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論文内容の要旨

Introduction

The dramatic works of W. B. Yeats have strongly influenced the Irish theatre. In the field of Irish theatre studies, this has been well recognized. The foundation of the Abbey Theatre was an epoch-making event for Irish theatre and it is not too much to say that Yeats initiated modern Irish theatre as its founder and co-director. Yet, he is counted as one of the greatest poets of twentieth-century Ireland and most critics have regarded his drama as a sideline. However, Yeats never regarded himself as a poet alone, for he was concerned that his plays be performed on the stage throughout his life. It is true that theatre activities entailed great hardships for Yeats, especially immediately after his beginnings in 1904. He was sorely distressed by such a series of troubles as the principled split among earlier members, the riot of the Dublin audience, and the general shortages of funds. Nevertheless, he never actually gave up his theatre activities, making even the difficulties of his theatre into materials for poems.

Moreover, study of his drama will help in the investigation and deepening of one of the main themes in Yeats criticism: Yeats's commitment to the realities of life. Yeats criticism since the 1980s has come to pay close attention to the relationship between Yeats and Ireland's colonial circumstances, and has challenged the traditional privileged figure of Yeats as a poet standing

aloof from the world. In such critical assessments of Yeats, it does not seem right to neglect his dramatic activities, for the form of drama, being essentially communal, inevitably involves persons besides an author, such as actors and an audience, to actualize the work on a stage and, therefore, his plays show best his concern with the society in which he lived.

Yeats as a dramatist created a stir in the Irish theatrical world that was strongly under the influence of English commercial theatre at the time. Yeats set up a new current in Irish theatre and a study of modern Irish drama cannot hold good without due consideration for his contribution to it. To put it more concretely, while he tried to establish an Irish drama unique to his own people and his dramatic materials were therefore often chosen from the Irish myths, they also afford ample scope for interpretation as harbingers of the absurdist plays written by Samuel Beckett in the mid-twentieth century.

To begin with, I want to show that drama was of as much significance as poetry for Yeats through the close reading of his autobiographical texts. Then, Yeats's dramatic works will be examined in chronological order to elucidate the continuous changes to his dramatic art. Thus, by reshaping Yeats as a poet and dramatist in connection with his historical surroundings, the whole figure of Yeats the writer will become clearer, and may thus contribute to the field of contemporary Yeats studies.

Chapter I

Yeats intermittently continued to publish autobiographical writings. Among these, *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* stands out because this is the first of such works and Yeats emphasizes the special supervision he exercised over it in a letter to his father. On the other hand, the poet makes an excuse for the fragmented passages of the work on the grounds that he describes such remote memories as one cannot remember accurately. However, the anachrony rather endorses his total authorial viewpoint, as it shows each fragment is connected not with occurrences in chronological order but with a more theoretical organization of material. Indeed, close reading of the text reveals that he represents his boyhood days in a dialectical fashion: he describes his maternal and paternal families in terms of a binary opposition of the histrionic Catholic and the contemplative Protestant, trying to sublimate them.

The poet took over the oral tradition of the maternal line and started to write under their influence with the hope of finding his "audience." His earlier experience with poetry is based not on silent reading but on reading aloud. The poet's father, the painter J. B. Yeats, is also depicted as an artist under the same influence. He read to his son dramatic verse and ballads; though he always achieved good marks in his own school days, he gave the son an education that overemphasizes literature, virtually neglecting other subjects in the school curriculum. In short, the poet's father is represented as a man who attempts to absorb the histrionic disposition from the maternal family and to mix it with his own contemplative one. He is a precursory model of the poet himself. However, as the father's style of painting changes from the Pre-Raphaelite into a more realistic manner, Yeats comes to look for another model suitable for his own art.

