

# Lord Dunsany and the Korean Translation of His Play

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## 1. Introduction

The treatment of Lord Dunsany is a further example which can be used to show how the Korean translators used their own interpretation of Irish drama and the Irish theatre movement and how this led to misunderstanding. In contrast to his reputation in Ireland, Korean dramatists considered Lord Dunsany to be at the forefront of the Irish theatre movement. After he was introduced as a major Irish playwright in the first Korean article concerning the Irish theatre movement, *Irish Renaissance: The Movement to Save a Declining Local Language. The Irish theatre*

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*movement, from Yeats the Valiant General to Lord Dunsany the Rising Star*, (Dongmyeong, 1923: 6) Lord Dunsany was introduced as a major Irish dramatist to the Korean reader on many different occasions.

A man has suddenly appeared like a flash in the Irish Literature world; his name is Lord Dunsany. ... His plays are full of Northern European mythical colour. In addition to this base, he adds the colour of Irish tradition. Lord Dunsany has finally created an ultra-realistic fantasy world. (Dongmyeong, 1923: 6)

After Yeats established the Irish Literature Renaissance, many Irish playwrights such as Lady Gregory, Synge, Lord Dunsany and OCasey were brought out. ... Dunsany is a mystic. He accomplishes mythical beauty and a super natural plot by putting lyrical poetry in the characters lines. (Y. Kim, 1931)

The major Irish dramatists were Yeats, Lady Gregory, Synge, Dunsany and OCasey. ... Dunsany is a unique dramatist who deals with super-natural themes. Sometimes he satirises modern culture and tackles the modern culture of science. (G. Kim, 1935)

In addition to the mention of Lord Dunsany in the Korean articles, Lord Dunsany's work was also translated into Korean. Of the seventeen Irish plays translated into Korean, during the 1920s and 1930s, four were one-act plays by Lord Dunsany.

*The Glittering Gate*, translator unknown, *Weekly Dong-Myeong* Vol.33, April 1923

*Fame and the Poet*, translated by Yong-Soon An, *Joseon Ilbo Daily*, 6th December 1934

*A Golden Doom*, translated by Yong-Dae Jo, *Simcheonji* [Monthly New Land],

Vol.2, April, 1924

*The Tent of Arabs*, translated by Ha-Yoon Yi, *Monthly Dong-Gwang*, Vol.36, August 1932

*Fame and the Poet*, translated by Yong-Soon An, *Joseon Ilbo Daily*, 6th December 1934

During the same period, ten Irish plays were produced on the Korean stage: five of these were Lord Dunsany's.

9th July-17th August 1921,

*The Glittering Gate*, performed by Dongwoohoi Club Touring Company, directed by Woo-Jin Kim

3rd-5th July 1924,

*The Gods of the Mountain*, performed by EMS, directed by Sung-Hi Bak

April 1925,

*Fame and the Poet*, performed by EMS, directed by Sung-Hi Bak

22nd 23rd February 1929,

*The Gods of Mountain*, performed by Ewha Girls College Drama Club

June 1933,

*The Tents of the Arabs*, performed by Yeonhi College Drama Club, directed by Ha-Yoon Yi

In contrast with the interest shown by Korean dramatists toward Lord Dunsany's plays, nobody in Ireland paid a similar amount of attention to his works. In fact, Irish critics regarded him as not an Irish dramatist.

Beyond the fact that his family and title are Irish, and that he has a castle and estates in the county of Meath, there is little that can be called distinctively Irish

about Lord Dunsany. Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, 18th Baron Dunsany, comes of a very old Anglo-Irish family which has given much distinguished service to Ireland and to England. He was born in 1878, was educated at Eton and Sandhurst, served for a time in the Coldstream Guards, and during the Great War served in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers as a Captain in France and Gallipoli. He had served with distinction also in the Boer War, and after that had given up soldiering for the comparatively milder excitements of big game hunting, cricketing, and the creation of a new theogony. On the whole he is more Anglo than Irish, and his reputation as a dramatist is mainly American, although he has had considerable success in the British theatre. (Malone, 1929: 246)

Apart from his family background, there are further grounds to support Lord Dunsany being labelled as not an Irish playwright. Firstly, for a large part of his life, he had resided outside Ireland and Ireland was not, therefore, his first choice of place to live.<sup>1)</sup> This implies that Lord Dunsany felt no strong Irish identity and lacked patriotism toward Ireland, contrary to what the Korean dramatists believed. As a result of Lord Dunsany's sympathies being closer to the English than to the Irish, he did not associate himself with the socio-political aspirations of the Irish people.<sup>2)</sup>

In contrast to his reputation in Ireland, Korean dramatists did not question Lord Dunsany's Irish identity which meant that Lord Dunsany was regarded as a major Irish dramatist who promoted the Irish identity. On the basis of these

1) He had a home and estate in Kent, which was his family's main residence, and another house in London. He also spent several years travelling in Africa and America. After World War I, he emigrated to America and stayed there until the end of his life.

