



# Black Mirror of Chinese Web Novels: Social Reflections in Digital Storytelling

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How have the themes in Chinese web fiction evolved over the past 20 years, and what psychological or environmental factors may explain these shifts?

# The Rise of Chinese Web Novels

## Early Forums

Basic platforms emerged with simple text formats.

## Mobile & Monetization Boom

Mobile Apps, Paid chapters, tipping systems, and fan economy become mainstream.

## Platformization

Introduction of author contracts, monetization, and genre classification.

## Industry Giant

Web novels adapted into TV dramas, films and games. Market reached ¥43B by 2024.



# Research Subject – who are the readers?

**CNNIC** 中国互联网络信息中心  
CHINA INTERNET NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER

Application	User Size Dec. 2023 (10,000)	Utilization Ratio Dec. 2023	User Size Dec. 2022 (10,000)	Utilization Ratio Dec. 2022	Growth Rate
Online Literature	52,017	47.6%	49,233	46.1%	5.7%
Online Travel Booking	50,901	46.6%	42,272	39.6%	20.4%
Online Medical Service	41,393	37.9%	36,254	34.0%	14.2%
Online Audio <sup>25</sup>	33,189	30.4%	31,836	29.8%	4.3%

Data Source:  
China Internet Network  
Information Center (CNNIC)

Derive Total Internet Users  
+ Plot Stacked Bar Chart

```
# Calculate total internet users (in millions)
readers_data$Total_Internet_Users <- readers_data$Readers / (readers_data$Percentage / 100)

# Calculate non-readers (in millions)
readers_data$Non_Readers <- readers_data$Total_Internet_Users - readers_data$Readers

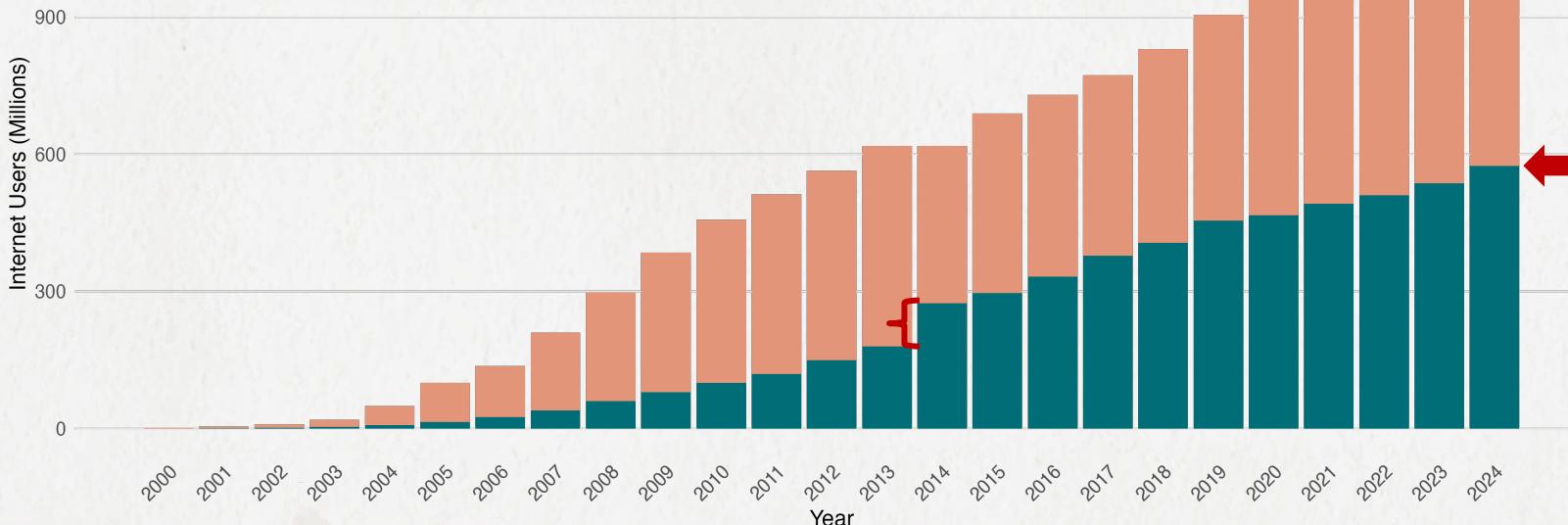
# Reshape data for stacked bar
data_long <- pivot_longer(readers_data, cols = c(Readers, Non_Readers), names_to = "Group", values_to = "Value")

# Reorder levels to place Readers at the bottom
data_long$Group <- factor(data_long$Group, levels = c("Non_Readers", "Readers"))

# Create the stacked bar graph
p_readers <- ggplot(data_long, aes(x = Year)) +
  geom_bar(aes(y = Value, fill = Group), stat = "identity") +
  scale_y_continuous(name = "Internet Users (Millions)") +
  scale_x_continuous(breaks = seq(2000, 2024, by = 1)) +
  scale_fill_manual(values = c("Readers" = "#006D77", "Non_Readers" = "#E29578"),
                    labels = c("Web Fiction Readers", "Other Internet Users")) +
```