In 1885, Yeats met John O'Leary and came to be deeply involved in the activities of Irish

nationalism. However, we can find in *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* nothing zealous or fanatic as regards the Fenian movement. Yeats writes of his nationalistic activities in relation to his interest in histrionicism. He visits a political club not to hold a political debate but to enjoy the excitement and the theatrically self-possessed state. In this theatrical commitment to the political club, Yeats contrasts the Irish mode of "public speech" with that in England, which is not unnatural. As Jurgen Habermas shows how "public opinion" was developed by debate in the newly evolving "public sphere" as coffee houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the idea of the public space cannot be dissociated from politics. However, while Habermas attaches importance to establishing a consensus by way of speech free from violence, Yeats is not concerned with it. Thus, though Yeats feels a joy at hearing the orator John F. Taylor give a lecture on Irish literature, the poet does not admire the content of Taylor's speech in the least. His half self-possessed speech is pleasant to the poet because "this art was public," while the father's voice has lost its former power because it is "private." This very difference between them is then not in themselves, but in the presence of an audience. What attracts Yeats depends solely upon the fact that Taylor in his lecture speaks to the general public. Yeats's idea of publicness is based profoundly upon its multiplicity.

Publicness in this sense is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt rather than Habermas. Arendt emphasizes the multiplicity of human beings as one of the most fundamental of the human conditions. She claims that the matter of speech will be necessarily political in its nature, as speech is the very thing that makes human beings political. Arendt's publicness is grounded on the agonistic side of the multiple public. She also examines human finitude as a testament to human beings with regards to their plurality. In her argument, our finitude signifies that our experiences, being all different, are restructured as a phenomenon of something that has already existed: that is, our finity lies in the Heideggerean distinction between the recognizable and the unrecognizable. The idea of human finitude cannot be separated from theatricality in this point. Her argument, which reveals the complicated connection between politics and theatricality in terms of publicness, makes clear the deep relationship of Yeats's drama and Irish nationalism.

Seen from the historical context of the period, Yeats was not the only one who connected the political dialogue of nationalism with the artistic dialogue of drama. Yeats in his earlier period was clearly influenced by Thomas Davis's Young Ireland tradition. Indeed, Yeats's idea of a national literature clearly reflects the Young Irelanders' romanticized ideal. Moreover, Davis himself owed his nationalism to the *Risorgimento* movement in Italy. The *Risorgimento* was a period of at once cultural nationalism and political activities that aimed at unification of the country. Giuseppe Mazzini played an important role, founding Young Italy which claimed a highly romanticized republican ideal based on conversations with ordinary people. Concerning cultural nationalism, the success of Giuseppe Verdi's operas offers a good example. *Nabucco*, for instance, dealing with Babylonian captivity, won tremendous applause in an Italy occupied by Austria. The form of opera, by which an author and an audience can communicate more directly than by written texts, was a great driving force for the *Resorgimento*, without losing its artistic qualities. Importantly, chances to experience the Italian political and artistic enthusiasm served not only

the Italians but also foreigners, what with the nationalists who sought refuge in foreign countries and Italian opera that was also exported to the other countries of Europe. Thus, the idea of drama as an influential medium of political speech was equally available in England or other European countries. In fact, also in Ireland, Dion Boucicault's political melodrama, *The Shaughraun*, had earned popularity in 1874, and it led him to write an open letter to Benjamin Disraeli, demanding the release of Irish political prisoners.

Yeats's romantic nationalism exemplifies the fusion of nationalism and theatre that had spread all over Europe in those days. Thus, by reading closely the historical and cultural backgrounds of the early Yeats, it becomes clear that an artistic conflict of the poet's mirrors a Pan-European trend in literature.

Chapter II

One of Yeats's early plays, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, well illustrates the communicative element of drama in the early Yeats, and its problems. The play has long been the subject of critical consideration because of its conspicuously nationalistic features: the play is regarded as a work of symbolic art at times, and as a propagandist drama at others. Its complexities lie in the collaborative nature of the play, which was written and produced with the aid of Lady Gregory and Maud Gonne.

The figures of peasant women show this collaborative nature most, as they contain two different connotations in the one image. Irish nationalists of the day made use of an Irish peasant image as an icon to exalt the national identity, while Yeats took peasants to be his ideal audience along with the aristocracy: for him, the peasant image is more an aesthetic device than a political one, though the two can never be wholly separated. In *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, these two kinds of peasant figure intersect in the process of collaborative writing and performance. By examining the peasant representations within and without the text, I will show how *Cathleen ni Houlihan* is at once both a political and artistic work, and how the misshapen coexistence of these different facets troubled Yeats himself and his critics.