2) His viewpoint is certainly English, and Ireland occupies little or no place in his consciousness. (Malone, 1929: 246)

circumstances, the main purpose of this chapter is to trace the socio-cultural background of the Korean dramatists' misunderstanding about Lord Dunsany and to analyse the dramatic elements of Dunsany's plays which appealed to them.

## 2. The Background of the Socio-Cultural Misunderstanding

The reason for the socio-cultural misunderstanding was a result of the Korean dramatists' ignorance of the Irish situation. They tried to understand Irish society and its history but only from a Korean viewpoint. The initial reason why Korean dramatists regarded Lord Dunsany as a patriotic Irish dramatist was Dunsany's involvement with the Abbey Theatre.

The first play of Dunsany, *The Glittering Gate*, was written at the request of Yeats and performed at the Abbey Theatre in 1909. His second play, *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior*, was also staged at the same theatre in 1911. From this point Dunsany was treated as a playwright. Consequently, the Abbey Theatre could be said to be his birthplace. (An, 1933)

As stated above, Korean dramatists regarded the Irish theatre movement as a national and socio-political movement rather than an artistic trend, believing that the Irish people found their nationalist strength through the cultural movement, particularly the theatre movement. According to this interpretation, the Abbey Theatre was the focus for the cultural war, not only for the Irish people but also for all peoples of small and weak nations. For this reason, Korean dramatists regarded anyone who was involved in the Abbey Theatre as a cultural fighter rather than an artist. Because the Irish theatre movement was over-idealised among

the Korean dramatists, it would have been hard for them to imagine that an anti-patriotic dramatist could exist there. It is true that Lord Dunsany wrote his first play *The Glittering Gate* at the request of Yeats.<sup>3)</sup>

Yeats said I should write a little one-act play on it, it was such a good idea. I said I knew utterly nothing of the stage or how to write a play. He also said that if I didn't write it he thought he should have to get someone to steal it from me! Then I'd try. (Amory, 1972: 61)

After his first play *The Glittering Gate* was staged at the Abbey Theatre on 29th April 1909, three more of Lord Dunsany's plays were staged there between 1909 and 1919. However, Korean dramatists overlooked two important points. Firstly, the extent of Lord Dunsany's involvement with the Abbey Theatre was not at the same level as Korean dramatists believed. For example, despite the fact that four of Lord Dunsany's plays were produced at the Abbey Theatre, the Board of Directors did not recognise him as a major dramatist. Lord Dunsany wrote more than twenty plays but only four were accepted by the Abbey Theatre. The first two plays, *The Glittering Gate* and *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior* were premiered on the Abbey stage but the other two plays were selected after their success outside Ireland and had to wait for their Irish production. *A Night at an Inn* was staged at the Abbey Theatre in 1919 but had earlier been staged in America in 1916 and in London the following year. Lord Dunsany's final contribution for the Abbey Theatre,

3) Lord Dunsany and Yeats had been acquaintances since 1893, from the time Dunsany gave financial support to a magazine which AE (George Russell) was to edit. Yeats wrote to his father in April 1909 about Dunsany, Dunsany is a man of genius I think. I want to get him into *the movement*. (Yeats, 1954: 529) According to Dunsany's letter to his wife Beatrice two days later, he treated the request to write a play, lightly but with a hint of his excitement. (Amory, 1972: 61)

*The Tent of Arabs*, was performed at the Abbey Theatre in May 1920 but it had been produced in Paris in 1914 and had become comparatively well-known in Britain and America since its première. It is also true that Dunsany was involved with the Board of Directors of the Abbey Theatre. However, the Board of Directors of the Abbey Theatre never showed favour to him or to his plays. Lord Dunsany's best and longest plays have never been produced at the Abbey Theatre, and have never been accepted as part of the Irish drama. (Malone, 1929: 252-253) Lord Dunsany's support on the Abbey Theatre Board of Directors came from Yeats. However, even Yeats was of a similar opinion to his colleagues. Yeats fully recognised Dunsany's cultural and family background, regarding Dunsany as a unique poetic dramatist rather than a major playwright.<sup>4)</sup> Yeats had thought no more than to have an Anglo-Irish peer involved in the Abbey Theatre in order to give it a healthy injection of respectability. In a letter he sent to Gordon Craig, Yeats wrote as follows about Lord Dunsany.

