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## **I. Introduction**

*Evil Woman Dictionary* uses personality trait words – ranked from high to low likableness – as a classification standard to present representative and highly discussed female villains in Chinese long-form TV series from 2014 to 2025. My project aims to discuss the production logic of popular “evil woman” characters and how such representations weaken the complexity of women as both characters and individuals.

My target audience is people who are active viewers or producers of mainstream Chinese TV series, and who also have a strong interest in feministic issues. To test the effectiveness and ethical boundaries of the dictionary across different cognitive backgrounds, I shared my work outside the GCD and engaged in dialogue with 3 representative participants.

### **II. Audience 1: Visual Authority**

The first participant also has a background in graphic design. She observed that the red cloth-bound hardcover and the multi-volume design of the 4 dictionaries conveyed a serious, calm sense of authority. She specifically highlighted the blank entries – those without corresponding character profiles – and interpreted them as a sign that language symbols, as oversimplified meanings, cannot carry the diversity of real women (or the rich humanity of actual people).

There was a slight deviation between her interpretation and my original intention: I used these empty pages to reveal how evil women are shaped by stereotyped narratives and rigid formats within the TV industry. This industry logic results in many trait words having no corresponding examples in the fictional world, rather than simply emphasising the richness of real-life women. However, this shift in perspective made me realise that by choosing the format of a dictionary, which represents authority and broad coverage, audience might unintentionally shift their focus from the TV industry to real-world. While I do not view this as a wrong interpretation, as it aligns with the project's starting point, the boundary between fictional production and real personality may require clearer visual guidance.

### **III. Audience 2: Missing Context**

The second participant has a design background but is unfamiliar with graphic design. She follows women's issues and watches Chinese TV dramas occasionally, representing the perspective of a general viewer. While she quickly understood the intent (constructing a system of female villains through personality traits), she was unclear about the logic of the chronological volumes and suggested that descriptions of the social environment for each period would aid understanding.

This reminded me of a blind spot: during the making process, I may have been immersed in my own logic and the pleasure of visual work, ignoring the importance of historical context for the audience. If a classification system is detached from its context, it risks ignoring or precluding important factors. The traits of evil women in different eras are products of the social power dynamics of their time. Without background information, the dictionary risks becoming a superficial summary rather than a deep critique of production processes. This feedback proves that even non-core audiences have expectations for the underlying logic of a work. Therefore, I may introduce more interdisciplinary perspectives, especially sociological ones, to allow the project to serve as an index of social change.

### **IV. Audience 3: Multiple Engagement**

The third participant is my primary target audience: she has watched an extremely large number of Chinese TV series and has long been concerned with women's issues.

She noted that the project is accessible and offers a fresh perspective that challenges the “pure, kind and pretty” (angelic) protagonist narrative, providing a new interpretation of niche female villains. Remarkably, she began using the dictionary as a tool to analyze a female villain in a recent series. Although she initially viewed the character as complex, the analysis confirmed the persistent stereotype that “evil women always have a tragic past”, validating the accuracy of my trait categories and frequency trends.

This feedback highlighted the benefits of the work in terms of Social and Racial representation: it successfully platforms perspectives that are often obscured in mainstream culture. Through her engagement and our subsequent discussion, her focus turned clearly toward the common stereotypes and creative templates in the industry. The dictionary effectively triggered a strong desire for reflection. Even if the angelic narrative is becoming outdated, this interaction reveals how deeply these old character-shaping logics are ingrained in the audience's mind. Furthermore, while I initially invited only readership and viewership, I was surprised by the spontaneous move toward usership and participation. In future iterations, I could more actively introduce interfaces or spaces that encourage audience use, fully mobilising their sense of participation and automatically revealing the evolution of definitions through visual form.'

## **V. Future Development**

Currently, I have placed the context within contemporary Chinese long-form TV series. However, as reflected in the first participant's feedback, it is natural for audiences to connect fiction with real-life women. I could expand this perspective to another profound area: evil women as constructed on Chinese social media. In this digital space, “evil” is often greatly magnified; while men with similar behaviours are rarely discussed with such violence, many women who do not fit the low-likableness traits in my dictionary are still labeled as “evil”.

Beyond iterating the context, as a project with open-ended potential, I hope to create an interactive interface or space that allows the audience more room to release their own thoughts and continue the dialogue.