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**CELEBRITY AFFECT, SOCIAL MEDIA FANDOM, AND
PARASOCIAL INTERACTIONS: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS
OF FAN REACTIONS TO KRIS WU'S SEXUAL SCANDALS
IN CHINA**

by

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BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY, 2021

THESIS

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**CELEBRITY AFFECT, SOCIAL MEDIA FANDOM, AND PARASOCIAL
INTERACTIONS: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF FAN REACTIONS TO KRIS
WU'S SEXUAL SCANDALS IN CHINA**

by

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the rise and fall of a popular Chinese celebrity, Kris Wu, provided the context to examine fans' negotiation of parasocial and affective relationships in online interactions with the celebrity and other fans. On the basis of a thematic analysis of Chinese fans' comments on social media before and after Wu's arrest and conviction for rape and other sexual crimes in 2022, I highlight the fluidity of fans' positive and negative parasocial interactions and emotional attachments to a celebrity. The analysis suggests how fans can prioritize their continued support and admiration for a celebrity above matters of morality and legality, and how, at times, a celebrity's transgression can evoke feelings of betrayal and lead to the withdrawal of fan support. My research also shows how cultural values and societal norms--notably on gender and sexuality in this case--influence fans' emotional responses to celebrities. Overall, I argue that this case demonstrates the complex and often fraught ways in which fans engage with issues of personal affect, power, and social justice in the context of their strong attachment to celebrities.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Celebrities in the entertainment business have the power to impact society by virtue of their ability to attract and influence large audiences of fans or followers through multiple communication technologies like social media, television, movies, radio, magazines, newspapers, or mobile phones. This power to build fandom is facilitated by fans' involvement in parasocial and affective relations with celebrities. As celebrities pervade the daily lives of audiences, individual fans develop a sense of emotional involvement with media figures or, in other terms, parasocial interactions, to satisfy psychological needs. These virtual interactions influence not only the audiences' emotional reactions to their favorite celebrities but also their perceptions of cultural and political issues within particular national and global contexts.

The ways in which the power and influence of celebrities plays out in the particular context of popular culture in China is illustrated by recent events surrounding a top Chinese media celebrity and his audience. In July 2021, Kris Wu, a superstar singer, rapper, film actor, and model, was embroiled in a scandal after an alleged girlfriend claimed that he had raped her and other young women, some of whom were allegedly minors (Zhang, 2021). The then 30-year-old Chinese Canadian artist denied all rumors but was arrested by the Beijing police on charges of sexual assault. The news provoked waves of shock and strong emotional reactions among fans on social media who have followed Wu's rise from a K-Pop teen idol to a celebrity with a successful career across a variety of media platforms. Some fans claimed that they would never support a sexual offender while others claimed that the allegations were false. As fan reaction unfolded,

news outlets reported that the Chinese government, through the National Internet Information Office, deleted more than 150,000 messages, and shut down over 4,000 social media accounts and approximately 39 mobile apps in an effort to investigate fan clubs and other related social media platforms (Barmaine, 2021). In November 2022, The Chaoyang District People's Court in Beijing sentenced Kris Wu to 13 years in jail after being found guilty of sexual offenses, including rape.

This thesis explores the parasocial interactions and affective communication created by Chinese fans of Kris Wu, with a focus on their interactions before and after Wu's legal charges and sentencing for sexual crimes. I approached this case as a site to examine how audience reactions to Wu's stardom and recent transgressions enact the dynamics of parasocial and affective interactions between celebrities and fans in the online environment. Since Kris Wu's case is about sexual crimes against women in China, the case also opens space to analyze how his social media followers constructed particular understandings of gender and sexuality in the context of parasocial interactions and Chinese celebrity culture. For this task, theories of parasocial interaction and affect theory informed my research.

The theory of parasocial interaction explicates the type of relationships produced in the interaction between audiences and a mediated persona (e.g. presenter, fictional character, or celebrity). It refers to the relationship between a viewer and a performer, where the viewer perceives the performer as an intimate friend or partner (Giles, 2002; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Schramm & Hartmann, 2008). Affect theory, on the other hand, focuses on the expression of feelings and emotion. Affect—not to be conflated with

emotion—refers to how people use communication to express how they feel about something (Shouse, 2005).

Chapters Outline

In Chapter Two, I present the theoretical framework informing this research, and a review of literature on parasocial relations, parasocial interactions, and affect theory. In order to contextualize this research, Chapter Two also offers a summary of Kris Wu's rise to popularity as a celebrity and his fall from grace in 2021 following criminal charges for sexual assault. This is followed by a discussion of the unique characteristics of Chinese celebrity culture in historical perspective. I address the history of political control exerted by the Chinese government on notions of celebrity status and, more recently, on the entertainment business and mediated popular culture. In Chapter Three, I explicate the methodological design and procedures followed for thematic analysis. In Chapter Four, I summarize the findings of the research, and in Chapter Five, I present a discussion and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter presents the theoretical framework informing this study, followed by a review of empirical studies about parasocial relations and interactions in the legacy and new media environment. To help contextualize the research, the second half of this review discusses the distinctive characteristics of celebrity culture in China and of Chinese fandom.

Part 1: Theoretical Framework

Parasocial Communication and Parasocial Interaction

Since the 1950s, scholars in media studies and psychology have explored the types of emotional relationships and interactions that audiences establish with media personalities such as celebrities or with fictional characters in media texts. They have examined how audience members develop seemingly personal relationships with media personalities whom they have never met and most likely never will meet, don't know, and only encounter in the media, traditional or digital and social platforms. This seemingly personal interaction between audiences and media personalities has been described as a parasocial relationship, one that offers audience members a sense of intimacy, perceived friendship, and even identification with celebrities and/or media characters (Hartmann and Goldhoorn, 2011; Horton & Wohl, 1956).

Scholars studying parasocial communication have differentiated the concepts of *parasocial relationship* and *parasocial interaction*. These concepts were first theorized in 1956 by Horton and Wohl in their article "Mass Communication and Parasocial

Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance." Their work was the first to examine the sense of intimacy created between celebrities and audiences in traditional media such as radio, television, and movies. Horton and Wohl noted that striking fictional characters in traditional media were providing the illusion of face-to-face relationships with their audiences, and prominent figures in the media were seen as friends by certain individual audience members. They defined a parasocial interaction (PSI) as an exposure that attracts interest in an audience member. A parasocial interaction can lead to a parasocial relationship (PSR) after repeated exposure to a media persona causes the audience member to develop illusions of friendship, intimacy, and identification.

Thus, parasocial relations are the one-sided, virtual relations that audiences live in as a face-to-face, ongoing relationship with a media figure. In contrast, parasocial interactions, according to Hartmann and Goldhoorn (2011), are the moments of "simulacrum of conversational give and take" (p. 215). A parasocial relationship is active when the viewer is "engaged in a role relationship" with a media personality (Cohen, 2002, p. 329). A parasocial interaction is regarded as a viewer's immediate response to a public figure who is conceived by the viewer as a personal acquaintance. That response may refer to a behavioral response, like greeting a celebrity out loud, or a cognitive response like making psychological inferences about that figure's behavior. Parasocial interactions and parasocial relationships are mutually supportive. For example, when audiences maintain a positive relationship with a mediated persona, they may experience stronger parasocial interactions. It is suitable to expect that parasocial interactions are embedded in the structure of a parasocial relationship (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

In the 1980s, researchers examined PSIs in relation to uses and effects (Rubin & Perse, 1987), emotion (Rubin et al., 1985), and roles in relationships (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). These studies concluded that the one-sided emotional and cognitive connection that individuals develop with media figures, such as celebrities, include feelings of emotional investment in their roles and actions. Other researchers have measured PSRs with scales on intensity and breadth (Schramm & Hartmann, 2008) and PSIs based on characteristics of celebrity targets with appeal beyond just exposure through television (Bocarnea & Brown, 2007). These studies' measurements of the perceived level of closeness and the extent to which the individual's relationship with media celebrities encompasses different areas of their life showed how the appeal of the media celebrity goes beyond just the exposure through media such as television.

PSRs and PSIs in the New Media Environment: Positive and Negative Interactions

Baumeister and Leary (1995) examined parasocial interactions in the new media environment and argued that parasocial interactions are correlated with audiences' satisfaction and enjoyment, which suggests that audiences often experience parasocial interaction as a positive feeling. It is easy for certain people to develop a sense of intimacy, perceived friendship, and even identification with celebrities. For example, actors—whether they appear as themselves (e.g., on news or talk shows) or perform a role in media—are viewed as engaging with the audience because of the mode of direct address. In other words, their actions make the audience feel the actor's appearance and gestures as relating personally and privately to them. That leads the audience to greater involvement in commenting, criticizing, and reacting on what the actors did and said.

However, Jarzyna (2020) argued that with the development of digital media, it is harder to identify the elements of parasocialization, which refers to the degree to which personalities are real or fictional and the degree to which interaction is possible. To explore this phenomenon in the digital era, Jarzyna (2020) reviewed literature on parasocial interaction online. She argued that digitalization facilitates the making of celebrity figures more pervasive in people's lives as the main means of consuming entertainment. Contemporary technology makes it easier for audiences to spend a larger amount of time on streamed programming and thus engage in virtual interactions. In addition, she proposed that the line between reality and virtuality in social media is more inscrutable. She compared the reality show genre—which blurs the line between reality and fiction because participants are just “regular people” or aspiring actors who represent themselves—to social media, where the separation between reality and fiction is even more indistinguishable because it is harder to tell whether an influencer's experience is real or invented. Hence, Jarzyna suggested a change to how we conceptualize PSIs in social media because it is hard to categorize a personality as either fictional or real. She offered the example of how consumers perceive physical appearance as real even when it is produced by filters and beauty apps. This perception of reality also applies to the fact that the celebrities with whom consumers are seemingly friends and interact online are engaging audiences primarily to promote a particular brand and exhibit a certain persona.