He is a man in whose genius I believe, though I am very doubtful whether it will ever come to anything. It is a great misfortune to be born in the Peerage, life is too pleasant for him. Fifty pounds a year and a drunken mistress would be the making of him. (Thilliez, 1972: 280)

The second fundamental misunderstanding of the situation by the Korean dramatists was Lord Dunsany's Anglo-Irish cultural background and his political sympathies with Britain. Firstly, Korean dramatists did not recognise the cultural and historical significance of the Anglo-Irish. There was no cultural and historical equivalent of the Anglo-Irish in Korean society. In Korea, there was some

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<sup>4)</sup> As a representative of the Protestant landlord class, his [Dunsany's] name may figure somewhat strangely on the list of Abbey playwrights. (Rynne, 1967: 80)

immigration from the ruling country, Japan. However, the cultural and historical significance of this group was not the same as the Anglo-Irish who first moved to Ireland from Britain. The Japanese immigration into Korea commenced in 1910.<sup>5)</sup> However, unlike the Anglo-Irish in Ireland, Japanese immigrant society was a strictly closed society which strongly preserved Japanese culture. There was no cultural mixing between Korean culture and that of the Japanese residents.<sup>6)</sup> For this reason, it can be said that Korean dramatists had no experience which could enable them to recognise the cultural and historical meaning of the Anglo-Irish. Although he could show romantic sympathy for Irish Nationalism, Lord Dunsany's loyalty to the British Army was unquestionable. Furthermore, Lord Dunsany was more familiar with English culture than Irish culture and his national identity was more as that of an Englishman and he had no sympathy with any kind of Irish political movement.

Dunsany served almost two decades of his life as a British soldier and took part in several wars including the Boer War and the First World War. Moreover, During the Easter Rising in 1916, he supported the British Government and was wounded by Sinn Fein in the street fights. Later Dunsany wrote 'Though Dublin must have been echoing to those volleys, to us they were firing in complete silence, for the crash of bullets going through the air drowns all other sound from them except the tinkling of their empty cartridges as they fall in the road. · many bullets went by me before I was hit. (Amory, 1972: 127) Perhaps surprisingly,

5) From that point, the Japanese Colonial Government developed a part of Seoul as a Japanese town. As a result of the Colonial Government master plan, a considerable number of Japanese moved to Korea permanently.

6) The situation changed slightly after the 1920s. However, during the whole colonial period, the Japanese residential area was a kind of cultural island in Korean society.

Lord Dunsany's army career was a well-known fact among the Korean dramatists. Dunsany(1893-) comes from a reputable family. He is a captain in the British Army, and only around forty years old. (Dong-Myeong, 1923) In the way that he revolts against the real world which he belongs to, Lord Dunsany has turned to being a traitor against Ireland which is his fatherland. During the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, he joined the British Army and fought against his brotherhood. (An, 1933) However, Korean dramatists did not interpret Lord Dunsany's joining the British Army as a voluntary action. This political attitude created a further emotional divide between Dunsany and the Board of Directors of the Abbey Theatre. For this reason, it is perhaps natural that no play of Lord Dunsany's was produced at the Abbey Theatre after December 1922, the year when the Irish Free State was founded.

### 3. Attraction of Dunsany's Drama to the Korean Dramatist-Fantasy and Political Allegories

Leaving to one side the misunderstanding about Lord Dunsany's political attitude, four aspects of Lord Dunsany's plays strongly appealed to Korean dramatists. Throughout his life, Lord Dunsany wrote more than twenty plays. Almost all of his plays dealt with a mythical sense of beauty and supernatural phenomena, based on an invented mythology in an imaginary country. (Rynne, 1967: 80)

Lord Dunsany is Ireland's only practitioner in magic in the contemporary theatre, but Lord Dunsany has had to invent not only a geography but a theogony of his own so that he could exploit his magic on the stage, or in his tale. (Malone, 1929: 246)

In contrast with the Irish attitude towards Lord Dunsany, the interpretation of his plays by the Korean dramatists was entirely different. They interpreted Dunsany's fantasy drama as a political allegory, the major tendency of which was to provide an escape from actual life to a world of fantasy, while it was not considered as such by the Irish themselves. Furthermore, Korean dramatists interpreted this fact to mean that Dunsany represented the voice of the oppressed people, the Irish. It is true that Lord Dunsany maintained that his plays were not pure fantasy. In his article *Romance and Modern Theatre*, which he contributed to the *National Review*, Dunsany insisted that he intended to attack modern culture by using a form of fantasy.