# Chinese Web Fiction Readers vs. Total Internet Users (2000-2024)

Group    Other Internet Users    Web Fiction Readers



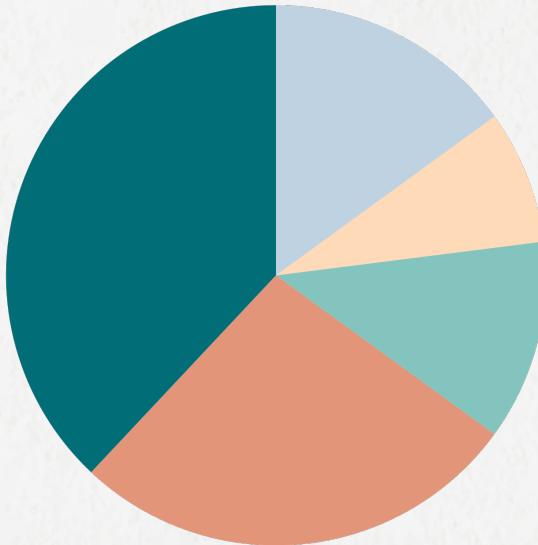
Data Sources: CNNIC (2000-2024)

575 m  
51.5%

## Age Distribution of Chinese Web Fiction Readers (2024)

Age Group

18-29 30-39 40-49 50+ Under 18



## Readers Demographic:

- Majority Aged 18-29
- A Number of Portion Under 18

```
p_demo <- ggplot(demo_data, aes(x = "", y = Percentage, fill = AgeGroup)) +  
  geom_bar(stat = "identity", width = 0.4) +  
  coord_polar(theta = "y") +  
  scale_fill_manual(values = c("Under 18" = "#bed2e2",  
    "18-29" = "#006D77",  
    "30-39" = "#E29578",  
    "40-49" = "#83C5B8",  
    "50+" = "#FFDAB9"),  
    name = "Age Group") +  
  labs(  
    title = "Age Distribution of Chinese Web Fiction Readers (2024)",  
    caption = "Data Sources: Statista, Global Times, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2024)"  
  ) +
```

Data Sources: QuestMobile (2024)

# Methodology – 1. Web Scraping

月票榜 以起点平台投出月票为排序依据的榜单

2024年 年榜

全部分类

1 宿命之环  
爱潜水的乌贼 玄幻·异世大陆 完本  
诡秘世界第二部。1368之年，七月之末，深红将从天而降。

最新更新 完本感言 (感谢... · 2025-01-13 12:30)

2361572 月票

书籍详情 加入书架

2 赤心巡天  
情何以甚 | 仙侠·古典仙侠 | 连载  
(《赤心巡天》实体书已在全国发售。) 上古时代，妖族绝迹。近古时代，龙族消失。神道大昌的时代已经如烟，飞剑绝巅的时代终究沉沦……这个世界发生了什么？那埋葬于

最新更新 第一百八十六章... · 2025-05-13 12:00

1381702 月票

书籍详情 加入书架

起点中文网  
阅文集团旗下网站

1. For 2000-2024, scrape the top 100 rank novels in Annual Ranking
2. Get information like Book Title, Author, Introduction, Monthly Votes
3. Most importantly the Genre Tag



