

(workshop)

Teaching Expression in Japanese and English

Oriza Hirata

一人ひとり顔が違うように、人間には言葉の個性というものがあります。これを、広い意味で「コンテキスト」と呼びます。ディスコミュニケーションの多くは、この「コンテキスト」のずれから起こります。また、とくに、この「ずれ」自体を認識していないときに、問題は深刻化します。これは演劇教育でも、コミュニケーション教育でも、また語学教育でも同様です。

演劇は、この異なるコンテキストを、短期間ですり合わせる能力や知恵を蓄積しています。こういったすりあわせの行為を、私は「対話」と呼んでいます。この「対話」の精神は、教育の問題だけではなく、異文化を理解する上でも、重要なポイントになります。

今後の語学教育、言語教育は、これまでのように、一方的に知識を授けるタイプのものから、「対話型」へと、変化して行かなくてはなりません。その時に、演劇や演劇的な教育手法が果たせる役割は大きいと考えられます。

As we each have a unique face, the language each of us use has its own personal characteristics, or "context," in a broad sense. Many of communication problems stem from the gap between personal contexts. It especially gets serious when people are not aware there is such a gap.

It happens in theater education, communication education and language education alike.

We need to gradually come to terms with other people's contexts to overcome the gap, and theater is a reservoir of knowledge and wisdom to do it in a short period of time. I call this process of coming to terms with other people's contexts "dialogue." The spirit of "dialogue" is one of the most important point not only for education but also for understanding other cultures.

Language education now faces the need to change. Conventional one-way method of passing down the knowledge to students has to take on the dialogue-oriented interactive attitude. And I believe theater and theater education can contribute greatly in the course of the shift.

Oriza Hirata

Playwright, director, leader of Seinendan, and artistic director of Komaba Agora Theater. Born in Tokyo in 1962. Graduated from International Christian University, College of Liberal Arts, Humanities Division.

In 1995, Hirata won the 39th Kishida Kunio Drama Award with "Tokyo Note (Tokyo Notes)." In 1998, he received the 5th Yomiuri Theater Award Outstanding Director Award, for his production of "Tsuki no Misaki (The Cape of the Moon)," a play written by Masataka Matsuda.

Hirata wrote and directed "Ueno Dobutsuen Sai-sai-sai Shugeki (Attacking Ueno Zoo for the Fourth Time)" in 2002 and won the Yomiuri Theater Award for Outstanding Production. In 2002, he won AICT (Association Internationale des Critiques des Theatre) Critique Award for his book "Geijutu Rikkokuron (Arts as the Basis of a Nation) " published from Shueisha.

In 2003, he won the Grand Prix of the 2nd Asahi Performing Arts Awards with "Sono Kawa wo Koete, Gogatsu (Across the River in May)," which was an event for the Year of Japan-ROK National Exchange in 2002.

At present, Hirata is associate professor of Obirin University (Department of Humanities, School of Integrated Culture), management board member of the Japan Performing Arts Foundation, board member of Japanese Society for Theatre Research, executive board member of JAWOC (Japan Organizing Committee for the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan), and artistic director of Fujimi Culture Hall KIRARI FUJIMI.

A playwright and director, Oriza Hirata is one of the key figures in the contemporary theater scene in Japan.

Hirata formed the Seinendan theater company while still in college, and has since developed a consistent methodology in his activities in the theater world. Hirata's "contemporary colloquial theater theory" is a new and practical theater theory. His theatrical practice, and books like "Gendai Kogo Engeki no tameni (For Contemporary Colloquial Theater)," have had a profound impact on the current theater scene in Japan.

The Komaba Agora Theater, where Hirata is artistic director, is Seinendan's home base. The theater also serves as an information clearing house for companies from all over Japan and overseas. By holding the Endo-of-Millennium Theater Festival annually for more than 10 years, Hirata introduced regional theaters to Tokyo audiences. Hirata's prescient efforts have helped regional theaters get much attention in the 1990s. The Komaba Agora Theater started a new festival called "summit" in 2001 and continues to develop its active role.

In the spring of 1999 he served as the festival director of Toga Spring Festival and has been broadening the area of his activities.

He is also active in collaborating with overseas artists in France, Korea, Australia, etc., through joint projects and workshops.

Hirata has become a noted critic on such cultural matters as education, language, and literature. In April 2000, he has joined the faculty as an associate professor at the School of Integrated Culture, a new division to develop a comprehensive program of theater education, Department of Humanities at Obirin University. Hirata's workshop method will be included in a new Japanese text book for junior high school students to be used from 2003. Over 300,000 children per year will be creating drama in the classrooms.