The drama is the mirror of life if not something more. · Such an [hypocritical] age may well have such a drama as will be pleasant and acceptable to the doers of these things. (Bierstadt, 1917: 118)

From Dunsany's viewpoint, the modern era was an era of hypocrisy. He felt that in a hypocritical age, non-realistic drama would be the most suitable form of art and for this reason he wrote fantasy plays rather than realistic drama. According to Dunsany, it was a euphemistic attack on the hypocrisy of the modern era. Korean dramatists accepted this point without criticism and placed great emphasis on it.

Dunsany is a neo-romanticist who dreams of a revival of a happy past, revolting against contemporary society governed by the realistic tendency of art. He is a traitor who has denied the meaning of contemporary life, aspiring to escape from the real world through the pursuit of fantasy. · His romanticism is an aggressive challenge against vulgar realism and a pungent satire from a fantasy world. Dunsany fiercely exposed the hypocritical attitude of contemporary society, which is revealed through morals, religion, laws and customs with his own technique, which is a mixture of

mystery and fantasy. Consequently, his plays are a satirical resistance of a people who have experienced a disaster of the times. (An, 1933)

As the above quotation reveals, Korean dramatists interpreted Lord Dunsany's attitude as a positive denial of real life, and felt that this was an expression of the inconsistencies of ordinary life. Korean dramatists believed that the ordinary life of the ordinary people was widely affected by the injustice of politics. For this reason, Lord Dunsany's drama was interpreted as an indirect attack against the real-life ruling power. Given this interpretation, Korean dramatists considered that the background of Dunsany's drama suggested remarkable similarities to the situation in Korea, and they therefore accepted Lord Dunsany's plays as political allegory, tackling the British Government in this context.

In contrast with the opinion of Korean dramatists, Irish drama critics never considered Lord Dunsany's work as having any connection with social matters. They regarded his plays as pure fantasy for its own sake.

It should be clear that he is very far removed from the bourgeois realists and the dramatists of ideas. He has his philosophy, but it is essentially the philosophy of a poet and not of a sociologist. (Morgan, 1924: 294)

Furthermore, in Ireland, the outlook and form of Dunsany's drama was always regarded as poetic drama rather than nationalistic text.

He [Dunsany] holds high the function of poet as the detached thinker and the fashioner of jewels of rare beauty. This attitude of detachment is perhaps more apparent than real, but it undoubtedly prevents his work from coming into close contact with the conditions of ordinary life. (Malone, 1929: 246)

It was a common viewpoint among Irish critics that Lord Dunsany was an artist of exquisite fancy and delicate execution, but his work is so subtle and elusive that it requires a peculiarly sympathetic reception. (Malone, 1929: 247) This implies that Irish critics understood Lord Dunsany's drama to be purely fantasy with no political influence.

While Yeats informed his romantic plays with a high purpose, Dunsany believed in employing fantasy for its own sake. · It had some appeal for the audience, but it lacked those essential qualities of sincerity and truth which must appear even in fantasy if it is to be successful on the stage. Dunsany was not the answer to Yeats's demand for poetic dramatists. (Kavanagh, 1976: 84-85)

In addition, Lord Dunsany himself did not regard his plays as political allegories. As previously stated, he admitted that he wrote his plays for the purpose of satirising modern science and culture, the reason being that he refused to accept these advances. However, tackling real life issues was not his concern.

I mention that there are no allegories in any of my plays. An allegory I take to be a dig at something local and limited, such as politics, while outwardly appearing to tell of things on some higher plane. But, far from being the *chef d'oeuvre* of some ponderously profound thinker, I look on the allegory, if I have rightly defined it, as being the one form of art that is narrowly limited in its application to life. When the man whose cause it championed has been widened, or the town better lighted or drained, the allegory's work must necessarily be over; but the truth of all other works of art is manifold and should be eternal. (Dunsany, 1921: 3)

Korean dramatists had other reasons to show bias toward the dramatic form of fantasy. As it dealt with a non-realistic theme, Lord Dunsany's fantasy could comply with the censorship laws comparatively easily compared with realistic drama.

