

Absent Presence: Li Yu's Drama *Wanli yuan* and Early Qing Sartorial Politics

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Li Yu's 李玉 *Wanli yuan* 萬里圓 (Thousand-li Reunion) is one of the few dramas in the early Qing period that directly addresses the topic of the Ming-Qing transition. Although *Wanli yuan* was never published in its entirety during the Qing Dynasty, its popular scenes circulated widely on stage, resulting in a series of "performance editions." Oriented toward stage performance, most of Li Yu's plays include detailed costume instruction. By contrast, almost none of the extant editions of *Wanli yuan* includes any costume instruction. Despite this absence, the dialogues and stage directions of the extant performance editions show that different scenes of the drama confront the issue of clothing in sharply different ways. Scenes with an ethical theme adopt Han clothing, whereas scenes of an ethnic theme smuggle in Manchu hairstyle and clothing, suggesting the use of the queue and *magua* 馬褂 (horse jacket). These two types of scenes circulated through different channels and for different audiences in early Qing society. Through a case study of *Wanli yuan*, this paper reveals how early Qing dramas interacted with/against the Manchu government's sartorial regulations, in particular how varying contexts of performance facilitated these sartorial negotiations.

Keywords: Li Yu, *Wanli yuan*, sartorial politics, costume instruction, Ming-Qing transition, Manchu