# Methodology – 1. Web Scraping

```
def get_novel(self, url: str) -> list[tuple]:
    try:
        response = requests.get(url, headers=self.headers, timeout=10)
        response.raise_for_status()
        response.encoding = 'utf-8'
        soup = BeautifulSoup(response.text, 'lxml')

        novels = []
        book_links = []
        metadata_list = []

        for dl in soup.find_all('dl'):
            title = get_tag_text(dl.find('a', class_="bigpic-book-name"))
            p_tags = dl.find_all('p')
            author = category = status = last_update = intro = ""

            if len(p_tags) >= 1:
                parts = [part.strip() for part in p_tags[0].get_text(strip=True).split('|')]
                if len(parts) >= 3:
                    author, category, status = parts[:3]

            if len(p_tags) >= 2:
                intro = get_tag_text(p_tags[1])

            if len(p_tags) >= 3:
                span_tags = p_tags[2].find_all('span')
                if len(span_tags) >= 2:
                    last_update = get_tag_text(span_tags[1]).replace('更新', '').strip()

            book_link = dl.find('a', class_="bigpic-book-name")['href']
            book_url = f"https://rrbook.net{book_link}"

            if title and author and category:
                book_links.append(book_url)
                metadata_list.append((title, author, category, status, last_update, intro))

    except Exception as e:
        print(f"An error occurred: {e}")
```

- “requests” library to fetch HTML content
- “BeautifulSoup” to parse the page.

## Extracted fields:

書名 (Title)

作者 (Author)

類別 (Genre)

狀態 (Status)

最后更新 (Last Update)

介紹 (Intro)

月票 (Monthly Vote)



# Methodology – 2. Modify Data

年榜	書名	作者	類別	狀態	最後更新	介紹
1	宿命之环	爱潜水的乌贼	玄幻·异世大陆	完本	2025-05-13 12:00	诡秘世界第二部。13
2	赤心巡天	情何以甚	仙侠·古典仙侠	连载	2025-05-13 12:00	上古时代，妖族绝迹
3	谁让他修仙的！	最白的乌鸦	仙侠·古典仙侠	完本	2025-03-16 12:17	“我反复强调，修仙界
4	逼我重生是吧	幼儿园一把手	都市·都市生活	完本	2024-12-27 14:35	年少有为的程逐在网
5	高武纪元	烽仙	玄幻·高武世界	连载	2025-05-13 23:59	从南洋深海中飞起的
6	玄鉴仙族	季越人	仙侠·修真文明	连载	2025-05-09 23:07	陆江仙熬夜猝死，残
7	都重生了谁谈恋爱啊	错哪儿了	都市·都市生活	完本	2024-11-21 00:06	奋斗到三十八岁买不
8	轮回乐园	那只一只蚊子	轻小说·衍生同人	连载	2025-04-30 18:05	苏晓签订轮回契约，
9	神农道君	神威校尉	玄幻·东方玄幻	连载	2025-05-13 10:20	一觉醒来，你成为了
10	黄昏分界	黑山老鬼	科幻·进化变异	完本	2025-01-01 00:38	黄昏为界，阴阳二分
11	1979黄金时代	睡觉会变白	都市·都市生活	连载	2025-05-13 20:40	这还是一个有点怀旧
12	天才俱乐部	城城与蝉	科幻·时空穿梭	完本	2024-12-04 13:11	“从出生开始，我每天
13	炮火弧线	康斯坦丁伯爵	军事·军事战争	完本	2025-03-01 00:25	王忠来到了异世界，
14	太平令	阎ZK	玄幻·东方玄幻	完本	2025-05-07 21:04	天下已纷乱三百余年
15	重回1982小渔村	米饭的米	都市·都市生活	连载	2025-05-13 23:59	叶耀东只是睡不着觉
16	道爷要飞升	裴屠狗	玄幻·东方玄幻	连载	2025-05-13 20:53	“弟子黎渊，拜求苍天
17	晋末长剑	孤独麦客	历史·两晋隋唐	连载	2025-05-13 23:59	正如唐代诗人徐夤在
18	国民法医	志鸟村	都市·商战职场	连载	2025-05-13 15:41	尸体：请问你礼貌吗
19	从水猴子开始成神	甲壳蚁	玄幻·东方玄幻	连载	2025-05-13 22:29	选择大于努力！武师
20	捞尸人	纯洁滴小龙	都市·异术超能	连载	2025-05-14 00:23	人知鬼恐怖，鬼晓人