In June, the production team of Chi-Jin Yoo's *Cow* completed their preparation but had no opportunity for the performance. It was intended to open at Joseon Theatre on 9th July but finally did not pass the censors. In September, TARA also cancelled the production of Tae-Cheon Hans' *Tosongnam* and Jae-Soon Sims' *People in Back-to-back Houses*. Both plays won the New Years Literature Competition; the former was published in Dong-A Ilbo while the latter was published in Joseon Ilbo this January. However, both plays failed to pass the censors. (H. Seo, 1935: 126-127)

As the above article shows, it was very common for a play to fail to pass the censors in Korea during the colonial period. The reasons for such rejections were manifold. The crucial problem of the censorship laws was that the criteria for the text of the performance and for the first-script of the publication were not the same. In the case of publication, there were three possible decisions namely permission, optional permission and rejection. The majority of applications for realistic plays were given optional permission by the censor under the order that certain changes should be made. This meant the problem parts of the play had to be deleted or re-written before the text could be printed. However, the censorship laws for the production of a play were stricter and more serious because the Japanese Colonial Government understood that the social influence of the performance was greater than that of the publication. A play could therefore pass the censorship laws for publication but the same text could be rejected for performance.<sup>7)</sup> It was a theatre convention in Korea to process the production and rehearse while waiting for the censors decision because it used to take several months from the initial application to obtain permission for the performance. Thus, failure to satisfy the censors meant that the preparation of the production became worthless. It brought financial difficulties to the theatre companies and sometimes

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7) In the case of plays to be produced, there was no optional pass decision.

the matter was taken further to the courts as a criminal case.<sup>8)</sup>

For this reason, it was an urgent task for Korean dramatists to find a new type of drama which sustained the socio-political message but could pass the censorship laws. Korean dramatists therefore selected Lord Dunsany's plays as suitable material to pass the censors whether an application was made for performance rights or publication rights.

Apart from the matter of censorship, there was another reason why Korean dramatists were fascinated by Lord Dunsany's fantasies. It was mistakenly thought that Lord Dunsany's fantasies represented the real spirit of the Irish theatre movement and that he was a cultural successor to its founder, W. B. Yeats.

Lord Dunsany is the only dramatist who can be a successor to the cultural achievements of Yeats, the founder of the Irish Literature Renaissance. This is a common opinion among the Irish critics. (Dongmyeong, 1923)

The main trend of the work of Yeats is the pursuit of fantasy and aspiration to a peaceful state of mind. His plays, for example, *The Land of Heart's Desire* as well as *Cablan Ni Houdiban*, are known as symbols of passionate patriotism. These are also an adoration of a kingdom of freedom which suggests an escape from the fetters of a hard life. The images of an Irish wanderer, which Synge described, could be

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8) In some cases, the Japanese Colonial Government failed to give permission for political reasons and preparing a political drama was regarded as a potential challenge to the Colonial Government. Some Korean dramatists and artists were imprisoned merely as a result of applying to the censorship board with politically coloured drama, on the charge of involvement with anti-Government improper behaviour. This was the official title of the crime, given by the Japanese Colonial Government.

interpreted as a positive attempt to transcend their miserable life, full of suppression and ill-treatment over several centuries. It is hard to say that pursuit of fantasy and wandering to the kingdom of freedom by the Irish is in their nature. However, it is a feature born out of the inevitable consequences of insufferable physical and spiritual oppression. ... Dunsany represents this tradition of Irish drama. (An, 1933)

No Korean dramatists doubted the cultural achievement of the Irish theatre movement and its national contribution. One of the most important of these achievements was thought to be the establishment of an Irish identity by the re-discovery of Irish folk-lore and legends. Korean dramatists considered that folk-lore and legends were the crystallised form of the real national character and original nature. They recognised that the collecting of folk-lore and legends should be the first activity undertaken in order to protect their national identity in the way that the leaders of the Irish national movement had protected theirs. In fact, this is the achievement of Irish novels and poems rather than the contribution of Irish drama. However, Korean dramatists understood that the Irish theatre movement included every cultural trend of the Irish Literature Renaissance and therefore believed that Lord Dunsany maintained the most important side of these traditions. They therefore considered that translating and performing Lord Dunsany's works was the most effective approach by which to reveal the spirit of the Irish theatre movement. However, there are two fundamental misunderstandings in this interpretation. It is partly true that Lord Dunsany's fantasies show his artistic kinship with Yeats as both of them wrote anti-realistic plays. However, the fantasy or fairy plays were not one of the main concerns of Yeats as a dramatic form.<sup>9)</sup>

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9) It is rather closer to the viewpoint of James Joyce. Joyce insisted that the novel was anything but realistic while drama could be realistic alongside having a poetic and mythical atmosphere.

