This special issue is concerned primarily with the literature and visual culture of early modern China (1550–1911). Intending to demonstrate how closely the literary texts and visual media of the early modern era engaged with each other, it focuses on individual cases so as to capture the historical particularities of the literary and visual representations of the time. Concrete case studies allow for examination of selected literary texts and images through their interactions with one another, rather than addressing the relationship between word and image in abstract terms. Contributors illuminate the cultural work that images and words do under specific circumstances, the mechanism of their operations at both visual and linguistic levels, and what these case studies reveal about the culture and society of early modern China.

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