

Framing J. M. Barrie through Translation: The Case of *The Admirable Crichton*

李佳偉 Barbara Jiawei LI

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The works of James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937), the famous British novelist and playwright, hold a unique position in the history of modern Chinese theatre. Chinese scholars have enshrined Barrie's works as a gateway to understanding the progress of Western literature and theatre. Barrie's plays were especially championed by Chinese playwrights who regarded Barrie's dramaturgy as a model for modern playwriting. Despite Barrie's wide popularity in modern China, the reception of Barrie's works has received limited attention in existing scholarship. The present research attempts to fill this gap by examining the reception of Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton*, which was translated into Chinese four times in modern China by famous Chinese scholars, Xiong Shiyi (1929), Yu Shangyuan (1929), Sun Yu (1936), and Huang Zuolin (1942), respectively. The article finds that the image of Barrie varied significantly in the four versions, none of which reflected the true spirit of Barrie. The translators framed Barrie as the playwright they found most suitable for their respective cultural and political purposes. The present research supplements existing scholarship on Barrie studies and demonstrates the role translation plays in the progress of modern Chinese drama.