In *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, the Gillanes, an ordinary Irish peasant family, are busy preparing for the wedding of their elder son Michael. Suddenly Cathleen ni Houlihan, the symbol of Ireland appears. Michael is charmed by her words and plunges into rebellion despite the strong persuasion of his betrothed. In the earlier part of the work, Lady Gregory vividly depicts the family conversation between Bridget and Peter in the robust style of Irish peasant speech. The movement to re-evaluate the folk culture of Ireland was in full flood at this time and the Gaelic League was founded by Douglas Hyde as early as 1893. In the same way, we can see a sound nationalism from the domestic conversations of the Gillanes. However, the style Yeats used for the protagonist, Cathleen, is quite different. The dialogue between Cathleen and the other figures is greatly intensified and her answers to Bridget's questions are always ambiguous and symbolic. The diction prevailing on the stage is raised by the presence of Cathleen to a symbolic level. Thus, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* shows the process by which the figure of an Irish peasant woman shifts from realistic to symbolic. Yeats asserted of the play's theme that it "is the perpetual

struggle of the cause of Ireland and every other ideal cause . . . against all that we mean when we say the world." For him, the subject lies between ideals and the world, or between art and life.

However, Yeats's idea was especially vulnerable to transformation under the influence of the leading actress, Maud Gonne. She was one of the founders of a famous nationalist women's group. It often performed highly political *tableau vivants* that showed a Mother Ireland figure for the audience in Dublin. Thus, the figure of Cathleen ni Houlihan was easily connected to her amateur political theatricals by the audience of those days. Moreover, for Yeats himself the idea of the Irish peasants was problematic. This idea was originally developed by the Young Irelanders, well-known both for their militarism and romanticism. Thus, as he put it in his later poem, 'Man and the Echo,' Yeats experienced fear that the work's symbolic dramaturgy might be incomplete, and, therefore, be excessively propagandistic. *Cathleen ni Houlihan* is the work that gave him the greatest difficulty with its dramatized conflict between an ideal and the world.

The problem is more conspicuous when the Irish peasant women in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* are compared with those in J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904). Synge's language is different from Yeats's in its peculiar mixture of a learned perspective and vulgar peasant speech and many critics have admitted that Synge's works preserve both penetrating observation and poetic decorum. Synge was regarded as a modern playwright for his realistic approach blended with a mythological background. In other words, he managed to actualize the two opposite characteristics and it constituted a threat to Yeats. He refers to Synge in a curiously distanced tone in "The Death of Synge," emphasizing Synge's self-confidence in his art and exposing the poet's own anxiety about his in the word "envy." Yeats's incessant admiration for Synge in many poems suggests not only pure acclaim but his ambivalent feelings towards the playwright. While Synge assured himself of his language, or at least he seemed to for Yeats, the poet was at a loss, halfway between high-toned dramatic verse and the peasant speech. Thus, his dramatic work continuously produced changes in his long subsequent career, beginning with *At the Hawk's Well* in which he explored a novel dramatic representation under the influence of Japanese Noh.

Chapter III

At the Hawk's Well is generally regarded as an important work because it is the turning point in his dramatic career. However, Yeats did not completely abandon the style and theme of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Engaging himself in seeking a drama innovative both in form and content, he kept one theme, that is, a protagonist standing against the catastrophic moment of destiny. He presents a model for his tragic theatre in a human being facing the moment of great exaltation that can be well presented in a nonverbal way, by means of dance. The conventional paradigm of Japanese Noh has much in common with Yeats's theory. Yet, Yeats was not indifferent to the Irish political situations as seen in his letters at that time. He did not leave them aside while engaging with symbolic Noh plays; rather, he intended to represent his tragic model in relation to the actual situations of Ireland in a subtler way with the aid of a dance.

In performing *At the Hawk's Well* in 1916, he was satisfied with the work and reported that "the dancing and masks [were] wonderful." It was a Japanese dancer, Michio Ito, who took part

in the work. To Yeats, Ito seemed to be able to express his attempt most effectively on the stage. Nevertheless, for all Yeats's eulogy of Ito's "minute intensity of movement in the dance of the hawk," he never used Ito in his plays and their relationship became more and more chilly as time went by. His dance that made the poet enthusiastic was suited only to the special occasion of *At the Hawk's Well*. In short, in *At the Hawk's Well* Yeats's tragic theory is highly successful, but his picking Ito out left something to be desired for him.