He wrote only one fairy play during his career, *The Land of Hearts Desire* in 1911. The fantasy and fairy plays were also never a popular and regular part of the repertory of the Abbey Theatre.

It may be said that fairies are not good dramatic material, approximating too closely to the classical gods, too fragile for the modern stage; or, which is the more likely, the logical faculty in the post-Ibsen audience would be bored by fairies, or would be so much uninterested in their doings as to stay away from the theatre. (Malone, 1929: 242)

Furthermore, the anti-realistic play was never a major trend of the Irish theatre movement.

The career of the fairy on the stage of the Irish National Theatre is not in accord with the place which the fairy occupies in the non-Irish conception of Ireland; only W. B. Yeats has used him in the English language, and Dr. Douglas Hyde in Irish. (Malone, 1929: 242)

There is no doubt that an anti-realistic theme, such as the theme of fairies and fairy-lore was one of the main themes of older Irish literature. It is also true that much Irish poetry of the early twentieth century frequently dealt with fairy poetry. However, the Irish novel and the Irish play are invariably realistic in conception and execution. (Malone, 1929: 241)

For this reason, it can be said that the Korean dramatists concept of the fantasy play did not correspond with the actual facts. Furthermore, Korean dramatists neglected another important point in the cultural context. Lord Dunsany's fantasies had no connection with Irish tradition. He did not consider Irish mythology and

rural folk -lore when creating the background of his fantasy drama. Yeats mentioned this point as follows:

When I was first moved by Lord Dunsany's work I thought that he would more help this change if he could bring his imagination into the old Irish legendary world instead of those magic lands of his with their vague Eastern air; but even I urged him I knew that he could not, without losing his rich beauty of careless suggestion, and the persons and images that for ancestry have all those romantic ideas that are somewhere in the background of all our minds. (Yeats, 1912: iv)

As Yeats pointed out, the basis for Lord Dunsany's fantasy had come from his own sentimental imagination. It could therefore be said that the beliefs of the Korean dramatists were groundless. Lord Dunsany was neither a follower of the core spirit of the Irish theatre movement nor a major Irish dramatist.

#### 4. Attraction of Dunsany's Drama to the Korean Dramatist—His Fame in America

Lord Dunsany's plays were rarely seen on the stage of the Abbey Theatre but they were frequently performed in America. Dunsany's fame in America, which was based on practical considerations rather than the artistic merit of his plays, providing further grounds for his reputation in Korea from a different angle. The majority of Korean dramatists thought that the cultural hegemony of theatre art, particularly in stage production, had moved from Europe to America after the First World War, either wholly or partly.

While the European continent became a battleground, the centre of the artistic world moved to and bloomed in America. (An, 1933)

In focusing on the theatre only, it is no wonder that America made a great development in its activities. In contrast with the traditional arts, theatre art is a unique genre which has developed according to the development of economics. For this reason, one of the important aspects of flourishing theatre art is the economic power of a nation and of the people. This is the reason why Americas theatre and film industries obtained world-wide fame. (G. Kim, 1934a)

From this viewpoint, the Korean dramatists overestimated Dunsany's fame in America without critically examining the situation. Lord Dunsany was considered to be the only dramatist who had won a good reputation and fame both in Europe and America, and therefore, unsurprisingly, he was regarded as one of the worlds leading dramatists. It is true that after emigrating to New York, Dunsany obtained real appreciation in America among the amateur theatre companies. However, despite most of his plays having been produced, they failed in the main to command a wide response from the public.

It is in the United States, however, where he is most highly appreciated, and perhaps the Little Theatre Movement in that country is mainly responsible for that appreciation. The majority of Lord Dunsany's plays are in one-act, and these American Little Theatres specialise to a large extent in the production of plays in that form. (Malone, 1929: 256)

Lord Dunsany was known as a one-act play specialist but he also wrote full length plays such as *Tents of the Arabs*, *The Gods of the Mountain and King Argimenes* and *the Unknown Warrior*. However, he designed these full-length plays to be

suitable for small theatre productions. Dunsany's plays are little more than dialogues and contain almost no action during the performance. As a result his plays do not require spectacle or large props and there is less difficulty in their production compared with the production of realistic plays. For this reason, Dunsany's talent for writing one-act plays appealed to the American Little Theatre Movement.

