, and was mentally exhausted. Yoshiko expressed her views on humanism at great length. Yoshiko thought in her heart, *This girl doesn't know how to enjoy student life*, so forced herself to laugh happily and brightly like the sun, showing pearly white teeth. But, as is usual with shy girls, Izumi was sensitive to Yoshiko's true feelings.

"And now, as I'm away from my parents and staying at my uncle's house, it's very hard to live only on the allowance from back home. That's why I'm teaching mathematics and science[9] to the neighborhood junior high students every night. I'm not a skillful teacher, but the job offers me a real challenge. I work practically 24 hours a day without a break. But I can earn a little money."

"Oh,..."

Izumi's eyes stared out into space, a distant look in her face. She saw her own misery but the next moment, she thought that Yoshiko was not that great of a person, either. This might be a kind of a strong rivalry or envy girls sometimes have, but Izumi became increasingly convinced that her thoughts were correct. *This girl is talking with eloquence and fluency, but she has not yet reached the path I'm looking for*, Izumi thought with dreams in her eyes.[10] Yoshiko regarded Izumi as weak and indecisive, said good-by, walking away proudly as if she were a female soldier. Head high and chest out.

At the dressmaking school, Izumi thought about Yoshiko all day long. Yoshiko's intelligent appearance was on her mind. On Izumi's way home it was really hot as if summer had come in earnest.

There were crowds of people here and there at the station. Some students with armbands proclaiming "Student League" were taking care of the repatriates who had just gotten off the train, and others were in groups, selling movie tickets to collect money for disaster relief. As Izumi passed by the crowds, a student from the women's medical college nodded and smiled. It was Yoshiko. She started to shout through a megaphone in her hand. The college students nearby absent-mindedly watched passersby.

"...we humbly ask for your cooperation in helping these poor repatriates." After her announcement, Yoshiko put her hat on again, and drew near Izumi, smiling.

"Sorry we had no time to talk earlier. I'm afraid I'm very tired. Good luck. Let's get together sometime. See you," Yoshiko said.

Into Izumi's mind came — somebody's tanka poetry.

May a storm come soon!
Because I tire of the monotony,
the tide flowing and ebbing peacefully.[11]

Walking slowly, Izumi repeated the phrase "I tire of the monotony." Were not her frustration and anguish also caused by the monotony of her life? — No, that was not true. But Izumi was stimulated by Yoshiko, she was excited. For the first time in a long time, Izumi was struck by the liveliness of

† Japanese citizens relocating after World War II from previously occupied countries.

the town. When she returned home, she found her mother sewing a silk kimono which had a youthful pattern of large white shapes like hash marks standing out against the purple color of the cloth.

"This is for you, Izumi. It will look good on you."

Toriko got so much enjoyment from making kimonos for her daughter. She smiled sweetly and held up the kimono fabric to Izumi's shoulder, checking the suitability of the size and pattern, her head tilted as if she were appreciating a work of art. But Izumi was not interested because she was tired and had things to think over from the stimulation of the day.

"I don't need anything. What's a kimono to me?"

"Everyone thinks that way when they are a child. But the time will soon come when you will be grateful for the kimonos your mother made."

Her mother said this so decisively that Izumi felt disagreeable.

"That's not true. I won't think that way, never."

"Listen, Izumi. Is it possible for you to idle your time away all your life alone? No. You have to get married at least once. It will be important to have many fine kimonos then."

"That's not true, Mom, no, that's not true."

Izumi turned red, looked away and sneered at her mother. Toriko thought that Izumi did not know anything, still immature though she was getting taller. However, Izumi suddenly began to talk eloquently.

"Mom, I met Yoshiko today. She is great! She is studying, earns money for herself, and is very active in so many groups and organizations — I'd also like to work somewhere very busy."

Izumi said the last part jokingly, and, of course, Toriko did not take Izumi's words seriously. "She is a so-called self-supporting student. What lousy parents. They leave their daughter in the middle of the town alone and make her earn a disreputable living. You don't have to work and earn your own money, Izumi."

"But...I feel somehow sorry for the people around us. I want to do something, I want to devote myself to something now, while I am still young."