At the Hawk's Well is the story of the quest after the Well of Immortality in a desert island far off in the sea. Situations around the Well are persistently described in words indicating barrenness and devastation. Indeed, the well of immortality and the world around it lie completely buried in horrible obscurity without any proper names but that of the Young Man, the only exception among this utter namelessness. The Guardian represents this vacancy most powerfully. Having no words to speak in the play, almost her only means to express herself seem her eyes, but her "dazed and heavy" eyes are only a mysterious enigma impossible to understand. She is the absolute Other with whom one can exchange no communication either by words or by countenance. Confronting so great a blank, the Young Man suddenly has a fit of passion and is possessed by madness. Nevertheless, his speech even in such a state is far from the ravings of delirium; rather, he speaks powerfully with well-controlled words and in correct grammar. He is never swallowed up by her great nothingness. Even after his trance caused by the Guardian's dance, Cuchulain's words still keep their tragic power which attracts an audience.

The connotations of this nothingness become accessible when we think of them in relation to the playwright's concern about the contemporary Irish situations. Terry Eagleton makes several important statements concerning vague evasions of the Great Hunger in the Irish academic and literary world. According to him, the Irish have been extremely afraid of mentioning the Great Hunger as if the Famine were a historical and cultural taboo in Ireland. Eagleton describes the Famine as a death of the *signifiant*: facing so great a calamity, the Irish keep entirely silent. What his research makes clear at once is a close affinity of characteristics between the Guardian in *At the Hawk's Well* and the Famine. There is enough evidence to show that we can identify the Guardian with the Great Hunger. Rev. Meehan noticed that the characteristics of Famine-damaged people included their eyes being "languid and careless," which quite resembles those of the Guardian. Asenath Nicholson states that Donegal in the midst of the Famine was filled with a "death-like stillness." While Donegal is almost the only hilly country in Ireland, the nameless land in the play is repeatedly called "hills" and "mountains." The emptiness of the Guardian and the land, in which the tragic essence of *At the Hawk's Well* lies, are to be thought of as symbols which stand for the taboo of mentioning the Famine in Irish history. Thus, in the text, the playwright skilfully brings about a reconciliation between his symbolic art and a deep concern for actual Irish problems.

By these examinations into the text of *At the Hawk's Well*, the difficulty of performing the Guardian comes to the fore. The Guardian is required to be the absolute Other both for the other characters in the play and to an audience. As for the reason why Yeats interpreted Ito's dance as an ideal one for this troublesome role, many critics have agreed that Yeats found a new

possibility in Ito's performance different from Western movement. True, Ito was native to Japan, but in reality he was not well informed about Noh. However, in the prevailing mood of Japonisme in the early-twentieth century, Ito was always judged in connection with this aesthetic cult. In such circumstances, we cannot easily think that Yeats alone escaped prejudice towards him. Rather it seems that the poet acquired an ideal distance from ordinary life not only by means of Ito's dance but also with regards to the person himself. What shows the Otherness of Ito to the poet most clearly is a language barrier between them. Ito was not good at English. True, the Guardian's silence in the text is owing to Yeats's symbolic dramaturgy in the main, but probably Ito's practical inability at speaking English is also relevant. Ito's being a foreigner--a lucid kind of Other--itself served to represent Yeats's idea of tragic theatre or "distance from life" at the first performance of the play. Nevertheless, its success depended on Ito's Otherness and consequently their mutual misunderstandings.

In the following year, Yeats revealed his disappointment and dissatisfaction at Ito's public performance of the play without his permission--as Yeats in those days liked neither public nor commercial performances. Ito's conduct was a betrayal itself for the poet in every respect. However, on Ito's side, he meant no harm to the poet. As they lacked genuine communication from the first, and as *At the Hawk's Well* largely owed its success to a lack of communication, it was a natural consequence that their rapport did not last. Furthermore, the very dissension between them indicates the limit of his dramaturgy. Yeats found that dance plays, in the end, have a weakness in their dependence on the dancer's performance. With all the risk of counting too much on dancers, Yeats's last plays explore a maximum dependence on the author's side, that is, how to speak the unspeakable.