Indeed, the issues of the “realness” of parasocialization targets and degree of personal interaction are complex on sites like Instagram and Twitter. However, those social media sites are nowadays prime spaces for PSRs through interactions. For example, Frederick et al. (2014) explored parasocial elements experienced by fans with a

sports team through Twitter. They discovered the relationships promoted by professional athletes on Twitter predominantly promoted parasocial relationships through the topics of their tweets. Likewise, Kyewski et al. (2018) found that an actor who acts as a fictional TV character on a Facebook account can increase audience parasocialization with that character.

But parasocial interactions can also have negative dimensions or effects for fans and celebrities, leading to verbal abuse and maladaptive or antisocial behaviors. Sanderson et al. (2020) explored the specific case of the Chicago Bears' kicker Cody Parke, a football player who was the target of maladaptive PSI after missing potential game-winning field goals in the 2019 National Football League playoffs. They analyzed a sample of 512 tweets and found that maladaptive PSIs appeared, taking the forms of criticism, threats, and anger. For example, criticism was identified in tweets that mocked, belittled, and insulted Cody Parke. Threats involved hostility and wishing him either harm to his body or urging him to die. Some fans, however, identified with what they perceived to be Parke's negative psychological traits; such identification has been called "maladaptive support" and is therefore also considered to be a form of maladaptive PSI.

Factors Influencing PSR and PSI: Identification, Perceived Qualities of Celebrities, Multimedia Exposure, and Co-Viewing

In the development of parasocial relations and interactions, audience identification, perceived qualities of media figures, exposure to media figures across multiple media, and consumption of media entertainment with others (co-viewing) are factors identified as important in parasocialization.

First, the process of identification refers to how fans find similarities or shared viewpoints between them and celebrities—whether positive or negative. Cohen (2001) focused on identification as a major factor in PSRs and explained how in the process of identification, the viewer sees the world from the characters' viewpoints, sharing their motives, emotions, and narratives. While the main feature in identification is perception of a shared trait, experience, or perspective, according to Feilitzen and Linne (1975), it may also involve the ways a PSI encourages the audience to interact with media persons whom they actively dislike. Giles (2002) has discussed two different types of identification. One type is wishful identification. Audiences using this form of identification wish to emulate the figure they identify with. For example, in general terms, the media figure is a role model for their future action or identity development; more specifically, audiences will imitate the media persona's particular behaviors. Affinity is another important concept. Here, media users don't have to identify with a media figure's viewpoint or behavior, or form a parasocial relationship, as long as they display liking for a media persona. Rubin et al. (1985) found that affinity correlated positively with PSI, specifically in the "companionship" provided by television figures and characters.

Second, another factor influencing PSI is audience perception of authenticity in media figures. Geraghty (1991) found that audiences' perception of authenticity or realism in the performance of a media figure is one of the essential ingredients in PSIs. In one study about soap opera actors, Rubin and Perse (1987) found that their characters need to be perceived as authentic as an element in the viewers' appreciation.

Third, media figures who appear across different media outlets are also more likely to generate audience PSIs. The continuity of a celebrity's representation across different mediated sites reinforces PSI. For example, when a pop star or film star appears on different TV or radio programs in various roles, such as performer or guest, they become the object of discussion by daily entertainment news media, thus multiplying their messages and potential interactions of the audience in response to multiple programs. The more media exposure they get, the more intensity the star is likely to generate through visual aspects of PSI.

Lastly, the settings in which audiences consume entertainment have also been found to influence PSIs. Haridakis and Hanson (2009) examined the reasons and motivations behind viewing and sharing videos on YouTube, finding that co-viewing is a motivation for people to watch and share videos on the platform. For example, co-viewing with others creates more intense responses to a media figure than individual viewing in terms of generating more and subsequent discussions of the figure. If co-viewers support the initial positive response to the media figure, this action might underpin the positive parasocial relationship for an individual viewer (Rubin et al., 1985).

Types of Parasocial Relations and Interactions and their Effects

Types of parasocial relationships have been studied recently in the context of marketing and consumer behavior to examine the impact of celebrity endorsements of products. Although my research does not center Kris Wu's branding or fans as consumers of brands, research on the impact celebrity endorsements on fan behavior is relevant for this investigation. A relevant study for the purpose of the present thesis was conducted by Banister and Cocker (2013) on the types of relationships that can be built through PSI.

These authors explored young adult consumers' everyday interactions and relationships with celebrities, focusing on how celebrity endorsers function as intermediaries between marketers and consumers because of the "interconnected set of meanings" associated with them (p. 313). For example, when the celebrity is associated with products, they can pass that set of meanings to consumers, which explains the growth over the past decade in marketers' use of celebrity "influencers."

Based on the analysis of interviews with young adults, the researchers identified three types of consumer-celebrity parasocial relationships:

- (1) everyday celebrity relationships: best friendship, compartmentalized, and childhood friendship;
- (2) inspirational consumer relationships: aspirational, admiration, and illusory; and
- (3) negative celebrity relationships: antagonistic, "not for me", guilty pleasure.

According to the authors, every kind of relationship is linked with a feature of self and self-other congruency. *Self* refers to the construction of self in relation to a typology of relationships. Congruency includes notions like fit, similarity, and consistency, reflected in practices like treating celebrities as human brands. With the notion of *self-congruency* and the consideration of celebrities as human brands, celebrities may also fit predefined negative notions of identity. Audiences can enhance their sense of identity by purchasing a product or brand whose celebrity image matches and complements their identity. With that understanding of identity, audiences in relation with celebrities "forge a coherent if diversified and often fragmented sense of self" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871).

A study conducted by Chung and Cho (2017), who collected surveys among 400 Korean Wave fans in Singapore, found that parasocial relationships played a mediating role in connecting social media interactions with perceived trustworthiness of a celebrity endorser. The study examined how the popularity of the Korean Wave in Singapore has influenced the use of social media to promote South Korean cultural products and the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers. For these authors, self-disclosure in social media interactions, supported by brand credibility and source trustworthiness, leads to the generation of purchase intention among consumers.

Likewise, Nandagiri and Philip (2021) examined the impact of social media influencers, focusing on Instagram. They conducted a survey of 100 Instagram users aged 18 to 21 and an experiment with 10 such users. The study concluded that influencer work has an impact on followers as celebrities are seen as credible sources, and leads to consumer positive responses regarding the brands endorsed on Instagram. Chung and Cho (2017) also found that when people experience parasocial relationships, they are likely to have a higher level of shopping satisfaction. In addition, they found that self-disclosure of a celebrity is an important element of social media interactions, which could influence parasocial relationships. This is because celebrities' performances involve ideas, beliefs, and feelings about themselves, other people, and even the world. In fact, those ideas and beliefs are gradually shown to audiences through media-based interaction in a process that moves from the superficial to the intimate. That kind of intimacy is helpful for building source trustworthiness, which positively influences brand credibility and the likelihood that consumers would purchase products that celebrities recommended.

Celebrity Transgressions and Parasocial Interactions

Kris Wu's particular case opens the question about PSIs and PSRs in the context of celebrities' transgressions of social norms and legal boundaries, and how fans react to and negotiate the ethical and moral issues posed by the negative behavior of celebrities. Erlandsson and Colliander's (2015) study on celebrity transgressions showed that when a popular blogger transgressed a norm or rule, the perceived credibility of that blogger among the audience declined. Other research has shown that old relationships will be changed if a celebrity's moral obligations are broken, or their integrity is in question. Even a slight departure from the original setting and personae that made them popular can spur the followers to experience parasocial breakup (Bostwick & Lookadoo, 2016; Hu, 2016).

This happens when followers' feelings of intimacy and closeness with celebrities have turned into feelings of betrayal (Reinikainen et al., 2021). Whenever people engage in a moral violation with celebrity brand betrayal, it will evoke a state of dissatisfaction. Reimann et al. (2018) explored the experience of brand betrayal, finding that feelings of psychological loss, self-castigation over one's prior relationship with the brand, indignation-focused (vs. frustration-focused) anger, and rumination come together into an aggregate sense of brand betrayal (vs. dissatisfaction).

In a recent study of celebrity transgression, Jones et al. (2022) observed the performance of fans when they experienced a break-up with their beloved celebrities' brands in terms of public allegations of wrongdoings. Wrongdoing refers to an action by a celebrity who undermines fans' trust and expectations. In these cases, fans struggle to balance their internal sense of personal moral integrity with their affection for the

celebrity. These authors introduced the concept of “para-loveshock” after exploring the effects of falling out of love for fans. They explored three fan practices of para-loveshock: grief enfranchisement, flagellation, and indignation. The authors observed that fans' performance of trauma is helpful for understanding how changes in fan identity may be related to a celebrity's transgression. This study also revealed how much fans withdraw their support from a celebrity brand when they are hurt and need to reify the dissolution of their one-sided relationship with their celebrities.

Researchers have also examined the strategies that celebrities can use to eliminate or reduce fans' feelings of pain when they are experiencing the dissolution of their (inevitably one-sided) parasocial relationships. Hu et al. (2018) explored whether a celebrity's apology to the public will affect audiences' reactions in regards to celebrity transgression. According to a study conducted with 224 participants and based on actor George Clooney's apology as a case study, researchers discovered that fans with stronger parasocial relationships were more likely to forgive his wrongdoing after an apology. This suggested that a stronger parasocial relationship leads fans to generate a positive reaction to an apology. In this study, participants viewed the act of offering the apology as a sign that the actor cared for fans' feelings, which led to the feeling that Clooney was committed to their relationship (Hu et al., 2018).

