

Process? ...What Process?!: Conversation with Ikuko Ikari
Translated by Ei Arakawa /Mari Mukai

(Cut)

You know, I don't know much about you as a person. That's why I'm asking these stupid questions. What's your favorite book? Or music?

One hundred Years of Solitude.

Doesn't ring my bell... Who wrote it?

Garcia Marquez.

Are you reading it now?

I read it a while ago. It was the most favorite one of all the books I've read so far.

Sorry, I didn't read it.

You should read it.

What's the story like?

It's about a family. The story follows up to the 5th generations by the end.

How did you like it? 5 generations thrive and decline? Did you like history?

Not really, well, actually I liked it. (laughter)

How about music?

Well, I don't have anything particularly favorite. My boyfriend plays something always.

(pause) **That's interesting.**

... you know, (pause) I sort of know the answer. Sort of.

You mean what you want to answer?

No, I mean I can tell what you want for answer, and I can say it if you want me to. (pause) But, I shouldn't do that, I think I shouldn't pretend I understood (your question) easily.

Understood easily about your answer?

No about your questions.

What does that mean?

You know, I don't want to pretend to understand so quick.

My question is not so deep.

I know, but it's ambiguous. If you ask me in Japanese, my answer could be different. You know, how a language constructs a culture? It develops a personality too. That's why my personality is different when I speak in Japanese and when I speak in English. If you question me in English in the same way you question in Japanese, I am not able to get the meaning of the question. You have to ask me much more specific. Otherwise, I can't answer, or I won't answer.

I know what you mean. Because my English is influenced by my native language, it becomes implicit often. So, I have to ask differently in English. Also, I agree that the language makes personalities. (pause) Actually, I like where we are going with this. I guess it's like figuring out the way to reduce misunderstanding, isn't it?

Also, I can response ambiguously to the ambiguous questions...but you are going to translate this in English, and this is going to be in print. That makes me very sensitive about what I say.

Sensitive about making your image, and control it in printed materials?

No, I just want to have a control on my works as much as I can, and I don't want to do it if I think I might regret it later.

Did you receive that kind of education at actor school?

No, I didn't.

It's like a fashion model whose images are on billboard.

I don't know if it's about *that* image. I should be able to be responsible for my works. For instance, I don't get paid for doing this. That's why I think I should be more cautious about what I give, it has to be within my ability. Also, it is easy for me to talk about the favorite books or movies. Maybe we can talk about something we read. But, it is very hard for me to explain the process because we have a different ideas on "process".

Which process are you referring to?

Let me tell you about my friend who has a long distance relationship. She is an actress, and he works for the government. When they talk on the phone, he sometimes ask her to read a few lines from the script. But, she can't. She doesn't want to say it because it doesn't make sense for her to say only those lines. But He doesn't understand it.

For example, questions about me being an actress, the "process", it's like I am asking you questions about why you do what you do (moving images). You know, because you are not an actor. So, I am totally confused when you asked me about the process. It is hard for me to understand where your question is coming from.

Well, I sometimes ask spontaneously.

That's fine. But, I don't get that.

I don't get that too. But, I am kind of hoping that I can start conversation from topics you accidentally speak out. I know it is a difficult situation because there's a voice recorder on the table, we are not regular friends at the café. If you put this interview in a frame of standard interview, I understand your response. You are a professional actress. But, it will be great if your true self is different from an actress Ikuko somehow. Well, it is too difficult because I am doing this for pamphlets . . .

(Cut)

How have you been busy? Are you tired?

Yeah.

Are you Tired? Yeah? You are not putting too much effort in our conversation.

(laughter)

Do you usually answer only yes or no? You don't want to answer more, do you? (pause) You think it is no use to say lots. (laughter) When someone say "are you tired?," for instance...

Honestly, I feel very awkward by the idea of getting this interview by you. Why me? (laughter) I was so introvert among friends too.

I knew it.

Yes.

Because you were drawing circles on the table, not looking at me. I thought you are very shy.

Right, I am like someone's cat in your house. I don't function well.

It could be a contradiction for an actress.

(laughter) It doesn't contradict.

I am sometime shy too, but...

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is that once we get close, it won't be a problem at all. But, I am a only child.