Toriko became puzzled, crossing her arms across her chest and peering into the face of her daughter. Izumi felt hot and flushed as if delirious with fever.

"What in the world is the matter, Izumi? What are you talking about?"

Izumi came back to reality. She had completely lost the thread of her story. There was only a feeling of emptiness. She was aware that she was trying to grow under the cover of her parents sheltering protection from the real world, but what should she do? — Izumi was too tired to keep thinking. Heizo came back from work in the evening. Toriko had little news because she had stayed indoors all day, but told him immediately what Izumi said. He was imperturbable and howled with laughter.

"Izumi might just be surprised because it's been awhile since she has gone out."

When his daughter sat at the table, he said abruptly,

"You don't need to worry about anything. You are different from your friends. You don't have to earn your living because you are my daughter."

Toriko added, "You shouldn't go out with girls like that medical college student, who is argumentative, and cares nothing about being ladylike. I can tell you." Izumi nodded and picked up her chopsticks. She did not want to make her parents worry, so she accepted their advice without argument.

"Understood."

"You look down, Izumi. Cheer up! Why don't we go out to Kyoto next Sunday? Don't you have something you want to buy?"

"Thanks, Dad. I'm okay. I don't need anything."

When dinner was finished, Izumi wandered absently-mindedly outside the house. It was very quiet around her, and the crescent moon was shining. The outline of the hills was clearly defined against the evening sky. The strong orange lights which came from within the houses were beautiful. Gently and without sound, everything sank into the mysterious color of evening dusk. The birds with pitch-black wings crossed the sky

through the air like heavy mist. Izumi felt a breeze blowing. Melancholic, muddy like a bottomless swamp, dusk was settling all around. Suddenly, uncontrollable feelings of grief and despair flooded her heart.

What a quiet and peaceful life. She was free from worry about food and shelter. If the situation remained the same, she would continue to go to dressmaking school, paint pictures, make tea, arrange flowers, and finally she would surely be a modest and obedient daughter. However, on the other hand, the girls in the new world had been growing stronger through clashes with each other, even if they often followed others blindly, or resorted to bravado. They were brave, they were not struggling unnecessarily like Izumi. Izumi would never match them in zest for life.

The new world was growing.[12]

When Izumi thought of her precious youth wasted, she hung her head in sorrow and wept leaning against a pine tree.

But what could Izumi do? She would go to the dressmaking school tomorrow. Then, she would learn to sew business shirts and spend time in small talk. She would also sew kimonos. She would lack nothing in her life.

But while weeping, Izumi said to herself, *This was never the life I wanted*, again, and again.

Notes:

＊この翻訳は田辺聖子「十七のころ」にもとづいている。この作品の翻訳についていろいろとお世話下さった国文学科中周子先生、田辺聖子文学館学芸員住友元美先生、田辺美奈様に感謝いたします。舞台は戦中から戦後にかけての大変混乱した時代で、主題である主人公泉の心の煩悶をとおして、この時代の日本社会の移り変わりも見える仕掛けになっている。住友（2012）は、この作品は田辺聖子氏の自伝的作品であり、樟蔭女子専門学校時代（1944 年 4 月～1947 年 3 月）のうち 1945 年 11 月以降に執筆が開始されたと推定している。

1　とり子が「泉つたら、だめですよ、ほんとに十六にも十七にもなつて」と言う時、「だめですよ」は娘の未成熟さ（immaturity）にたいする不満であると解釈できる。

2　短編を通して三人称の語りであるが、視点はほぼ泉にあり、平蔵の描写はほとんどが泉のネガティブな視点から語られると考えてよい。人が太っていることを表す形容詞には、他にも overweight, stout, obese などがあるが、「散らかつた食卓」「膨れた腹」など周囲の文脈からもネガティブな含みを持つ fat を選択した。