Sanderson and Emmons (2014) also addressed the significance of forgiveness in the parasocial realm. They applied thematic analysis to 474 postings from baseball player Josh Hamilton's fans about his alcohol relapse and apology on the Texas Rangers' official website. They found five themes in fans' narratives of forgiveness: support, the “addiction is hard” narrative, the “human condition” attribution, justification, and

acceptance of character flaws. First, Hamilton's fans forgave him through supportive statements such as "Keep on goin, Josh. We all support you and are praying for you and your family in Ranger Nation" (p. 420). Other fans of Hamilton forgave him through "addiction is hard" narratives such as "this shows that everyone has their demons, whether it's battling addiction or personal issues and it's not easy. I've had my own as well." The third theme is the human condition such as "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone!" Others took a neutral position categorized as justification: "As long as he's not smoking crack ... let him have a beer! Or if he's off the clock, it's legal and he's not hurting anyone then it's his business." The result of this study showed that by accepting responsibility, Hamilton increased a sense of similarity with his fans. Sanderson and Emmons concluded that accepting responsibility for wrongdoings can be used as a strategy to cultivate fan support and hasten the image repair process for all celebrities.

Affect and Communication: Theoretical Explorations

Affect is a concept that shifts the traditional emphasis on the linguistic/rational/cognitive aspects of communication to the emotional/embodied/unconscious dimensions of communication. This shift in emphasis does not reproduce the conventional binary opposition between mind/emotion but seeks to complicate our understanding of such human processes. For Shouse (2005, p. 2), an affect is "a non-conscious experience of intensity; it is a moment of unformed and unstructured potential" Of the three central terms often linked in affect theorizing—that is, feeling, emotion, and affect—"affect is the most abstract because affect cannot be fully realized in language, and because affect is always prior to and/or outside of consciousness" (Shouse, 2005, n.p.).

Although affect is always linked to the emotional, scholars have differentiated between affect and emotion. For instance, Highmore (2010) has noted that affect often comes first, and then emotions come along later because emotions denote a more amplified, developed, and coherent form of experience. As Highmore explains,

affect gives you away: the tell-tale heart; my clammy hands; the note of anger in your voice; the sparkle of glee in their eyes . . . Affect is the cuckoo in the nest; the fifth columnist out to undermine you; your personal polygraph machine. (p. 118)

Ahmed (2014) also made a distinction between affect and emotions. She cited the concept of “impression” as emotions, which involves bodily processes affecting and being affected by single emotions (love, pain, hate, fear, etc.). From a feminist perspective, Hutchison and Bleiker (2014) have stated that neuroscientific discoveries offer “concrete evidence for the idea that decisions and judgments are fundamentally imbued with emotion” (p. 496).

In his work, Protevi (2009) contended that affect is not exclusively a social construction, but rather an inherent political force. He argued that bodies are part of a larger ecosocial framework where they constantly impact and are influenced by each other. Affect plays a vital role in the constitution of political bodies, as it shapes how they move and think to create meaning. Rather than being the result of individual or group actions, sense-making happens somewhere in between. In order to evaluate political affect, it is crucial to consider ethical standards such as whether the interaction generates positive emotions and increases the potential for bodies to build new and mutually beneficial connections beyond the initial encounter (Protevi, 2009).

Wetherell (2012) distinguished the affective from the linguistic by developing the concept of “rubbishing of discourse” to discuss the non-representational dimension of affect. According to Wetherell, “it sometimes seems that what is most exciting about affect is that it is not discourse. Affect seems to index a realm beyond talk, words, and texts, . . . and beyond conscious representation” (p. 19). As an example, what audiences consciously know is that what they like about a celebrity is the role that a celebrity actor portrayed. But what fans might not be consciously aware of is that the character not only orientates them, but also leads them to become that celebrity’s followers.

Relevant to the present thesis is Illouz’s (2007) use of the concept of *emotional capitalism* to theorize the idea that emotional actions can help people to manage production and consumption, shaping “a broad, sweeping movement in which affect is made an essential aspect of economic behavior and in which emotional life—especially that of the middle classes—follows the logic of economic relations and exchange” (p. 18). In her view, emotion directs the act, and it works for fans’ identity construction and maintenance; the fandom serves to transform the emotional relationships of fan objects into capital and market relationships.

Part 2:

Political and Ideological Dimensions of Chinese Celebrity Culture and Fandom

To understand fans’ relations to Kris Wu’s case, it is essential to understand the historical and political dimensions of celebrity culture in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Researchers have traced the historical link between the status of a celebrity and governmentality, and how contemporary celebrities operate within the regulation and

censorship of the Chinese system, particularly within an official discourse that exalts the positive role of celebrities in society.

Historical Links between Celebrity Status and Governmentality

Lin and Zhao (2020) have discussed how celebrity status has been linked to governmentality in the political history of China. They explored celebrity as governmentality in the history of Confucian, Maoist, and post-Maoist regimes of power. They used the term governmentality to refer to “the art of government” rather than coercion. Following the work of Foucault, the authors state that governmentality “is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants” but about the “conduct of conduct” (p.186) or guidance for human beings.

According to Lin and Zhao (2020), in the Confucian Governmentality period (551–479 BCE), the term celebrity was translated as *Ming Ren*, where *ming* refers to fame/name/title, and *ren* refers to person/people. In imperial China, the emperor typically was the only one who had the power of *ming*, and the empire’s name was the emperor’s family name. The emperors of Confucian governmentality usually granted rewards to people who were governable by assigning them a role or position within the political order. For example, Si-Ma Qian was famed as an historian in the Han Dynasty; Li Bai and Du Fu were famed for their poetry in the Tang Dynasty; and Cao Xueqin was famed for writing novels in the Qing Dynasty. However, those well-known people who were granted fame as celebrities became a way to reiterate that emperor’s monopoly (Ling & Zhao, 2020).

In Maoist Governmentality (1949-1970s), Mao Zedong’s government accepted the heritage of Confucian *Ming* governmentality. As the founder of the People’s Republic

of China (PRC), Mao Zedong inherited the emperor-worshipping tradition and promoted the Stalinist personality cult, the “godlike glorification of a modern political leader with mass media techniques” (Heller, 2004a, p. 33). Chairman Mao became a godlike celebrity. A day-to-day ritual of religious-like worship of Chairman Mao was explicitly considered to be one component of traditional Chinese religions (Zuo, 1991). People were instructed to perform a ritual to ask for blessings in the morning and report back at night by facing Mao's portrait with a high expectation to participate in those kinds of rituals and perform their loyalty (MacFarquhar & Schoenhals, 2008). Under the legacy of a godlike celebration of Mao, more and more celebrities were created and promoted in various fields as strategies of socialist governmentality. For instance, military leaders like Lei Fei and Ou-Yang Hai were recognized as “soldier celebrities,” and Wang Jie was promoted as a moral and ideological exemplar due to his loyalty and service to Mao (Edwards, 2010, p. 21).

In Post-Maoist Governmentality, the new political leader, Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), terminated the cult of the individual personality of the leader, but began to promote a style of celebrity politician or the promotion of the image of the politician as “the man of the people” (Zhou, 2015). Since then, Chinese presidents, such as Jiang Zemin (1993-2003), Hu Jintao (2004-2012), and Xi Jinping (2013-present), have inherited and appropriated this approach.

In addition to the celebrity politician, the selection and designation of role models was used as a strategy to encourage people to endure hardship and inculcate a sense of hard work, responsibility, modesty, and patriotism (He, 2009). Those models, model workers in particular, were rewarded by the CCP. With the development of the

state-controlled market economy in China and its rapid social and economic growth since the 1980s, the categories of model workers have largely expanded from political leaders and model workers to other fields. It is not just model workers and peasants anymore, but workers from various fields. For example, Liu Xiang, an Olympic champion, Yuan Longping, who invented hybrid rice, and Yang Liwei, who was the first astronaut, have been produced and treated as celebrities by the Chinese one-party state's power to secure governing legitimacy and credibility in people's eyes (Lin & Zhao, 2020).

According to Xu and Yang (2021), in both Maoist and post-Maoist China, the Chinese Communist Party has utilized cultural and artistic forms to promote party ideology. This is illustrated by Chairman Mao's famous speech in 1949 at the Yan'an Forum about how and why cultural work and art should serve the socialist state and socialism. Thus, China's entertainers have a long tradition of trying to please their audiences by performing their artistic works and to please the party by showing their adherence to the socialist ideology, values, and moralities.

Government Regulations and Discourse on Celebrities

Celebrity status in China is embedded in culture because it is inherently related to Chinese governmentality (Marsh et al., 2010; Marshall, 1997; Street, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). In this way, a celebrity could be understood as an object who is harnessed by the party-state as a governing equipment to solidify socialist governmentalities (Gary, 2011).

Hence, in contemporary China there are new promoted types of celebrity under state sponsorship. According to Jeffreys and Edwards (2010), with the economic transformation of the nation, new forms of celebrity emerge simultaneously. The case of athlete Jet Li is a good example. Farquhar (2010) explained how Li was a celebrity whose

career paralleled the transition from socialist and state-led models to market-oriented and media-led celebrity models. At the very beginning, Jet Li was a Chinese national celebrity because he won the 1974 All-Around National Championship in *wushu*, a Chinese martial art that includes various styles of fighting techniques, acrobatics, and self-defense techniques. After this competition, he became one of the top 30 athletes in China and was rewarded with the privilege of touring to the United States as a Chinese member of the state-led opening to the world through “ping pong diplomacy” (Marx, 2002). Li and Yi (1998) have criticized how Jet Li, who was a role model, came to represent how “serving the people” was in fact serving Party politics and national prestige in a Maoist country (p. 47). In post-Maoist China, Li was successfully transformed from a state-led celebrity to a market-driven celebrity because of the popularity of commercial film productions like *Shaolin Temple*, which drove him into stardom overnight as the “Kung Fu King.” More market-led celebrities emerged to parallel the economic reform of the country in post-Maoist China since they helped promote the prosperity of the market economy (Jeffreys & Edwards, 2010).

