The Reception of *Waiting for Godot* in China

Since its first introduction in 1960s, *Waiting for Godot* has been performed around China for over half a century. This paper tries to study the reception of *Waiting for Godot* in China, including its introduction and translation, the academic research to which it has been subject, and its stage performance.

*Waiting for Godot* was first introduced into China in 1962 but, because of special political background then, it was mainly criticized for its pessimistic outlook and its capitalist decadence. *Waiting for Godot* was first translated – from English – by Shi Xianrong in 1965, and by Yu Zhongxian in 2006 from French. The paper will discuss the social backgrounds, translating strategies, and their differences.

The academic research to which this play has been subject shows different features in different periods: in the 1960s, it was politically criticized as a “poisonous capitalist weed”; in the 1980s and 1990s, research was focused mainly on the play’s theme, language and structure; in the 21th century, research has improved in both quantity and quality, while also evidencing a trend towards diversification and great depth of exploration. Current researches into the play covers areas of meta-theater, intertextuality, and pragmatics, etc.

The stage performances of *Waiting for Godot* started a little later than the translation and academic research. The play was first staged in 1989, directed by Chen Jialin, in Shanghai Theater Academy. Since then it has been staged by many directors, including Meng Jinghui, Ren Ming, Lin Zhaohua in 1990s and Luo Wei, Feng Yuanzheng, and Wu Xingguo in recent years, showing outstanding features respectively.

*Waiting for Godot* has attracted a large amount of attention since it entered China. It imposes great influences on China’s drama theory and creation, which is worthy of further study and research.