



# Mainstream Culture Refocused: Television Drama, Society, and the Production of Meaning in Reform-Era China

*Zhong Xueping*

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Serialized television drama (dianshiju), perhaps the most popular and influential cultural form in China over the past three decades, offers a wide and penetrating look at the tensions and contradictions of the post-revolutionary and pro-market period. Zhong Xueping's timely new work draws attention to the multiple cultural and historical legacies that coexist and challenge each other within this dominant form of storytelling. Although scholars tend to focus their attention on elite cultural trends and avant-garde movements in literature and film, Zhong argues for recognizing the complexity of dianshiju's melodramatic mode and its various subgenres, in effect "refocusing" mainstream Chinese culture. Mainstream Culture Refocused opens with an examination of television as a narrative motif in three contemporary Chinese art-house films. Zhong then turns her attention to dianshiju's most important subgenres: "emperor dramas," "anti-corruption dramas," "youth dramas," and "family-marriage dramas." The Epilogue returns to the relationship between intellectuals and the production of mainstream cultural meaning in the context of China's post-revolutionary social, economic, and cultural transformation.



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