Chapter IV

After the publication of *Four Plays for Dancers* in 1921, Yeats's dramatical activities seem stagnant. He produced more or less no plays during the 1920s. It seems that he reached a dead end over dance plays. However, it does not necessarily mean that he was inactive in his art. In this period, he showed an enhanced interest in reading such philosophical texts as George Berkeley's. His ten years' silence in the field of drama was for the refashioning of his artistic dogmas and for the adapting of his reformed thoughts to the Irish context. What came after the long, refreshing retreat was *The Words upon the Window-Pane*, first performed in 1931.

However, contrary to what we might expect from Yeats's philosophical tendency, this is said to be "his only realistic play"--dealing with a seance of the contemporary Dublin spiritualists. Therefore, the relatively traditional form has been regarded as his attempt to identify himself with the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy tradition in the eighteenth century. However, for the most part, the play deals not with the public achievement of Jonathan Swift, a representative of the intellectuals in his day, but with the agony of his private life--so that it seems to represent Yeats's ambivalent feeling towards Swift rather than a whole-hearted appreciation. The point of this play does not lie in the superficial realism of treating Yeats's contemporaries or in its traditional form, but in the deep penetration into a perception of one's own mind. By examining

what causes Swift's affliction in the play and what attitudes the attendees of the seance have towards him, I want to make clear Yeats's idea about human perception. The play will reveal its philosophy as akin to a phenomenological idea of perception rather than a rationalistic one. The idea deepens sharply in one of his last plays, *Purgatory* (1938)--as pessimistic and doubtful about the the meaning of the act of speaking itself. With the investigations of these two dramatic works, I want to point out that Yeats's theatre reached a stage which can be said to be a forerunner of the Beckettian absurd world.

In *The Words upon the Window-Pane*, Swift's agony seems to come more from his uncertainty about the rightness of implanting his ideals in others, his Vanessa and Stella, than his indignation against the coming democracy and the decline of his ideals. Interpreting Swift's tragedy, two men play an important part: in contrast to John Corbet, a young Cambridge student who specializes in Swift, old Dr. Trench remains silent, saying that the living cannot help the recurrent agony of the dead until they comprehend the problem themselves. It is the same idea of recurrence that Yeats shares with him. Together with other aspects identifying Dr. Trench with Ireland, such as his local connection with Dublin, he expresses an uncertainty about the classical ideals of Swift's day by his own silence. The play is a story in which the serious problem of acquiring experiential intellect is offered in the agony of Swift's spirits. It is realistic in that it deals with one of Yeats's greater themes, that is, the avoidance of theoretical abstraction and its perceiving of realities, beyond a superficial realism.

On the other hand, *Purgatory* is his most intensely minimized piece of work and has often been compared with Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* because of some characteristics that they have in common: a simple stage set of a withered tree, two beggar tramps as protagonists, and the circulating structure of the story. However, too much attention to formal similarities might have made critics miss another continuity between Yeats and Beckett. Therefore, I will consider the play from the viewpoint of its idealism as in *The Words upon the Window-Pane*. In *Purgatory*, the Old Man speaks about the ghosts of his parents, but they are represented only as silhouettes projected onto a screen. Being unable to speak or dance, the silhouettes are to do nothing but be there. Therefore, the dead's biography being revised into the living's autobiography, the indeterminacy of human perception is doubly intensified as compared with the case of Swift's ghost. The structure of *Purgatory* is fundamentally monological and highly arbitrary. The pattern is similar to that of Beckett's plays in which silent listeners are the last resort for the speaker suffering from a sense of nothingness, as in the relationship between the Mouth and the Auditor in *Not I*.