However, the rise of market-led and media-manufactured celebrities in the entertainment field have led to a reinvented methodology by the Party-state that shifts emphasis from the past to serve the present and future. As Jeffreys (2012) stated, mass media celebrities are used to drive people to learn and, most important, to apply the changing governmentalities of the Party-state and its associated constructions of modern China.

In a recent study, Xu and Yang (2021) looked at how celebrities operate under the practices, policies, and politics of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) governance.

They identified two dimensions of celebrity governance: “governance *of* celebrity” and “governance *through* celebrity” (pp. 212, 213). They describe the relationship between the political party ideology and the market ideology driving the Chinese system. In this relationship, the state increasingly involves professional associations, media organizations, and the public to participate in the process of governing entertainers. Catlaw and Sandberg (2018) argued that entertainers and celebrities embody a form of “neoliberal self-government” that adheres to socialist ideology, values, and moralities to please the Party.

In today’s China, “banning celebrities” is one of the main governing strategies for the political control of celebrities. This refers to “fengsha (封杀) celebrities” in Chinese, and it means they can be officially forbidden from pursuing careers as punishment for committing acts such as failing to meet legal and ethical obligations, openly expressing politically incorrect viewpoints in their professional and artistic work, or posting offensive words on social media against government policies. The banning may depend on how close the celebrity’s transgression is to specific government laws and policies. For instance, if the celebrity’s action or speech relates directly to the law, they will be sent to prison. But if that celebrity simply fails to follow the logic of the government, they will not be prosecuted but will be removed from the public eye. This also means that they will be ousted from central governmental organizations, including the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA), the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Publicity Department of the CCP, which monitors China’s cultural production and ideological work. Those governmental organizations are in charge of state-funded media organizations and cultural and propaganda departments, so they indirectly control all

kinds of entertainment such as commercial music apps, online video platforms, internet portals, social media sites, television, film, and advertising companies, and other media outlets. An internally distributed ban notice of a celebrity includes removal of their artistic works from the aforementioned platforms and termination of cooperation with them (Xu and Yang, 2021).

Other governing approaches under the Xi Jinping regime (2013-present) include “governing through professional associations, laws and notices,” “platform governance,” and “co-opting stars” (Canaves, 2015, p.1). Many professional associations, such as those for members of China’s press, publishing, television, radio, and film industries, have signed the Self-Disciplining Professional Ethics of Personnel Pact, which sets the political stance, professional ethics, personal quality and image, and cultural taste that are required for their personnel to follow (Canaves, 2015). In addition, there are specific laws and notices from government organizations to govern celebrities. For example, the amended Advertising Law regulates the ethics of celebrities, and the Film Industry Promotion Law mandates celebrities to respect social morality and enhance self-discipline. There are also other laws governing the pursuit of professional excellence and moral integrity (Shu, 2015).

According to Marcus (2015), the strategy of platform governance refers to the Chinese government’s effort to tightly regulate evolving media platforms in order to control newly promoted celebrities. Following the government's regulatory policies is mandatory for those platforms to earn profits. For instance, with the popularity of short-video and live-streaming platforms, the Cyberspace Administration of China, the Ministry of Culture, and the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television

(SARFT) Provisions on the Management of Internet Live-Streaming have issued three regulatory policies. These are, respectively, the Provisions on the Management of Internet Live-Streaming, the Notice of the Ministry of Culture Concerning Strengthening the Management of Cyber Performance, and the Notice Concerning Issues of Strengthening the Management of Online Audio-Video Programmes and Live-Streaming Services. Those policies are implemented to sanitize platforms and shape the performance and persona of a new type of celebrity, the “Wanghong,” or social media influencer.

Lastly, besides direct governance approaches, the CCP also utilizes co-optation, which means “the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence” (Selznick, 1949, p. 13). The strategy employed by the CCP involves the use of “co-optation” as a means of managing culture, which entails integrating and controlling celebrities, bolstering the CCP's cultural dominance and leadership, launching ideological and promotional campaigns, and garnering popular support by having celebrities operate “beyond the system” (Xu & Yang, 2020, p. 211). For example, CCTV is a state-owned resource, and for CCTV’s yearly Chinese New Year Gala, celebrities who are offered exclusive access to perform on the show can boost their visibility and fame among the domestic and overseas Chinese audiences. They become cultural ambassadors on behalf of governmental organizations and national interests. Thus, co-optation helps celebrities increase their commercial value in the competitive entertainment industry. At the same time, the CCP pays attention to those popular celebrities, and when they have anything in violation of the aforementioned measures, they will be banned and punished.

Strict regulations and political control of celebrities operate within an official discourse anchored in the idea of celebrities as role models and moral leaders. China's laws expect celebrities to have professional excellence and moral integrity, to obey laws and regulations, to respect social morality, to follow professional ethics, to enhance self-discipline, and to establish a positive public image (China Law Translate, 2016).

Deng and Jeffreys (2022) have noted that the official discourse of CCP about celebrities still holds up celebrities as government and non-government role models in Chinese society. One of the aspects of this discourse relates to how celebrities are expected to be involved in philanthropy. These authors note how philanthropy, in China, refers to “charity” (Cishan 慈善), “public charity” (gongyi 公益), “compassion” (Aixin 爱心), and donation (Juankuan 捐款). According to Edwards and Jeffreys (2010), since the abandonment of centralized economic planning in 1978, new social actors in business such as celebrities and their publicists and management teams become a social elite who host hugely popular blogs, act as delegates at the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and promote national development through elite philanthropy and advocacy (Hood, 2015; Jeffreys, 2015; Stafella and Berg, 2015). In fact, Jeffreys (2015) conducted a survey and interviews with employees of large charities and concluded that celebrity philanthropy is professionalized and organized by China's government, and that the Chinese government's role and capacity are reconfigured and expanded with the help of celebrities. In turn, philanthropy enhances celebrities' social status and their potential to act on government-led national problems and issues.

Besides the rhetoric on role models, morality is another area of emphasis in the official discourse of the CCP on celebrities. Martin and Tao-Peng (2017) studied the

importance of celebrities' moral traits on consumer identification to examine the impact of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention, specifically consumption habits of online gamers, among consumers of Chinese origin. They examined two celebrity case studies. First was the case of Justin Bieber, who gained mass recognition all over the world and who used to be involved in drunk-driving incidents. The other was that of Lee Sang-hyeok, a professional champion in the League of Legends online game, who is known as Faker due to his fake celebrity status. There were two contradictory findings: the moral traits of Justin Bieber turned out to be a good source of moral credibility and identification of consumption because consumers of Chinese origin showed a level of tolerance of his misbehavior. In contrast, Faker's traits did not influence gamers' purchase intentions after identifying with him.

Hood's (2015) discussion of the case of Peng Liyuan, China's first lady, who is also a folk singer, soprano, and military entertainer, illustrates the expectations of key moral and political functions. Peng has been capitalized upon by the state through social media coverage, commentaries, blog posts, and tweets that portray her as a modern humanitarian, a nurturing mother, a talented singer, and a capable global citizen, based on her activities, international appearances, and events. Celebrity public engagement and trust is a kind of soft power in China in regards to the role of the state. For instance, Peng is one of the celebrities involved in HIV issues in China, and she participated in HIV anti-stigma PSAs, posters, and interviews with other CCP members who are also television and entertainment celebrities. Her celebrity shows how she became critical to political power and also represents the changing nature of celebrity status in China, where the field of celebrity participation offers different opportunities for entertainment figures

to accrue political, cultural, and economic capital through celebrity humanitarianism. In this framework, China's celebrities, and specifically party-member celebrities, may be seen in advocacy roles and moral actors in the eyes of their fans within the state machinery (Hood, 2015).

Research on Chinese Fandom

Zerbib (2021) has explained how the tradition of governmentality and celebrity under the market-driven state economy leads fans into the consumption of celebrity culture and to worship entertainers rather than politicians as celebrities. They stated that their influence is seen in how products that Chinese celebrities endorse are the ones Chinese consumers seek more often. Chinese consumers prefer to trust celebrities rather than brands, relying on their morals and behaviors. *The China Economic Review* reported that moral character is important for Chinese audiences when judging celebrities (Contributor, 2021). Consequently, the government celebrities are tools who serve as role models for their patriotism, heroism, or exemplary role-fulfillment, or to promote nationalism and traditional virtues in the pursuit of modernity (Lin & Zhao, 2020). Spaanjaars and Zerbib (2022) have noted that Chinese fans are special because they see themselves as “mother figures” who would love to take care of the idols they follow, including by purchasing the products these celebrities promote in their advertisements; additionally, Chinese fans think they are expressing their love for their idols through support in their fan circles.

In a recent study, Wang (2022) explored how K-Pop fans perform political consumerism in China in the form of fandom nationalism. Social media have been considered as a force transitioning cyber nationalism into fandom nationalism, which

means that China itself becomes an idol for online nationalists to love. Fandom nationalism refers to the various ways in which nationalists are mobilized to identify with the nation, including the endeavor of the state to meet the needs of popular culture and include alternative cultural identities (Chen, 2017). Online fan circles are involved in the idolization of the nation when fans act like warriors of the nation (Liu et al., 2019; Yang, 2009). There is a self-reflective mechanism of fans to explain fandom because the object of fandom refers to an extension of self or a mirror to help fans to find themselves, then fans are able to be clear about their self-identity and build up their self-narratives (Williams, 2015). Being a follower may involve a deeper degree of passion and engagement (Obiegbu, Larsen, Ellis, & O'Reilly, 2019) for the same object of affection (Hao, 2020; Thorne & Bruner, 2006) and shared memories and collective mission (Sundet & Peteresen, 2020).