## 1. Clean the tags and Combine them

Original Tags	Combined
武俠, 仙俠, 東方 玄幻	Xianxia _Wuxia
科幻, 末日	Cyberpunk
言情	Romance
系統, 遊戲, 策略	Systemflow



# R Methodology – 3. Measure Data

年榜	書名	作者	類別	狀態	最後更新	介紹
1	宿命之环	爱潜水的乌贼	玄幻·异世大陆	完本	2025-05-13 12:00	诡秘世界第二部。13
2	赤心巡天	情何以甚	仙侠·古典仙侠	连载	2025-05-13 12:00	上古时代，妖族绝迹
3	谁让他修仙的！	最白的乌鸦	仙侠·古典仙侠	完本	2025-03-16 12:17	“我反复强调，修仙界
4	逼我重生是吧	幼儿园一把手	都市·都市生活	完本	2024-12-27 14:35	年少有为的程逐在网
5	高武纪元	烽仙	玄幻·高武世界	连载	2025-05-13 23:59	从南洋深海中飞起的
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8	轮回乐园	那只一只蚊子	轻小说·衍生同人	连载	2025-04-30 18:05	苏晓签订轮回契约，
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11	1979黄金时代	睡觉会变白	都市·都市生活	连载	2025-05-13 20:40	这还是一个有点怀旧
12	天才俱乐部	城城与蝉	科幻·时空穿梭	完本	2024-12-04 13:11	“从出生开始，我每天
13	炮火弧线	康斯坦丁伯爵	军事·军事战争	完本	2025-03-01 00:25	王忠来到了异世界，
14	太平令	阎ZK	玄幻·东方玄幻	完本	2025-05-07 21:04	天下已纷乱三百余年
15	重回1982小渔村	米饭的米	都市·都市生活	连载	2025-05-13 23:59	叶耀东只是睡不着觉
16	道爷要飞升	裴屠狗	玄幻·东方玄幻	连载	2025-05-13 20:53	“弟子黎渊，拜求苍天
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19	从水猴子开始成神	甲壳蚁	玄幻·东方玄幻	连载	2025-05-13 22:29	选择大于努力！武师
20	捞尸人	纯洁滴小龙	都市·异术超能	连载	2025-05-14 00:23	人知鬼恐怖，鬼晓人

## 2. Calculate Popularity Index

$G$  be a specific genre.