Some distinctive features of *Purgatory*, the impossibility of communicative dialogue, the devastating arbitrariness, the terribly imperfect mastery of monologue, and the thorough pessimistic view about human life, have their echoes in all of the Beckett's works. In fact, *Purgatory* is highly akin to *Endgame* in that they both have a fear of the continuity of bad blood and arbitrary stories of the protagonist, and inherit a Berkeleyian idea of human perception. For instance, Hamm is afraid of the possibility that they might "mean something," saying that "Imagine if a rational being came back to earth, wouldn't he be liable to get ideas into his head if

observed us long enough." Beckett's idea of perception is undoubtedly based on that of the Berkeleyian, though the ultimate eye of God is revised into the grotesque eye of "a rational being" from outer space that is evocative of a science fiction. Yeats and Beckett owe their ideas to Berkeley and are of the same line out of Ireland.

Yeats's dramatical career represents a complex network of the involvements in the theatre movements of the twentieth century as well as his own long personal explorations. When we examine Yeats's absurdist aspects, we tend to connect them retrospectively with Beckett's because of his great successor. Nevertheless, we should not ignore the simple fact that Beckett had not begun to write plays when Yeats died in 1939. Yeats's achievement as a precursor of the modern drama should be done justice.

Conclusion

Yeats's drama is simultaneously within and without Irish theatrical history. His dramatic art started under the influence of cultural nationalism, though, later it transformed itself into the precursor of the theatre of absurd. Furthermore, it also follows the process of that world literature took during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. It is not without grounds that T. S. Eliot praises Yeats as a playwright so enthusiastically: "With the verse play... Yeats had nothing, and we have had Yeats. . . . I do not know where our debt to him as a dramatist ends--and in time, it will not end until that drama itself ends." Yeats was always a pioneer in his dramatic activities. Many of the plays produced ranging from the earliest to the last stage of his literary career are testimonies to his consistent and laborious efforts to settle the problem of how art should commit itself to the realities, while simultaneously revealing the continuous shaping and reshaping of a human mind.

論文審査結果の要旨

本論文は、19世紀末から20世紀前半に活躍し、アイルランドを代表する詩人であったイエイツ (W. B. Yeats) の演劇作品を包括的に研究し、その劇作家としての文学史上の意義を明らかにしようと試みたものである。その目的のためにイエイツ自身の自伝的断章の分析から出発して、その背景にあるアイルランド独特の歴史、文化、政治の状況が作家の自己形成にいかに関与したかを論じる。さらに、作家が常に抽象的・美的志向とアイルランドの現実への執着との間に揺れ動いていたことを指摘して、その劇作活動がいかなる軌跡を描いていったかを解明し、最終的には一般的には詩人としてのみ名高いこの作家の演劇作品が、実際には20世紀のモダニズム文学のきわめて重要な一部であること、特にベケット (Samuel Beckett) の不条理劇の先駆となる意義があったことを証明している。

青年時代のイエイツが、グレゴリー夫人 (Lady Gregory) などと協力して演劇を通じてのケルト文化復興 (Celtic Renaissance) の担い手の一人となり、アビー劇場 (Abbey Theatre) の創立と活動に大きな貢献をなした劇作家であったことはよく知られた事実である。にもかかわらず、現在の見方ではイエイツは詩人として第一に評価されるのであり、その演劇作品は副次的