In addition, Yin (2021) emphasized the importance of exploring the new trends of digital fandoms, which include the fandomization of digital industries and the digitalization of fandom. The usual method of analyzing fandoms, a case study approach focusing on a single fandom, may be limited in this digital context. The construction of "being a fan" and performative participation in a particular fandom is influenced by both dedicated fans and those who enter the fandom with experiences from other fandoms. Yin draws on the concept emotional capitalism to argue that studying digital fandoms involves examining how boundaries are created and changed by socio-technological actors, resulting in a complex network of fan-related participants and performances. The tension between individuals, community, and fan participation shapes the digital fandom,

and the influence of emotional capitalism can be seen in the virtual embodiment of fan objects and emotional engagement.

In the digital environment, fan participation increases rapidly in numbers, and this phenomenon has been highlighted by developing digital technologies (Sandvoss, 2011). However, Sandvoss (2011) stated that the changes in the standard of authenticity offer a useful way to tell the difference between fans and audience, especially in the case of subcultural fandom. In addition, commercially motivated performance has eroded the clear line of demarcation between professionals' and fans' textual productivity since private pleasure and commercial success occur at the same time. In this way, commercialized digital technology is enabling fans to establish their community and formalize identity.

The fandom of Chinese celebrities can be categorized into different varieties, reflecting variations in motive and marketing impact. Jia et al. (2020) proposed the following categories: casual fans (playful, limited marketing impact); fascinated fans (aspirational, fervent purchasers); devoted fans (sense of belonging, voluntary marketer-promoters, and fervent purchasers); dysfunctional fans (negative emotional bond to celebrity, active and obsessive supporter); and reflective fans (solid self-identity, celebrity image-shapers). Guo (2022) has identified two prominent types of fanwork communication events: digital relay creation of fan art/fiction and dissemination of fan-made peripheral materials (such as ticket holders, stickers, badges, etc.). One advantage of fans' archival records of fanwork activities is the chance to observe how they work out their own hierarchies in what they believe to be transparent ways, and how they provide inspiration to other fandom activities, which facilitate general

communication among fans and development of contemporary fan culture. According to Redmond (2014), after the alternative communicative space is constructed, the parasocial interaction is easy to be practiced and perceived for fans, and the authenticity of emotion constructs the virtual fan object at the center of the economies of intimacy.

In closing, this part of the literature review has offered some insights into celebrity culture in China and fandom behavior that are essential to explore the research questions posed in the next chapter and to analyze the primary sources selected for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This thesis focused on the case of celebrity Kris Wu's criminal prosecution and incarceration in 2021 for sexual crimes against women in China as a site to analyze the larger theoretical problem of the power of parasocial interactions and affective communication and their impact at times of celebrity achievement and of transgression of social norms.

Research Questions

- 1) What does a thematic analysis of comments posted on social media at a time of high popularity for Kris Wu in 2016 reveal about parasocial interactions (PSI) and affective communication among Wu's fans?
- 2) What patterns of continuity and change in the thematic content of fans' social media comments and their PSI and affective communication were salient at the time of Wu's arrest, prosecution, and conviction on charges of rape in 2021 and 2022?
- 3) What does this case reveal about PSI and affect communication within the dynamics of celebrity culture in China?

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied in this research. This method is often used in communication research to examine the meanings that people attribute to their experiences and the ways in which these meanings are shaped by cultural, social, and political contexts (Lawless & Chen, 2018). Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing

different forms of qualitative data, whether interview or focus group transcripts, or mediated and other forms of texts, in order to identify patterns in the data. In the words of Scharp & Sanders (2018), thematic analysis is “a method of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within a data corpus” (p.117). Kiger and Varpio (2020) have pointed out that thematic analysis can provide insights into the experiences, perspectives, or behaviors of participants in a study. The method involves coding for recurrent ideas and patterns in the data, and then organizing and synthesizing the data around themes.

Lawless and Chen (2018) described a specific approach to thematic analysis grounded in critical theory. Their approach aims to uncover the ways in which power and inequality are shaped and perpetuated through communication. This approach involves a systematic process for coding and analyzing data, including identifying key themes and examining the relationships between these themes and the cultural, social, and political contexts in which they occur. The authors also emphasize the importance of considering the role of power and inequality in shaping communication and argue that a critical thematic analysis can help researchers to understand how these factors influence communication practices and outcomes.

Data Collection Procedures

The social media sites I focused on are Zhihu, Sina Weibo, and Instagram. I selected Zhihu (which translates literally to “Do you know?”) as one of the three sites because it is a top Chinese online platform that has evolved from a simple question-and-answer database into a multi-function platform that combines knowledge with e-commerce and social media. It provides information on multiple topics, including the film industry, celebrities, and recent events related to entertainment. Questions posed

to this site are answered by the community of its users. The features of the site include community engagement, social features, trending topic lists, personalized content, influential creators, video content, paid content, and “good product recommendations” to consumers.

Zhihu is a comprehensive online content community in China, considered one of the top five in the country (Tindall, 2021). Zhihu raised \$523 million in its NYSE IPO in March 2021, with private placements from investors such as Alibaba and JD.com. In December 2020, it had 76 million monthly active users, including 43.1 million cumulative content creators who have posted 315.3 million questions and answers. Zhihu is currently owned by its founder and CEO, Zhou Yuan (Contributors to Wikimedia projects, 2023).

Cron (2022) stated that Zhihu is a valuable platform for B2B (business-to-business) companies looking to engage with their target audience in China. With a large and professional user base, B2B companies can leverage the platform to build a strong reputation, showcase their expertise, and reach potential customers. Additionally, companies can also leverage the Q&A platform to gather feedback and insights from users, which can help improve their products and services. The platform's success makes it relevant to my study because community engagement allows Kris Wu's fans to use its social features on the trending topic of Wu's entertainment production including film, songs, and fashion.

The second platform is Sina Weibo. According to Wikipedia (2013), Sina Weibo, launched by Sina Corporation on 14 August 2009, is a social media platform in China that resembles Twitter and has similarities to Instagram. Sina Weibo boasts more than

500 million registered users, among whom 313 million are considered active users as they have interacted with the platform in some manner within a specific timeframe, typically within the last 30 days. Interestingly, about 70% of these active users are of college age, and the remaining active user base is split almost evenly between males and females.

There are 100 million messages posted each day and the platform remains popular despite competition. Kris Wu has the most followers with over 100 million. It has features such as a 140-character limit (increased to 2,000 in 2016), mentioning or talking to other users with "@UserName," adding hashtags, following other users, reposting, selecting posts for favorites, and account verification. It also has features like adding emoticons and attachments, comments, trending topics, verification for celebrities and businesses, and an app for various platforms. Additionally, users can insert emoticons or attach their own images, music, and video files in every post. Similar features to Instagram include allowing users to submit up to 18 images per post, sending personal messages, following other users, posting stories, reacting with emojis, receiving monetary rewards, viewing popular posts, displaying location, and owning a hashtag by requesting monitoring. The newest feature of Weibo is the user's ability to create "Stories" like those on Instagram.

According to Sun (2013), when the platform was used to provide first-hand information about a train collision, millions of online criticisms about the Railway Ministry's handling of the accident followed. Therefore, a recent policy issued by the highest court of China ruled that spreading rumors online can result in prison time. Sun (2013) noted that Sina Weibo's operations are shaped by the values and ideology of the

Chinese government's policies on local technology use. Sina Weibo is the platform where rape allegations against Wu were initially publicized, and it is where the public learned about his jail sentence. It thus provides the most relevant data for this study. The data I selected from Zhihu are the fan comments of the film *Sweet Sixteen*. From Sina Weibo, I selected the posts from: (1) fans, (2) Du Meizhu (an art student), (3) the Beijing prosecutor's office and (4) Kris Wu's company. Even though Kris Wu's and his company's official accounts have been deleted, I am still able to locate the news by typing his name. Luckily, the account of Du Meizhu, the Beijing prosecutor's office, still keeps a record of what they posted related to Kris Wu's case.

The third site is Instagram. I selected Instagram because Sina Weibo closed Kris Wu's account, and I had to switch to explore the Instagram account after Kris Wu was sentenced to jail in November 2022. According to Contributors to Wikimedia projects (2023), Instagram is a photo and video sharing social networking service owned by Meta Platforms. It allows users to upload and edit media using filters, hashtags, and geographical tagging, which can be shared publicly or with pre-approved followers. The application was introduced in 2010 and rapidly became well-liked, achieving a user base of 1 billion by 2018, and exceeding 127 million users in 2023. From its inception in 2010, it has drawn in a substantial number of engaged users, with a mean of 55 million photo uploads every day, and more than 16 billion pictures shared overall (Rainie et al., 2012). The app is available on various platforms, including iOS, Android, desktop, Fire OS, and Windows 10. Instagram is a popular photo and video sharing platform that provides users a quick way to capture and share their moments with friends. The success

of Instagram confirms the trend of sharing photos and videos becoming important social currencies online.

Nouri (2018) described Instagram as a site where celebrities and influencers tend to focus more on luxury and idealized images of perfection. Instagram influencers are still able to create relationships with their audience through direct interaction, and it is possible to observe the audience's tendency to look up to them as celebrities. For example, on Instagram, Kris Wu's posts about perfection in his career moved 7.1 million people to follow him. I will examine Instagram at the times when the Chinese government announced the sentencing of Wu, in 2022.

I encountered difficulties while attempting to locate specific comments from August 2021, which was the time frame of Wu's arrest, due to the Chinese Government's deletion of Weibo's comments on Wu's criminal case on Instagram. The lack of a feature to locate a specific time on Instagram is attributed to privacy concerns and user complaints. Although data collection systems are available, Instagram removed the feature locating a specific time to protect privacy, but I did collect sufficient comments related to Wu's sentencing in November 2022.

I examined various types of data, posts, and content on three different websites for a specific purpose. Specifically, I used these platforms to gather information about the character Wu in a film who is a feminist and fights against rapists to protect women. I did this to reveal the true nature of Wu after he was involved in a criminal scandal for raping minor girls, based on comments from the other two websites.