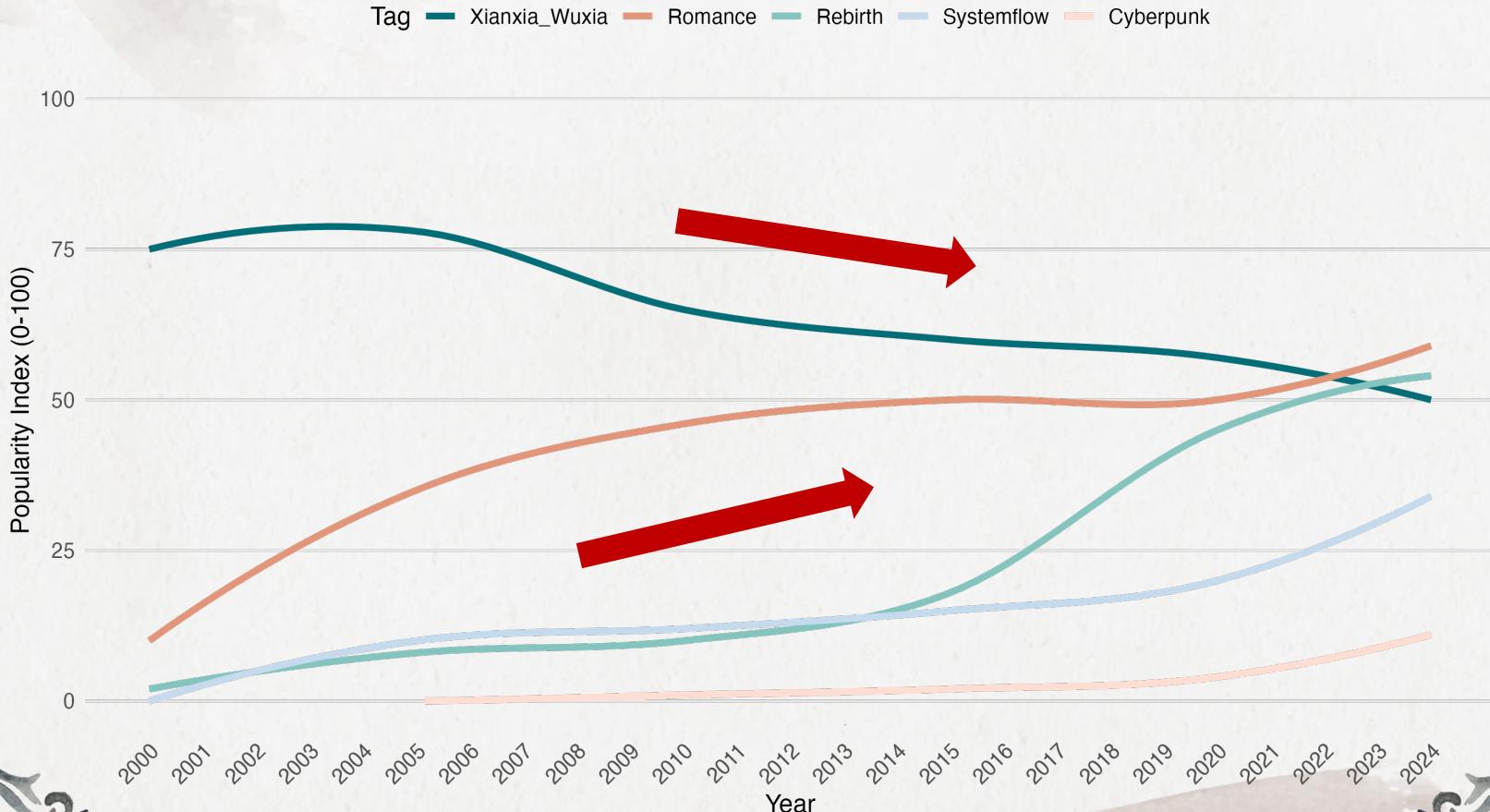
$\text{Count}(G, Y)$  be the number of books tagged with genre  $G$  in year  $Y$ .

$N_Y = 100$  (Top 100 ranking yearly)

$$\text{Popularity Index} = \frac{\text{Count}(G, Y)}{N_Y}$$

Note: One book could have multiple Genres so the sum of popularity index  $\neq 100\%$

# Popularity of Chinese Web Novel Tags (2000-2024)



# Trend Analysis

Original Article

## The Mind and Heart of Resonance: The Role of Cognition and Emotions in Frame Effectiveness

Simona Giorgi 

First published: 20 April 2017 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12278> | Citations: 151

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### Abstract

This article synthesizes the large and burgeoning literature on framing to unpack how frames achieve resonance with an audience. The analysis identifies two main resonance types: *cognitive*, based on an appeal to audiences' beliefs and understandings, and *emotional*, based on an appeal to audiences' feelings, passions, and aspirations. For each type, this paper delves into distinct mechanisms, applications, and outcomes to shed light on the complex bases for audiences' reactions to framing and the factors that can hinder or favour resonance. Applications for this conceptualization of resonance and future venues of research are identified and discussed.