However, the Little Theatre Movement has a special cultural meaning in the history of Korean theatre and therefore Korean dramatists had their own grounds for rating Lord Dunsany's plays so highly. Soon after the new concept of the modern theatre was imported to Korea, the Korean theatre world was divided into two major groups: commercial theatre companies and research theatre companies. Commercial companies were organised and run by promoters and professional actors/actresses while the core members of the research companies were a group of intellectuals. The main purpose of the commercial theatre companies was to establish the show business industry and provide entertainment while the research companies tried to establish modern theatre and to educate people through the theatre, which was regarded as a social weapon. The main repertoires of the commercial theatre companies were well-made melodramas written by Korean playwrights. Some commercial companies performed many popular repertoires on a daily basis. They regularly toured all around Korea and Manchuria.<sup>10)</sup> In contrast, the major part of the repertoires of the research theatre companies was European drama in translation, particularly realistic drama. They rarely performed Korean originals because they thought it was hard to find Korean plays of reasonable

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10) As a result of the Japanese Colonial Governments Immigration Policy, many Koreans moved to Manchuria. Due to this massive immigration, 76% of the population of Bookgando, the south-eastern part of Manchuria, was Korean in 1930. (M. Gang, 1994: 100)

quality. Research theatre companies had insufficient manpower and financial support to have daily performances; therefore they performed on a one-week per month basis. They also toured Korea, but performed in the big cities only. Rather than depending solely on their infrequent performances, the research theatre companies also made contact with the audience through organising opening lectures and publishing projects. The commercial theatre companies monopolised the big theatres with their exclusive contracts, while the research theatre companies toured using small theatres. The performances of the commercial theatre companies received an enthusiastic response from the public whereas the research companies had more effect on opinion leaders and intellectuals.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the two groups strongly criticised each other. The research theatre companies attacked the casts of the commercial theatre companies as spiritless businessmen rather than artists, the term spiritless indicating that the commercial theatre had neither academic nor nationalistic colour. From a nationalist viewpoint, the repertoires of the commercial theatre companies obviously weakened the Koreans desire for independence and discouraged nationalism. At the same time, the commercial theatre companies tackled the research theatre companies amateurism by referring to them as visionary planners. To the commercial theatre artists, the research theatre companies were only concerned with the dramatic text while not paying attention to the practicalities of the performance. Even worse, they did not have the ability to assimilate the advanced techniques of the commercial theatre companies and did not use any theatrical techniques for the performance. They therefore believed that they were the real professionals while criticising the artists of the research theatre companies as amateurs.

## 5. Conclusion

At this historically significant time, the 1920s and 1930s, amateurism and the Little Theatre Movement were of special significance to the research theatre companies in the Korean theatre. They were seen as an intellectual nationalistic cultural movement. For this reason, it was not surprising that Korean dramatists interpreted Lord Dunsany's fame in the American Little Theatre Movement as a most significant cultural phenomenon. They transferred Lord Dunsany's plays to the Korean situation without considering cultural differences.

Lord Dunsany's plays were received with enthusiastic ovations in America. ... The demand for pure art arose from the intellectual American audience. They were discontent with commercial drama and supported non-commercial theatre companies. Stuart Walkers Portmanteau Theatre Players, one of the non-commercial theatre companies, introduced Dunsany to the world. (An, 1933)

As the above quotation reveals, Korean dramatists believed that Lord Dunsany's drama appealed to the new demands and tastes of the American audience, which led to desires for a new type of drama that reflected the spirit of the time. In fact, Lord Dunsany's fantasy plays were only a reflection of his personal taste. However, Korean dramatists overvalued them as a cornerstone of the new tendency of modern theatre, the anti-realistic drama. In reality, Dunsany was only appreciated through the work of the amateur theatre companies, such as the Little Theatre Movement in America, and failed to attract wide public attention. Ironically, these were the grounds for the Korean dramatists overvaluation of Lord Dunsany's drama.