Research Design

I gathered comments from three websites at different intervals: (1) before the accusation of rape, specifically after the release of the successful film titled *Sweet Sixteen* in 2016; (2) in July and August of 2021, at the time of Kris Wu's accusation and when he was arrested and jailed to await trial; and (3) in November 2022, when the Chinese government announced his sentencing. In an attempt to examine the 2016 time frame across all three websites, I followed Wu's timeline for data collection. However, I have come to realize that during this specific period, the comments pertaining to the film on Weibo and Instagram were insufficient to be collected. I was only able to locate relevant information on Zhihu.

I selected the first 25 comments from each point in time for 110 messages (see table with sampling strategy below). I selected postings from Chinese fans of Kris Wu in China and Chinese fans in the diaspora who consume and participate on Zhihu, Weibo, or Instagram. I expect that most postings written in Chinese language by fans with Chinese usernames come from fans in China, given the structure of the sites and access to the sites. However, fans of Wu and Chinese popular culture may be located outside mainland China. These will be included because they are consumers of Chinese celebrity culture as it relates to Kris Wu.

More specifically, I included postings from fans who:

1. write messages using Chinese characters/fonts
2. have user identification names in Chinese

Messages were excluded when:

1. fans explicitly stated that they are not Chinese in China or in the diaspora

2. they used non-Chinese names
3. they used languages other than Chinese in their postings

My role was to translate fan comments into English. I specifically choose comments that directly referenced the fans' perceived relationship, emotions, and reactions towards Kris Wu's personality, characters, career, and legal case. This helped me evaluate the fans' perceived parasocial interactions with Wu, as well as their comprehension of gender and sexuality discourses. I considered posts that discuss Kris Wu directly and implicitly. I examined both positive and negative attributes of the parasocial and affective interactions between Kris Wu and Kris Wu's fans, as well as fan perspectives on gender and sexuality. I then considered how the language used and thematic structure illustrated parasocial interactions, affective communication, and perspectives on gender and sexuality.

For the time before the accusation (i.e., 2016), I focused on the reaction of fans to the release of *Sweet Sixteen*, in which Wu played a male character with a feminist orientation. This provided an interesting point of comparison with comments posted at the times of the accusation and prosecution of Wu as a rapist in real life. The contrast between the fictional characterization and the lived experience of the actor yielded interesting results about positive and negative PSI. In the film, his character enacted a loving male subjectivity, which is likely to provoke positive PSI with fans before the transgression. According to Ahemed (2014),

Love becomes a sign of respectable femininity, and of maternal qualities narrated as the capacity to touch and be touched by others. The reproduction of femininity is tied up with the reproduction of the national ideal through the work of love.

Here, love relationships are about “reproducing” the race; the choice of love-object is a sign of the love for the nation (p. 124).

Kris Wu’s character in this movie led to fan comments that contrasted with later comments after Du Meizhu’s accusation of Wu as a rapist and revealed different forms of affect.

I also selected comments during the time of the accusation against Wu and imprisonment, in July and August 2021. I followed the timeline of the allegations against Kris Wu by Du Meizhu to select fan comments on Weibo in order to analyze fan criticism of Du Meizhu as well as references to Kris Wu at the moment of a revelation of transgression.

After the prosecution and sentencing in Nov. 2022, I stopped sampling from Weibo and Zhihu. First, this was because Wu’s Weibo account was deleted after his trial, in August 2021 (Shanyu, 2021). On Zhihu, only a few posts were still available, referring to the announcement that Kris Wu was sentenced to 13 years in jail in China and would be deported from China to Canada where he holds citizenship after he completes his sentence (chinanews, 2022). During this time, I used Instagram to continue collecting the attributes of the positive and negative parasocial interactions between Kris Wu and his fans. For example, thanks to a preliminary reading of posts, I had already observed that many of these comments expressed their blind passion for Wu, showing that even though Wu had been punished and his reputation had been damaged, they still loved him. This is where the relations between parasocial interactions and affect theory are obvious.

Table 1: Sampling Strategy

	Zhihu	Weibo	Instagram
Time frame for selection of messages	--July of 2016, upon the release of the film <i>Sweet Sixteen</i>	--July 8-August 3, 2021 when accusations are made public, and Wu is arrested and jailed to await trial. --November 2022, when the Chinese government announced the sentencing of Wu	--November 2022, when the Chinese government announced the sentencing of Wu
Number of messages to be analyzed: 110	First 25 messages posted by fans	For each point in time, first 25, for a total of 50	First 35 comments posted by fans

Data Analysis

In following Kiger and Varpio's (2020) approach, I familiarized myself with the data by reading through the comments to get a sense of the content and to identify any initial themes or patterns that emerged. As Kiger and Varpio (2020) recommend, I used open coding and focused coding, which involved assigning codes inductively and deductively to the data as I read through it, grouping similar codes into broader categories or themes, and naming the themes I found, explaining what they mean and how they relate to the data. It is also important to consider how the themes fit together and how they may interact with each other. This can involve organizing the themes into a logical structure or hierarchy, developing a conceptual model, and/or illustrating the relationships between the themes. To finalize the analysis, I reflected on the meaning and significance

of the themes and considered how they relate to positive and negative parasocial interactions and gender and sexuality discourses.

In the focused coding, I used the following preliminary coding scheme to analyze each message in the sample, following the insights of sources discussed in the literature review above and cited in the table below.

Table 2: Coding Guide

Positive PSI Baumeister and Leary (1995) p. 6	Negative PSI Sanderson et al. (2020) p. 7	Forms of identification Giles p.8	Types of positive PSI Banister and Cocker (2013) p.10	Narratives of forgiveness Sanderson and Emmon (2014)	Types of fans in China Jia et al. (2020)	Affect Emotion (open coding)
intimacy friendship identification	criticism threats anger support fans' identification with negative psych traits such as personality disorder (maladaptive identification) hostility wishing harm to his body urging him to die Jones et al. (2022), p. 12 para-love	wishful identification or wish to emulate affinity, display liking for a media person	(1) best friendship, compartmentalized and childhood friend; (2) inspirational aspirational admiration, and illusory; (3) negative celebrity relation: antagonistic; 'not for me'; guilty pleasure.	They found five themes in fan's narratives of forgiveness: support, the "addiction is hard" narrative, the "human condition" attribution, justification, and acceptance of character flaws	casual fans (playful, limited marketing impact); fascinated fans (aspirational, fervent purchasers); devoted fans (sense of belonging, voluntary marketer & promoter and fervent purchasers) dysfunctional fans (identification with celebrity, rally pro); reflective fans (solid self-identity,	i.e. expression of love, hate, pain, joy, etc.

	shock: grief, enfranchise- ment, flagella- tion, and indignation.				celebrity image-shapers)	
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The next chapter analyzes the parasocial relationships and affective communication of Kris Wu's fans on social media during his career success and after his conviction for rape and other sexual crimes. The chapter is divided into three parts, examining the evolution of fans' emotional attachments and responses to Wu. It highlights the complex and challenging ways in which fans engage with issues of power, social justice, and personal affect in the context of their strong attachment to celebrities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, I present the thematic analysis of fan comments in social media to discuss how they relate to the construction and transformation of parasocial interactions (PSI) and affective communication in times of professional success and at a time of transgression and legal punishment in a celebrity's career. The chapter centers on the case of Kris Wu, a pop culture icon and Chinese celebrity arrested in 2021 and convicted in 2022 of rape and other sexual crimes.

The analysis identifies the types of PSIs and the affective communication supporting fan interactions as well as the patterns of continuity and change in the fans' emotional attachments and responses to Wu before and after his legal problems. It thus shows the fluidity of fans' positive and negative PSIs in online communication, depending on their perceptions of Wu's public image and personal character, and the circumstances surrounding his career and personal life. It suggests how fans' PSIs and emotional attachments to a celebrity can determine their continued support and admiration for a celebrity above matters of morality and legality, and how, at times, a celebrity's transgression can evoke feelings of betrayal and lead to the withdrawal of fan support. It also shows how cultural values and societal norms—notably on gender and sexuality, in this case—can also influence fans' emotional responses to celebrities. Overall, I argue that this case demonstrates the complex and often fraught ways in which fans engage with issues of personal affect, power, and social justice in the context of their strong attachment to celebrities.

The chapter is organized in three main parts. In Part 1, I examine the parasocial

relationships formed by Kris Wu's fans on Zhihu after the release of the movie *Sweet Sixteen* in 2016, a time of high popularity for Wu. At this time, fans engaged in positive PSIs with Wu, identifying him with a heroic character and supporting him emotionally in response to those who criticized Wu's talent. Positive PSIs with Wu contrast sharply with negative PSIs directed at critics of Wu. In Part 2, I analyze the online reactions of Kris Wu's fans following his arrest for sexual assault allegations, including their exchange of messages with Du Meizhu on Weibo. I highlight the harmful reactions of some fans towards Meizhu, and conclude that the relationship between fans and celebrities can be complicated and pose challenges to social justice issues. In Part 3, I examine fans' PSIs at the time of Wu's conviction for his crimes to note the adverse social effects of PSIs between fans and celebrities, such as continued victim-blaming and cyberbullying. I also highlight how fans' negotiation of emotional connections and moral values can influence their responses to a celebrity's misdeeds, ultimately leading to a parasocial breakup. In Appendix A, I provide the list of the comments in Chinese language that formed the primary data for this research.

Part 1. PSI and Affect in 2016, Upon the Release of *Sweet Sixteen*

As discussed earlier, before charges were presented against Kris Wu for sexual crimes by Chinese authorities, Wu's popularity and positive image in Chinese celebrity culture were very strong. I selected the particular time of the release of the popular film *Sweet Sixteen* in 2016 to identify the types of parasocial relations and affective communication that fans using the sites Zhihu were engaged in before Wu's transgressions.