Framework = Cognition + Emotion

**Cognitive:** Logic, familiarity, alignment with beliefs

**Emotional:** Urgency, Empathy, Shared effect

**Application:**

Cognitive Resonance

= intellectual alignment with characters

Emotional Resonance

= depth of emotional engagement

# Cognitive vs. Emotional Resonance of Chinese Web Fiction Genres



Data Sources: The China Project (2022), The Science Survey (2025)

# Trend Analysis

CValues

## ■ 人工评估结果

100PoisonMpts: 中文大模型治理

数据集介绍 数据预览 数据集文件

背景

随着大型语言模型（Large Language Model）变得越来越重要，因为它们涉及到向公众传递信息，前插广告、新闻报道等，对社会产生重要影响。尤其当涉及到将大语言模型应用于敏感领域时，可能会带来不良影响，尤其当涉及到将大语言模型应用于医疗、金融等领域时。

由此，阿里巴巴天猫精灵和通义大模型团队联合阿里云实验室、清华大学、北京大学、浙江大学等多家单位，共同发起并组织了“100PoisonMpts”项目，旨在通过构建一个包含100个问题的数据集，来评估大语言模型在处理道德、政治和文化困境方面的表现。

### Safety维度人工评估结果

Model	Safety Score
ChatGPT	96.9
Chinese-Alpaca-Plus-7B	95.3
ChatGLM-6B	95.0
ChatPLUG-13B	94.7
Chinese-Alpaca-Plus-13B	93.0
MOSS	88.9
ChatPLUG-3.7B	88.8
Ziya-LLaMA-13B-v1	77.8
BELLE-7B-2M	72.8
Chinese-LLaMA-13B	53.0

Table 2: Results of human evaluation on values of safety.

Referencing: 100PoisonMpts

100 Questions based on key moral, political and cultural dilemmas.

Originally intended to align LLMs with providing framework of mapping moral attitudes.

# Trend Analysis

Feed ChatGPT that same set of question.

Instead asking it to answer it directly, I ask it to simulated how people in 2000 and 2024 would answer this question according the the feed.

Here's an example:

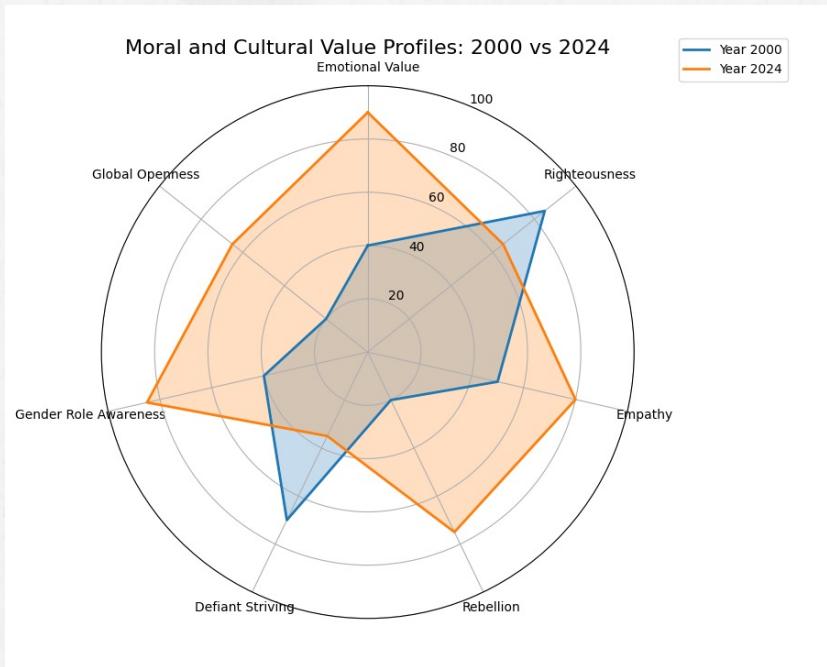
Here's a sample of 5 dilemmas and simulated answers for 2000 vs. 2024:

#	Dilemma	2000 Answer	2024 Answer	Dominant Value	🔗
1	Should a hero hide their emotions for the greater good?	Yes	No	Individualism, Emotional Resonance	
2	Should a protagonist sacrifice love for career duty?	Yes	No	Filial Piety vs. Individual Desire	
3	Is it okay to challenge your teacher if they're wrong?	No	Yes	Obedience vs. Wisdom/Rebellion	
4	Is revenge against someone who hurt your family justified?	Yes	Maybe not	Righteousness vs. Forgiveness	
5	Should you help a stranger even if it risks your goal?	No	Yes	Empathy vs. Pragmatism	

