

Gazing sincerely at <Hagino Miho>

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I can't remember when and where I first met <Hagino Miho>. It must have been within a year or so, but I only have a vague memory. I happened to look aside and there she was, so close as the tip of my nose could touch her. I was startled for a moment, but soon I figured to take it easy and somehow decided to keep the closeness.

<Hagino Miho> takes a startling close distance with others in general. If it's a person, she approaches near enough as though she can see one's skin grain, can feel one's breath, can tell the number of bad teeth or as to see into the deep part of the eyes of that person.

Naturally some people may not like how <Hagino Miho> approaches. How beautiful the objects could be, they go out of the frame of beauty if seen from such a short distance. From one step behind, they could be seen as beautiful as they seems to be..... Even though people asks her to do so, she never withdraws. What <Hagino Miho> really wants to know is the actual feeling of the existance and not the beautiful appearance of the objects.

<Hagino Miho> also gets surprisingly close to society. Society is something indistinct and it seems to have nothing to do with distance, but <Hagino Miho> dares to stand point-blank to "it". Then all of a sudden "it" appears in front of me with substantial shape and shocks me.

The law for example. It is an intimate issue for <Hagino Miho> for she studied international laws as a student in university. Viewers are forced to be at the site where things such as copyrights or portrait-rights, which are heard often, can be violated ("Super Star, Right?"). The governmental administration system is another. The viewers are induced to look carefully at the birth certificate of a Mexican or the copy of a Japanese family registration with the experience they are urged to find an evidence of man's living ("Renaissance"). Then, they may realize that it is a piece of paper. Captions of art works at

museums ("No one knows what they wanted, Even") and internet communication (the internet project "Jackie in the Box") also provides us with a situation which makes us stare at "it" and realize what "it" includes and what "it" excludes.

For one understanding of <Hagino Miho>, we can say that knowing <Hagino Miho>, we learn that "Society" is a receptacle to contain us and it is smaller than we think. We have been trained not to bump against to it and taught how to swim tactically in it . But this is not quite what I can see from <Hagino Miho>. There is something more about <Hagino Miho>.

To stand at a point-blank reach can also be a violent. <Hagino Miho> is executing violence. Of course she is taking a risk of having a counter attack and being beaten by her opponents, whether it is a person or society. The way she acts is unsafe and at the same time there is something humorous about it. Nevertheless, <Hagino Miho> lets her body and heart stand at a startling position so close to her opponents that she can feel the breath of them. As to say that otherwise she could not believe "the actual feeling of a person's existence, (even of an invisible one!)," or "the actual feeling of society, (even though it's invisible.)" This attitude represented through her works questions us "What makes you to believe so?"

I who somehow decided to stay on the tip of my nose distance find myself fascinated by <Hagino Miho>, even being startled all right by her question. I look into her eyes and see some swiftness and fretfulness as something uncomprehensible. I look into her eyes questioning myself why I resonate with her time after time.

Translated by Yasuko Hayashi