なものと呼ばれることが普通である。彼の戯曲はいずれも短い一幕劇がほとんどであり、しかも詩作品に比して現在では読まれることが少なく、こうして等閑視されるのもやむを得ない面があることは否定できない。しかし、本論文によれば、イエイツ自身の自伝的作品を見ると、作家自身にとって演劇が彼の生涯を通じて本質的に重要な芸術創作上の意味を持っていたことが明らかになるとされる。イエイツはアイルランドの民衆とその文化を代表するものと彼自身が認識している母方のポレクスフェン (Pollexfen) 及びミドルトン (Middleton) の家系とイングランド系アイルランド支配層 (Anglo-Irish Ascendancy) であるイエイツの家系という対照的な二つの血筋を引く人間であることを意識していた。彼はアイルランド民衆の口承文化を母方から受け継いだのである。一方、画家であった父 (J. B. Yeats) からはスコット (Walter Scott) の作品などを読み聞かせられて教育を受けた。彼にとって文学の本質は耳から入るものであり、語る者すなわち演技者と聴衆とを必要とするものとして意識されたのである。これが長い生涯を通じてのイエイツの基本的な文学観であった。もちろん論者は、伝的事実そのものを議論しているわけではなく、作家自身が自分の来歴をこのような二項対立的なものとして理解し、自伝として表現していることを重視しているのである。詩人としてのイエイツもまた、現実から遊離した抽象や夢想の中に生きたのではなく、アイルランドとの具体的なつながり、血縁と地縁によるつながりの昇華を希求していたことが示唆されている。イエイツにとっては芸術と現実の均衡をいかに保つかが常に切実な問題であった。民族作家としては「劇詩の高い窓枠」 (the high window of dramatic verse) から降りなければならないが、現実のアイルランドの大地に完全に降り立つことは作家としての芸術的基盤を失うことを意味する。汎ヨーロッパ的視野で見ると、19世紀のナショナリズムは、イタリアにおけるヴェルディ (Giuseppe Verdi) のリソルジメント・オペラ (Risorgimento Opera) に代表されるように、芸術と政治とが密接に関係する場ともなっていた。イエイツはアイルランド・ナショナリズムの作家として、劇作活動の中に芸術と政治とのヴェルディ的融合を企図したのであったとも言える。本論文の第1章ではこのような伝記的背景の問題が詳細に論じられ、相対立する可能性のある二つの要素を作家がいかにして弁証法的に止揚して解決すべきか模索していくこととなった過程が明らかにされている。

第2章ではイエイツの初期の演劇作品『カスリーン・ニ・フーリハン』 (*Cathleen ni Houlihan*) が内包する問題が具体的に検討される。現実から決して遊離しないことを目指したイエイツが、当時のアイルランドの現実である民族主義の高揚、イングランドによる植民地支配への抵抗の中に自らの身を置いて、政治的な演劇活動を行ったのは当然のことであった。アイルランドそのものを象徴する伝説的女性カスリーンが農民の日常生活の中に来訪し、その感化によって若者が平和な家庭を捨てて救国の行動に赴くという内容のこの芝居は、しかしながら、芸術と現実の調和の困難さを作家に認識させることにもなった。イエイツは当時のナショナリストと同様にアイルランド農民層を理想化して捉えていたように思われるが、実際の創作にあたっては、農民の言語の表現がうまくできないため、農民の家庭での会話の部分では全面的にグレゴリー夫人に依存することとなった。また、実際の上演にあたっては、詩人の片思いの相手でもあり、情熱的ナショナリストとしても有名であったモード・ゴン (Maud Gonne) がカスリーンを刺激的に演じることとなった。そのためにアイルランドの観客の熱狂的な支持を得ることにはなったが、イエイツにとっては、自己の芸術の自立性が揺るがされることになり、また、反イングランド活動を扇動して、後の「イースター決起」の悲劇の一因となったのではない

かという疑念が残ることになった。アイルランドの民衆、特に最底辺の農民や漁民との直接的絆を持ち得ない作家にとって、この作品はその創作活動の根源的問題をさらけ出す結果になったとも言える。このようなイエイツの初期演劇の問題点は、同時代のシング（J. M. Synge）との対比において、より立体的に浮き彫りにされている。シングは少数の演劇作品しか残さなかったが、そのいずれもがアイルランド演劇を世界的な意義を持つ存在に高めたものである。シングの劇作品、たとえば『海へ逝く者たち』（*Riders to the Sea*）などでは、アイルランド方言によって民衆の生活を描きながら、それをギリシャ悲劇的な高みへと引き上げることに成功している。シングの劇作品は政治との直接的な関わりがないために、アイルランド民衆の悲劇に普遍性を付与することになったとも言えるが、芸術とナショナリズムとの弁証法的解決を希求したイエイツは、シングのような民衆との直接的接点を持たないがために、さらに別なドラマの形態を模索し続けることとなった。