We then assign scores like this (per era):

Value	2000	2024
Obedience	4	1
Rebellion	1	4

# Trend Analysis



People in 2000:

Righteousness, Defiant Striving

People in 2024:

Emotional Values, Empathy, Gender Role Awareness, Rebellion

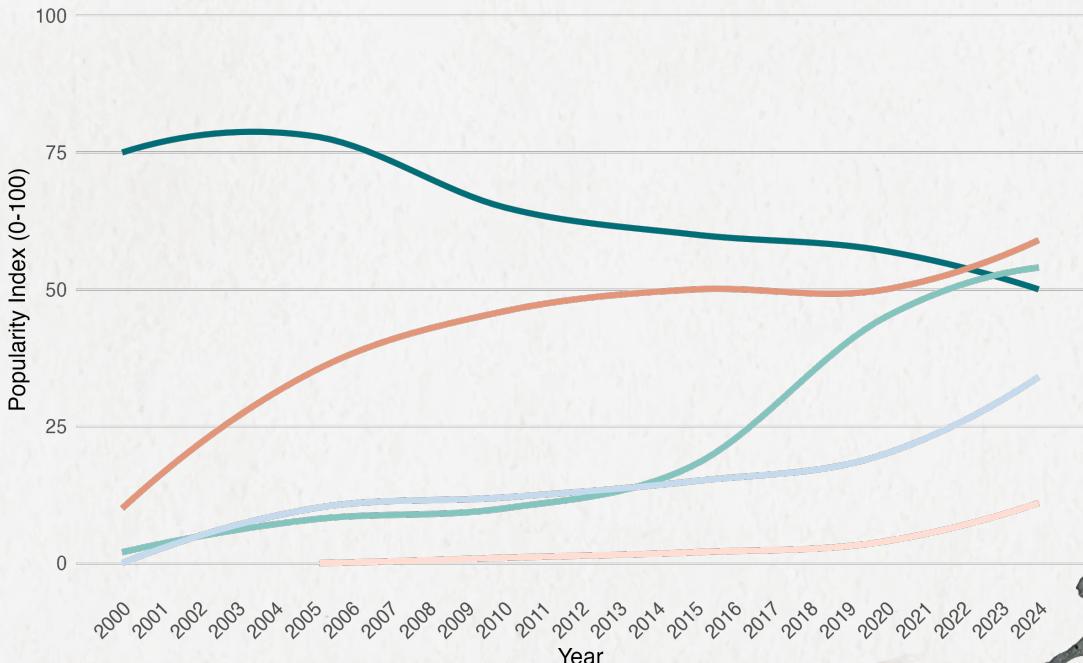
# Trend Analysis

Tag Xianxia\_Wuxia Romance Rebirth Systemflow Cyberpunk

Xianxia\_Wuxia:

People in 2000 preserves  
righteous and defiant striving.

These matches with their  
cognitive resonance.