3　「しかし彼女に何ができよう」。これと同様の文が作品中に数度繰り返され、彼女を取り巻く古い世界の拘束の強さと泉の無力感を示す。

4　「柱」について、日本家屋の「柱」に相当する英語は見つけにくい。column はギリシャ石造建築物の柱、pillar は屋根を支える丸柱（a tall upright round post used as a support for a roof or bridge、post は門柱・支柱（a strong upright piece of wood, metal etc that is fixed into the ground, especially to support something）などの意味（カッコ内はいずれも *LDOCE* 5）。

5　「しきりにへらを髪にこすつてゐた」は、和裁において針と同様、滑りをよくするために髪の油をへらにつけていると思われる。しかしこのような和裁独特の方法も、外国人の視点からすると生地に汚れを付けているようにしか見えない。

6　とり子が泉の「すらりと伸びた四肢」を見て「幼いものだ」と感じる場面であるが、「すらりと伸びた」という表現から、一般にはむしろ大人への成長を感じることが多いように思われる。ここでは大人ではなく、未成熟な子どもの体型の表現として、fragile and slender limbs を選択した。

7　小説の中で使われる green は成長や生命を表す色のメタファーとして多く用いられている。特に小説後半の、角材の下敷きになった雑草の美しい緑は、敗戦後の混乱期を乗り越えて生き延びる生命のたくましさと、新しい世界への変わりない成長を感じさせる。

8　鏡の中で暗い顔の泉。作品では「それはどんなに、赤い大きなリボンと対照して道化じみてゐたことだらう」と続く。ここではリボンの派手さと、泉の暗い無表情さの組み合わせが道化に似ているとした。

9　「物象」は旧制中学校の教科名で、物理学・化学・鉱物学などに相当する。（『大辞林』三省堂）。

10　住友（2012）によると、泉は「おとなしく、夢みがちな女の子」と構想されているが、夢見るようにぼんやりすることと、夢を抱くことは訳出する

うえで区別した方がよいと思う。ここで「夢見るような瞳をして考えた」はむしろ後者であると考える。

11 「あらし来よ潮干汐満つわたつみのその平調にわれ飽けるゆゑ」は与謝野寛の作（『相聞』（1910年、明治書院　258頁））。

12 「新しい世界は芽生えつつある」も生命力に溢れた植物のメタファーであり、注7のgreenのメタファーの流れでとらえることができる。新しい戦後世界の到来を感じつつも、戦前的な世界に閉じ込められ抜け出すことができない泉の心の中の煩悶とコントラストをなす。

Comments for Readers:

On the surface, Tanabe's *At the Age of Seventeen* appears to be a straightforward coming of age story of a girl who is conflicted about her future. However, because Tanabe's work is situated with such deep connections to time and place, she provides a unique snapshot of Japan during great change and conflict.

Tanabe explicitly describes Izumi's internal feelings of conflict, while providing other characters who challenge Izumi's way of thinking. Izumi's weariness and depression is contrasted strongly with Yoshiko's vitality and activity. Also, Izumi's identity as an obedient and sheltered daughter is contrary to the successful independence Yoshiko represents. In addition, Izumi's parents believe that Izumi should be a cultured woman, who does not work outside the home and is educated in various domestic skills. Their view of Izumi's future is intrinsically connected with her future role as a wife. Although Izumi recognizes benefits of all these paths, she is clearly still torn about her own desires.

Beyond the direct challenges in Izumi's life that Tanabe writes about, her story also touches on national and international conflict. The mention of Marx's and Engels and the social commentary Heizo gives from the newspaper, show political instability and ideological conflicts that will also appear in the coming era of the Cold War. Moreover, the repatriates that Yoshiko helps are an influx of Japanese citizens after World War II. In some instances these people are returning to Japan, but others were born abroad in Japanese colonies and are coming to Japan for the first time. This influx of repatriates may be a visual reminder to people in in Tanabe's story of failed colonization and a start to re-conceptualizing national identity. Yoshiko's efforts to aid repatriates can be seen as an acceptance of change, whereas Izumi's isolation from such activities mimics her isolation from change in her own life.

Tanabe's work ends somewhat ambiguously, leaving the final judgment of the many characters' opinions to the reader. Overall, Tanabe's attention to detail and description of local life leads to a reflection on the many challenges individuals and societies have when going through periods of change.

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