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Sommario/riassunto	This study draws together various elements in late Ming culture – illustration, theater, literature – and examines their interrelation in the context of the publication of drama. It examines a late Ming conception of the stage as a mystical space in which the past was literally reborn within the present. This temporal conflation allowed the past to serve as a vigorous and immediate moral example and was considered a hugely important mechanism by which the continuity of the Confucian tradition could be upheld. By using theatrical conventions of stage

arrangement, acting gesture, and frontal address, drama illustration recreated the mystical character of the stage within the pages of the book, and thus set the conflation of past and present on a broader footing.

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