The analysis of fan comments posted on Zhihu at this time showed both positive and negative PSIs and strong emotional reactions through two main themes: (1) identification of Wu with a heroic character through expressions of liking, admiration, praise, empathy, loyalty, and even worship for his good looks and physical appearance; and (2) support for Wu through a defensive, emotional position as in a “Us vs. Them ” approach to critics of his acting. This thematic emphasis shows both positive and negative PSIs. Positive interactions were observed among fans and toward Wu, and negative interactions were evident in the communication between Wu’s fans and those who posted comments with any criticism of Kris Wu. In addition to comments, fans also created fan art, fanfiction, and other creative content to showcase their emotional connection with the celebrity. These forms of interactions were supported by affective communication through expression of feelings that supported the PSIs.

Theme 1: Identification of Wu with the Heroic Character of Xia Mu

Fans’ reaction to Kris Wu’s performance on film of the character Xia Mu—a character who appeared originally in a historical novel—described Wu’s acting as a convincing and truthful representation of the heroic qualities of Mu. Mu is the character who avenges the rape of a female friend by violently severing the rapist’s penis. For some fans, Wu’s portrayal of Xia Mu was consistent with how they had imagined the character from the historic novel before watching the film. Fans appreciated the performance by Wu as an accurate portrayal of Xia Mu, the hero from the novel.

Several fans discussed Wu’s acting in the particular context of a movie adaptation of a novel. They believed that Wu’s interpretation of Xia Mu aligned with their

expectations from the novel and that Wu embodied the character's appearance and personality. Some fans even considered Wu as their ideal Xia Mu. One fan argued that Wu's temperament "matches" the original character of Xia Mu and that his portrayal fulfilled fans' imaginations of the character's appearance and temperament. Those who said they were fans of the original novel believed that Wu captured the essence of Xia Mu's character in his portrayal.

Fans praised his ability to convey Xia Mu's emotions with subtlety and depth through non-verbal cues, including eye movements, facial expressions, and other body language. They also admired his portrayal of Xia Mu's defining character traits, such as introversion, aloofness, coldness, hollowness, and protectiveness towards his loved ones. These fans praised Kris Wu's acting skills, which they noted made him a fitting choice for Xia Mu's role.

Some expressions of empathy and loyalty with Wu centered on the fans' identification with his growth and development as an artist. Some fans used a tone of friendly support by calling attention to the fact that acting is a challenging and multifaceted craft, where even simple roles require a great deal of skill and nuance. Noting how Wu had worked hard and developed a unique style in his career, fans conveyed their support for his growth as an artist, with some pointing out to critics of Wu that constructive criticism was important for an artist's growth. As one fan expressed, fans will continue to support Kris Wu while acknowledging that he would continue to develop and refine his craft.

Expressions of fans' worship of Kris Wu due to his physical attractiveness were also part of the discourse, with personal emotions coming into play through language. For some fans, liking, admiration, and worship revolved primarily around his physical appearance rather than his acting skills. Fans expressed their opinions about Wu through reference to his good looks. One fan noted that, in addition to being an actor, Wu was a model and thus his job was to look good and in this he did a great job in the film. This fan stated that they would watch anything featuring Wu just for his looks. Another fan commented that Wu's beauty was "otherworldly" and so "stunning" that it's "hard to believe he is human." This fan did not care about the plot or other actors in the films; Wu was the only reason they were interested in the movie. One fan described their reaction simply as "Worshipping Wu Yifan on the screen" indicating that the fan had a strong affection for the celebrity and found pleasure in watching him perform.

For these fans, Wu's looks were the reason for their initial attraction to him, and they will continue to support him for that reason alone. According to one fan, "Wu is the definition of perfection; he has a chiseled jawline, sharp features, and his height is just impeccable." Another fan disclosed that they were unable to take their eyes off him whenever he appeared on screen. As one fan put it, "Wu Yifan is the ultimate eye candy." Another fan's fixation on his appearance was so intense that they stated that "he is so good-looking that it's distracting" and that she could "not concentrate on anything else when he's on screen." In this case, physical attraction is the type of virtual, one-way interaction that bonds these fans/followers to the celebrity.

Overall, most fans agreed that Kris Wu was suitable for the role of Xia Mu, with the ability to transform from a cautious and guarded character to a fierce and determined avenger. They expressed satisfaction with Wu's performance and believed that he did justice to the character from the novel.

Theme 2: Us versus Them - Fan Community in Defense of Kris Wu

Fans' comments that praised Kris Wu and identified him with a noble character, good acting skills, and an attractive physique often were intertwined with postings where they performed a sense of defensiveness and antagonism against critics of Wu's acting. This was evident in how fans reacted to critical comments about Kris Wu's performance in the role of Mu Xia. Positioned in an "us vs. them" approach to critics, fans got involved in defending Wu against those who deemed his acting poor. Their arguments often referred to their deeper knowledge about Wu's personal life and career, as in defending a friend or acquaintance.

One devoted fan simply questioned why anyone would criticize Wu. Another fan arrogantly replied to critics by pointing out their lack of knowledge of the original novel or aesthetic sensitivity to evaluate "good acting." Still others defended Wu by blaming time constraints in film production for having possibly affected the movie's plot logic and, thus, Wu's performance. In one comment, a fan counter-argued: "The plot is very close to the original work. If you haven't read the original work, can you please not evaluate it based on your subjective preferences?" And as another fan put it, "Don't bullshit if you haven't read the book."

Some fans acknowledged that negative criticism is “freedom of speech,” but stated that they would not condone insults and called for “objectivity” in the evaluations of Wu. For instance, in an apparently indifferent tone, this fan still evoked antagonism toward critics and displayed a sense of having intimate knowledge of Wu’s feelings: “I won’t criticize those who insult or swear at him. Freedom of speech. Wu Yifan won’t pay attention to it anyway. So be it.” Another fan replied to critics by highlighting their personal knowledge of how “hard” Wu has worked in his career and how he had developed a “unique style.” This fan addressed the critic directly: “Do you have any idea about the level of hard work put in by Wu Yifan?”

These fans displayed a personal, emotional tone of defensiveness and rejection of criticism towards Wu’s acting, as if they felt the need to demonstrate loyalty to him in front of critics and display their personal connection to Wu’s career. As I will discuss below, this type of interaction, which centered on acting skills, intensified significantly at the times of public scandal and legal prosecution in 2021 and 2022.

Affect and Parasocial Interactions

Fans’ emotions showed a range of feelings toward this celebrity figure. Some fans expressed anger at the online negative comments about Wu’s acting and reacted defensively, while, paradoxically, noting the subjectivity of such negative opinions on his performance. Fans also expressed a deep emotional connection to Wu’s performance of the character of Mu, feeling easily moved to tears by the plot, music, and lyrics, and referring directly to the emotional impact of Wu’s acting on them.

For instance, some fans referred to their feelings of inspiration, love, joy, sadness, physical attraction, or a sense of community through their appreciation of Kris Wu. A fan related to the idea that love can be a positive energy, and saw how the interpretation of Xia Mu's "pure love" could be a positive force in the lives of those around him. Other fans mentioned they felt like crying when Wu appeared on screen and admitted to being easily moved to tears by the performance, experiencing a sense of sadness and heart-wrenching emotion in relation to the character Xia Mu. Fans also expressed liking and admiration for Wu's acting and career growth; love and physical attraction to his looks, and a sense of belonging to a community in support of Wu.

At the same time, feelings of rejection and criticism of those denigrating Wu's acting were part of the fans' affective communication and helped solidify a sense of loyalty as a community in defense of Wu.

Part 1: Conclusion

This analysis shows how fans related to Wu at a time when his popularity was high and his public image was not yet tarnished by scandal and sexual crimes. The dominant themes in the fans' discourse suggested both positive and negative PSIs. On the one hand, fans positively identified with Wu through liking, admiration, praise, empathy, loyalty, and even worship. On the other hand, they engaged in negative interactions through a tone of defensive self-righteousness directed at commentators who posted negative criticism of Wu.

The communication of affect among fans in 2016 suggests that Wu had the power to elicit deep and diverse emotional responses through his image and acting, whether

negative feelings toward critics or positive feelings toward Wu. This was evident in the fans' identification of Wu's performance with that of a hero with a noble character or in fan antagonistic, self-righteous reactions to critics of Wu.

Despite the fact that the movie centered sexual violence against women, references to issues related to gender and sexual violence were not visible in the discourse of the fans. This was likely influenced by dominant cultural values in China, where public discussion of these topics is avoided.

In Part 2, below, I will present the analysis of fan comments in 2021 and 2022 to explore PSIs in the context of Kris Wu's criminal case.

Part 2. PSI and Affect After Public Announcement of Wu's Transgressions, 2021

The first public revelations of Wu's alleged sexual crimes in Weibo were posted by Du Meizhu, an art student in Beijing, on July 3, 2021. Meizhu claimed that she was Wu's former girlfriend and accused the celebrity of raping her. Wu's business associates called her allegations "fake" and threatened to sue Du Meizhu for defamation. This first exchange triggered the government's and fans' reactions to Wu in ways that will be examined in this section.

In this section, I will, first, summarize the exchange of messages on Weibo between Du Meizhu and Kris Wu and his business and legal representatives. This exchange is important for the contextualization of how Wu's fans first learned about the alleged transgressions. It is worth including this exchange because the ways in which fans first became aware of the news might have influenced their subsequent reactions and

PSIs and affective communication. Following the summary of the public exposure of the case, I will present the analysis of fan comments in Weibo and Instagram in reaction to the public scandal and criminal prosecution of Kris Wu.

How the First Accusations Against Wu in 2021 Became Public

July 3, 2021 – The Accusation

It all started when Du Meizhu's postings on Weibo shared evidence, including screenshots of text messages and photos, alleging that Kris Wu cheated on her and had affairs with many other women, some of them minors. She also accused him of running an account to "hunt" underage girls, using excuses like hiring actresses for music videos and signing new artists to invite them to parties where they would drink together. She wrote that Kris and his friends allegedly discussed and displayed photos of these girls like toys.