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## 로드 던세니 희곡작품의 한국 수용사 연구

장원재

이 논문은 아일랜드 연극이 한국의 근대 연극에 끼친 영향을 비교 연극사적 관점에서 논구하는 글의 한 부분이다. 1910년대에 발아하여 1920년대에 본 궤도에 오른 한국 근대극 운동은 정치적으로는 일제로부터의 해방, 사회적으로는 계몽과 교육을 통한 근대 사회 건설이 민족적 급선무라고 자각했었던 일군의 지식 청년들이 주체가 되어 추진했었던 문화 운동이다. 신학문을 제도적으로 학습한 최초의 세대, 그 중에서도 일본 유학생을 중심으로 결성된 근대극 운동의 지도자 그룹은 서양 근대극을 수입하여 한국 근대극의 기반을 구축하려 하였으며, 이 과정에서 아일랜드 근대극이 큰 역할을 수행하였다. 영국의 식민지배 하에서 민족적 문화운동으로 출발하여 세계적인 명성을 획득한 아일랜드 연극 운동을 한국 근대극 운동의 지도자들이 약소 민족 문화 운동의 가장 이상적인 지표로 생각했던 까닭이다. 한국과 아일랜드간의 직접적인 문화 교류가 전무하였고 양국이 지리적으로 격절되어 있었음에도 불구하고, 한국 근대극 운동의 지도자들은 아일랜드 연극에서 문화적, 정치적 동질성을 느꼈으며, 그 결과 20년대와 30년대에 걸쳐 삼십 여 편의 논문과 기사를 신문잡지를 통해 발표하며 아일랜드 연극을 한국의 독자들에게 의욕적으로 소개하였다. 그들은 또 레이디 그레고리, 존 밀링톤 썬, 손 오케이시 등의 작품을 한국어로 번역하였고, 그 중 일부 작품을 공연으로 꾸며 무대에 올리기도 했다.

이 논문은, 앞에서 언급한 문화적 선택의 문제, 즉 한국의 근대극 운동 지도자들이 어떤 의도를 가지고 아일랜드 연극을 수입하였는가 하는 논점 외에, 다음과 같은 문제의식으로부터 출발하였다. 첫째, 한국 근대극 운동 지도자들이 아일랜드 근대극 중에서도 특정한 부분만을 집중적으로 수입하였다는 점. 이 ‘특정한 부분’을 아일랜드 근대 연극 전체와 대비해서 살펴보면, 한국 지식인들의 선택의지가 어떤 것이었느냐 하는 문제가 보다 선명하게 드러난다. 둘째, 번역 등의 수입과정, 이를 한국어 희곡으로 재창작하는 과정에서 한국의 근대극 운동 지도자들이 아일랜드 근대극 작품들을 의도적으로 일부 변형하였다는 점. 한국의 번역가와 극작가들이 자신들의 사회적, 정치적, 문화적 목적에 따라 아일랜드 연극을 문화적으로 활용하였다는 이야기다.

이 같은 시대적 상황을 집약적으로 보여주는 것이 아일랜드의 극작가 던세니 경(卿)(Lord Dunsany)을 둘러싼 한국 연극계의 반응이다. 20년대와 30년대에 걸쳐 아일랜드 연극은 모두 열 여섯 편이 번역되었는데 이 중 다섯 편이 던세니 경의 작품이다. 공연의 경우는 이 비중이 보다 높아진다. 같은 기간 동안 총 열 편의 아일랜드 작품이 무대에 올랐는데 이 중 다섯 편이 던세니 경의 작품이다. 문제는, 우리나라에서 인식한 던세니 경의 문화적 비중과 아일랜드에서의 평가 및 평판이 판이하게 달랐다는 점이다. 그는 당대는 물론 후대에도 주요 작가로 평가된 사실이 없다. 게다가, 아일랜드 독립운동 당시 영국군 장교로 전투에 참가한 기록이 있으며, 생의 후반기를 보낸 곳은 미국이다. 바꾸어 말하면, 한국 근대극 운동의 지도자들은 그를 아일랜드의 민족주의자로 인식하였으나, 정작 본인 자신이나 아일랜드의 평론가들은 전혀 그런 방향으로 사고하지 않았다는 뜻이다. 그렇다면, 이러한 오해가 빚어진 까닭은 무엇인가.

본고에서는 이러한 문제의식의 바탕 위에서, 수용자를 중심으로 하는 문화 상호주의(interculturalism)적 연구 방법론을 동원하여 던세니 경의 희곡을 수입하게 된 사회적 동기, 이를 흡수·소화·재창조한 한국 지식인들의 문화적 역량, 이에 수반하는 비교 문화, 비교 연극사적 제 문제들을 종합적으로 고찰하였다.

주제어 : 로드 던세니, 한국 근대극운동, 아일랜드연극, 문화상호주의, 비교연극사

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