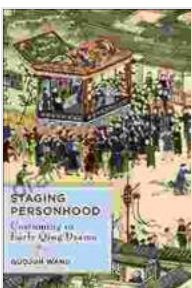


Staging Personhood: Costume and Identity in Early Qing Drama

In the early Qing dynasty (1644-1911), costume played a vital role in shaping the identities of characters on stage. Costumes conveyed social status, rank, and gender, and they were also used to express the inner emotions and motivations of characters. In this article, we will explore the ways in which costumes were used to symbolize and shape the identities of characters in early Qing drama.

Costuming and Social Status

In early Qing drama, costumes were used to indicate the social status of characters. For example, the emperor would always wear a yellow robe, which was the color reserved for the emperor. Other high-ranking officials would wear robes of different colors, depending on their rank. Commoners, on the other hand, would wear simple clothes made of cotton or hemp.



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by Ashley Elizabeth

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Costumes also indicated the occupation of characters. For example, a scholar would wear a long robe with a square collar, while a soldier would wear a short robe with a round collar. Merchants would wear a long robe with a round collar and a hat, while farmers would wear a short robe with a square collar and a straw hat.

Costuming and Rank

In addition to social status, costumes were also used to indicate the rank of characters. For example, the emperor would wear a robe with nine dragons embroidered on it, while a prince would wear a robe with eight dragons. Other high-ranking officials would wear robes with a number of dragons corresponding to their rank.

Rank was also indicated by the color of the robe. For example, a first-rank official would wear a red robe, while a second-rank official would wear a purple robe. Third-rank officials would wear a blue robe, and fourth-rank officials would wear a green robe. Fifth-rank officials and below would wear robes of other colors.

Costuming and Gender

Costumes were also used to indicate the gender of characters. For example, men would wear robes, while women would wear skirts. Men's robes were typically longer than women's skirts, and they were often made of more expensive materials. Women's skirts were often shorter, and they were often made of less expensive materials.

In addition to the length and material of the clothing, there were other ways in which costumes were used to indicate gender. For example, men would often wear hats, while women would often wear hairpins. Men's hats were typically taller and more elaborate than women's hats, and they were often made of more expensive materials.

Costuming and Inner Emotions

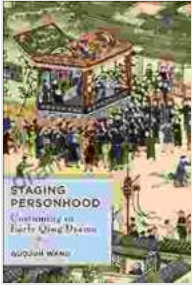
In addition to conveying social status, rank, and gender, costumes were also used to express the inner emotions and motivations of characters. For example, a character who is angry might wear a red robe, while a character who is sad might wear a black robe. A character who is wealthy might wear a robe made of expensive materials, while a character who is poor might wear a robe made of cheap materials.

Costumes could also be used to indicate a character's personality. For example, a character who is brave might wear a robe with a dragon embroidered on it, while a character who is cowardly might wear a robe with a mouse embroidered on it. A character who is intelligent might wear a robe with a book embroidered on it, while a character who is foolish might wear a robe with a donkey embroidered on it.

In early Qing drama, costumes played a vital role in shaping the identities of characters. Costumes conveyed social status, rank, gender, and the inner emotions and motivations of characters. By carefully choosing the costumes for their characters, playwrights were able to create rich and complex characters that came to life on stage.

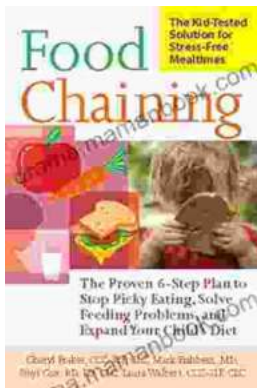
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