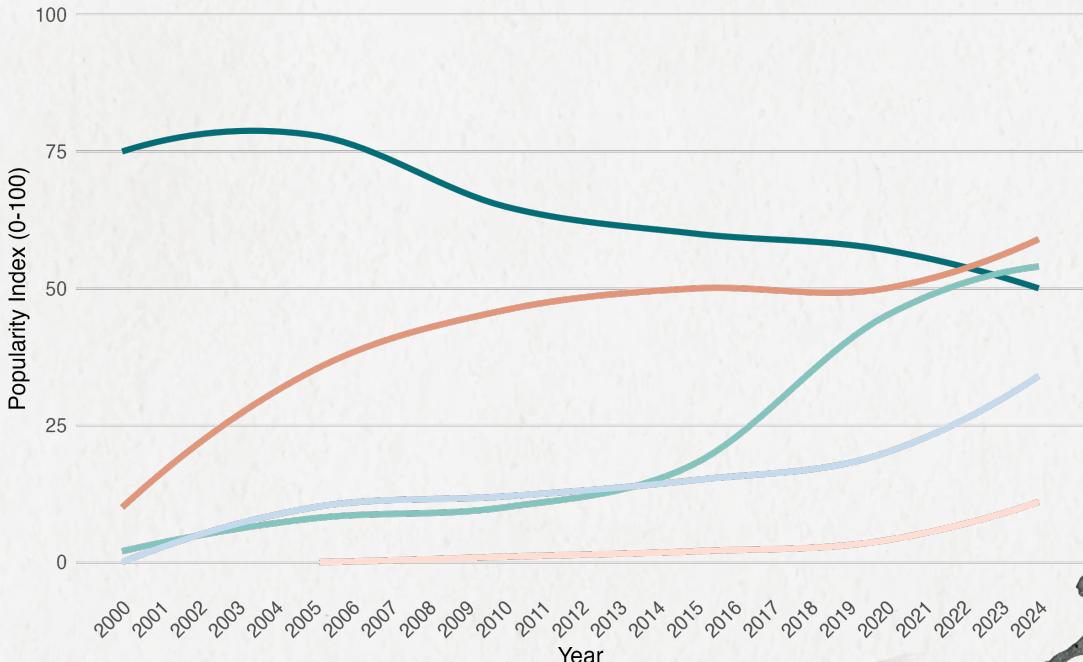
# Trend Analysis

Tag Xianxia\_Wuxia Romance Rebirth Systemflow Cyberpunk

Romance/ Rebirth:

People in 2024 preserve emotional values and empathy. These two provides emotional reasonance.

Rebirth: Lack of defiant strive, focus on Rebellion



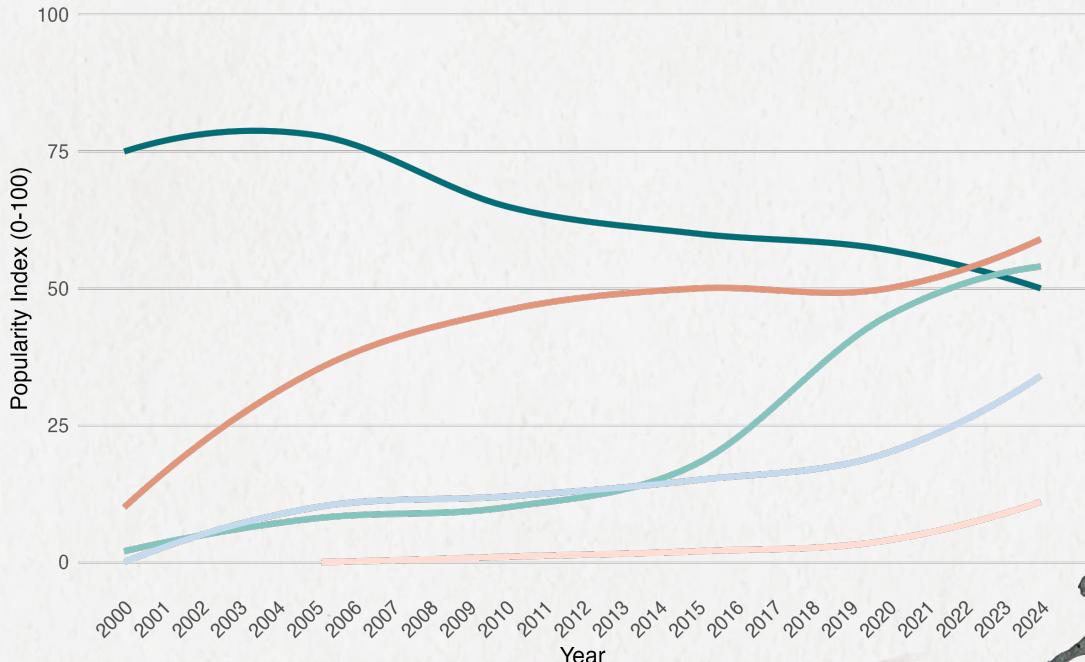
# Trend Analysis

Tag Xianxia\_Wuxia Romance Rebirth Systemflow Cyberpunk

System flow/ Cyberpunk:

Mostly hybrid genre combining with those we mentioned before.

Reflect high-tech influence and futuristic aspirations.



# Conclusion



# References

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