そのような模索は本論文の第3章で扱われる『鷹の井戸にて』（*At the Hawk's Well*）において、日本の能、さらにダンスというパフォーマンス芸術との結合という形で一つの解決を見ることとなった。この芝居は老人と若者、そして井戸の守護者というきわめて簡素化された登場人物と舞台構成という点で、能に倣ったものであり、また日本人の舞踊家伊藤道郎を黙役の守護者に起用して、舞踊による非言語的表現を行っていてもいる。きわめて実験的また前衛的な芝居であると言えよう。本論文では、しかしながら、イエイツの日本演劇に対する理解が実際には皮相的なもの、というより、彼独自のドラマツルギーのために恣意的に利用されたものであることが実証されている。それは伊藤道郎自身が能について無知であったこと、英語による意志疎通が困難であったことが、むしろ作家にとっては好都合であったということにもなる。この作品でイエイツが能から学びとり、新しい演劇として志向していたものは、沈黙を表現することであり、言語とパフォーマンスの精妙な融合であった。アイルランドの場合に、その沈黙とは19世紀半ばの「大飢饉」（the Great Hunger）についてのそれである。イーグルトン（Terry Eagleton）は、アイルランドの歴史と文学の中で、この民族的規模の重大な悲劇について奇妙にも殆ど語られないことを指摘しているが、少なくともイエイツが『鷹の井戸にて』の中で、その大いなる沈黙あるいは無そのものを表現しようと試みたことは間違いない。言語によって語りきることができないものをダンスによって表現することが、作家にとっての芸術と現実の弁証法的止揚の一つの可能性であった。しかし、そのことは伊藤道郎やその後起用された舞踊家ヴァロワ（Ninette de Valois）のパフォーマンスに過度に依存する結果を必然的に招来することとなり、実際の上演が作家の意図するところから離れてしまうことが避けられなかった。そのため、『クーフリンの死』（*The Death of Cuchulain*）では、『鷹の井戸にて』とは対照的に、ダンス表現の場面に作者の意志を反映する詳細なト書きが付されることになったのである。

本論文の第4章では、イエイツの晩年の劇作品である『窓ガラスの言葉』（*The Words upon the Window-Pane*）と『煉獄』（*Purgatory*）を取り上げて、作家が不条理劇の世界へ踏み込んでいたことが立証されている。前者の芝居は、イエイツの作品の中で最も「リアリスティック」なものとしてされているが、そこで追求されているのは、抽象概念の世界と現実の葛藤であり、表層的現実を超越した高次の現実への希求である。従来は脇役的人物として軽視されていたトレンチ博士（Dr. Trench）がこのテーマを表現する人物であることが指摘されている。また、『煉獄』においては、舞台の簡素化が究極的な形態にまで達しており、父と息子というわずか二人の人物によって芝居が進行する。しかも、実際には父である老人の偏執狂的モノローグの芝居であ

ると言ってよいものであり、言語的なコミュニケーションはもはや成立しない。その中で描かれるのは行為の永遠の繰り返しであり、語り得ないことをなお語り続けなければならないという不条理のヴィジョンである。この作品はベケットの不条理劇を想起させるものであるが、この作品発表当時のベケットはまだ劇作活動を開始していなかったことに注目すべきである。ベケットがイエイツの晩年の演劇を高く評価していたことから分るのだが、イエイツは20世紀のモダニズム文学の重要な一部である不条理劇をすでに完成させていたのであった。

本論文は従来軽視されてきたイエイツの演劇作品を取り上げて、その意義を、この大詩人の全創作活動の中においてのみならず、汎ヨーロッパ的な視野の中で、20世紀文学の根幹をなすモダニズム演劇に重要な貢献をなしていることを立証したものである。きわめて意欲的な企図のもとに、詳細かつ緻密な分析が行われていて、説得力に満ちた議論が展開されている。論者はアイルランド独特の歴史、文化、宗教に関する背景知識も十分に備えていて、堅実に論を進めている。19世紀から20世紀にかけてのナショナリズムの昂揚の中で芸術と現実の融合を求める詩人の苦闘が、その演劇作品によってきわめて明瞭に表現されていることを明らかにしている。おそらく最も重要な指摘は、イエイツが不条理劇の開拓者であり、ベケットの登場以前にすでにその完成者となっていた可能性であろう。このような意味で、本論文がイエイツ研究に新しい局面を切り開き、学問的に独自の位置を確立することに成功したことは疑いない。

よって本論文の提出者は、博士（文学）の学位を授与されるのに十分な資格を有するものと認められる。