July 8, 2021 — Initial Denial from Kris Wu's Representatives

Kris Wu's business team denied the accusations made by Du Meizhu and claimed that the texts were fake. They stated that they would use their legal team to protect Kris Wu's image and reputation, and threatened to sue Du Meizhu for defamation. They also warned that if she spread rumors without evidence to mislead the public on Sina Weibo, she could face punishment by law.

July 8, 2021—Du Meizhu First Report of Denigration by Wu’s Fans

On this date, Meizhu posted that she experienced depression due to this case, but that her depression was being aggravated by the cyber-bullying and threats from Kris Wu’s fans. She displayed a medical certificate as evidence of how much pain she was suffering. She wrote that the medical certificate was from Beijing Anding Hospital Beijing Medical University, one of the top psychiatric hospitals in the city. According to the certificate, she experienced dysautonomia, which affected “auto-regulation,” “compressive ability,” and fatigue level, and caused irregular heartbeat. She claimed she was prescribed medicine, and an image of the prescribed medication was shown on the screen shot posted by Meizhu.

July 10, 2021 — Meizhu’s First Media Interview

Du Meizhu agreed to be interviewed for the news program *Yi Xian*, a program produced by Tencent Holdings Limited, one of the largest media conglomerates in the world, with the power to reach mass audiences (“Tencent,” 2023) This is a translation of an excerpt of the exchange during the interview:

Yi Xian: According to the information that other victims provided, what impressed you most?

Du Meizhu: It is a shame that the middleman used the same excuse of looking for talent to select the female lead in Kris Wu’s ongoing MV in order to have girls come to their party. However, they lied to those girls and forced them to drink alcohol, and then Kris Wu had sex with them after they were

drunk. This is deceitful behavior because they all lost consciousness when they were drunk.

Yi Xian: In terms of “drunk sex,” how did he explain after?

Du Meizhu: I was cheated by him, and he said he will take responsibility and take care of me. But now he is pretending that we don’t know each other as if we are strangers. Again, I am not here to ride the wave of Kris Wu.

Yi Xian: Did you report to the police as you mentioned before? What was the policemen’s attitude?

Du Meizhu: Yesterday, I consulted with police about this case; they said they need to organize the evidence and determine whether they have evidence to accuse him. The police said: “as long as we have evidence, the law is just and fair; it won’t take sides with anybody.” I feel extreme pressure in my heart, but I am looking forward to seeing a fair outcome under the help of the law.

Yi Xian: So you won’t withdraw this lawsuit and keep on it until it is done, right?

Du Meizhu: I will keep doing it unless he repents for his sins and apologizes for his wrongdoings.

July 18-19, 2021— Brand Breakup

All the brands that Kris Wu had endorsed officially announced on Weibo that they had terminated their business relationship with Kris Wu within two days. Other brands

also posted their decision to terminate business relationships with Wu, one after another, including Liby (a laundry detergent brand), Seeyoung (a shampoo brand), Vatti (a kitchen appliance brand), Tempo (a paper handkerchief brand), Master Kang's Ice Black Tea (a beverage brand), Honor of Kings (a Tencent game brand), Tencent Video (a Chinese video streaming website), and Tuborg (a beer brand). A day later, on the morning of July 20, the most influential brands announced that they would be drawing a line between Kris Wu and their products—such as L'Oreal Paris (a cosmetics brand), Porsche (a car brand), and Burberry (a clothing brand)—and would terminate their contracts with Kris Wu. Even though Louis Vuitton didn't announce anything about their contract with Wu, the company stated that it would end its business relationship with Kris Wu.

This initial series of public messages on Weibo and other media like *Yi Xian* set the stage for fans' reactions to the news about alleged moral and criminal transgressions by Wu. In the next section, I present the analysis of fans' reactions and the types of PSIs and affective communication that are created by fans at the time of Wu's personal crisis and professional downfall.

Fans Reactions at the Time of the Wu's Arrest and Imprisonment in 2021

On July 22, 2021, the Beijing prosecutor's office circulated information to confirm the allegation made by Du Meizhu. Officials shared the information about this case and validated Meizhu's claim that a relationship between Wu and Meizhu existed. In addition, even though the police found that the accuser had exaggerated her claims and posts to earn money and fame, they reported that the sexual assault allegations against

Wu were proven. On August 16, 2021, the Beijing prosecutor's office released a statement, posted on Weibo, confirming Kris Wu's arrest: "Kris Wu (male, 30, Chinese Canadian) has been detained by Beijing police on allegations of rape to many young girls due to online reports."

The analysis of fan messages on Weibo in response to Meizhu's allegations and Wu's business partners' counter-allegations online, followed by the arrest of the celebrity by the Chinese authorities on charges of rape, suggests that most commentators responded with strong, positive PSI and affective communication in defense of Wu. Their messages reinforced their unconditional identification with Wu despite the scandal. These interactions were expressed most often through three main themes: (1) cyberbullying and hate speech against Meizhu, (2) trust in the Chinese judicial system to hold a fair trial to exonerate Wu; and (3) Us vs. Them - Fan Community in Defense of Wu.

Theme 1: Cyberbullying and Hate Speech

To the news of Wu's arrest, the reaction of fans who engaged in cyber-bullying and victim-blaming was extremely negative and harmful. These fans chose to support Kris Wu and assume his innocence while discrediting and verbally attacking Du Meizhu even after her accusations were proven true by authorities. This indicated an emotional reaction biased in favor of their preferred celebrity rather than an objective analysis of the situation. In these messages, Wu was positioned as the victim of a woman trying to profit by taking advantage of his celebrity status.

Furthermore, the fans' verbal aggression towards Du Meizhu reinforced harmful stereotypes and contributed to a toxic culture of victim-blaming and shaming female victims of rape. One fan reacted to the news with shock and disbelief: "really speechless, a wave to ride." Many others criticized the accuser for "riding the wave" of Kris Wu (or taking advantage of Wu's popularity) to open a live show on TikTok. They expressed their opposition to "micro celebrities" like Meizhu who make accusations against celebrities as a way to get rich.

Some fans posted the Chinese meme "Green Tea" to refer to Meizhu as a young woman who used her youth to attract men and gain fame. This is an insult that suggests that Du Meizhu was promiscuous or a prostitute. In one comment, a fan directed their hate to Meizhu in this way: "a disappointed girl. Are you cheaper than a tart? Green tea bitch. Are you a whore who anyone can sleep with? Bitch." Another fan stated: "bitch, do you want to drink green tea? Or you want to drink sulfuric acid? Do you feel good by smearing other's reputation to sensationalize yourself? Do you want this fire to be famous? Do you want a fire to burn you out?"

Other fans wished the death or suicide of Meizhu. One fan who questioned Meizhu's credibility and mental health suggested she should kill herself:

You said you are depressed, and why don't you just commit suicide? Please die right away, and get out. After riding the wave of Kris Wu, you just open a live show on TikTok. It is such a turn-off. Bummer, why don't you call the police? don't you dare? Or is it because you don't have any evidence?

Another fan wrote:

What the hell are you? A disposable washrag? Are you expected to let more people know you? Are you freaking mental? Depressed? Suicidal? Why are you still alive? You rub us the wrong way. Ugly people do strange things, please die as soon as possible.

The use of gender-specific hate speech and insults towards Du Meizhu highlighted a larger issue of misogyny and sexism in society.

Amidst a majority of hate comments, only two fans identified with Meizhu's allegations of mental distress and noted her role in speaking up for other victims. One unnamed woman shared her own experience with depression to show empathy with Meizhu and give credibility to her postings about her depression and suffering. A second woman wrote a comment to support the position of the first woman. Their messages are telling of the dominant values that keep low the visibility of critical voices of women on these matters. These women were using their own experiences to support Du Meizhu's claims and counter the narrative that she was lying or seeking attention for financial gain:

Du Meizhu went to the same hospital as me. Let me explain that she wasn't trying to attract more attention by acting or pretending to be depressed. Beijing Anding Hospital provides electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), and they will do an entire test which includes not only mental questionnaires but includes a physiological index test. This means that if her depression is not very serious, the hospital won't allow her to do ECT. In addition, the negative effects of ECT are strong; people might experience memory disorders and even can't remember their mother's name for a short time. ECT is for people who have a tendency for

suicide, seriously, so it is helpful for those kinds of people to diminish the thought of death. At that time, the Anding Hospital physician also recommended me to do MECT, but I prefer to die before being left like a fool after the treatment. But my depression condition was very poor at that time. Thus, I think this level of pain should not be ridiculed and suspected. Facing this medical condition, she [Meizhu] stands up and speaks for all victims who are not for money. If she doesn't care about life first, why would she care about money? Is it to make her funeral look better?

In support, another fan wrote, “Yes, when I was in the hospital for depression treatment, the physician told me MECT is only for people who are in a serious condition.”

Their language reflects empathy for the victim and the desire to validate her testimony in front of those who attacked her as a liar, and insulted and ridiculed her. Furthermore, these comments highlight the ways in which gender intersects with issues of power and control. The fact that women are being disbelieved and dismissed by some fans and media suggests the enduring stigma and bias surrounding women's discussion of issues of sexual assault and harassment.

Theme 2: Trust in the Legal System and Defense of Wu's Legal Rights

Some fans did not react with an attack on the alleged victim or defend Wu's innocence overtly. They focused more on their trust in the legal system and Wu's legal rights. In these sets of comments, the assumption of Wu's innocence was implicit and the interactions were less emotional and seemingly more objective than in the messages

analyzed above. Partly as a reaction against “rumormongers” who were intentionally spreading unproven accusations, some of these fans expressed their trust that the Chinese judiciary would give a fair judgment, reveal the truth, and punish the accused if found guilty.

To demonstrate their “objectivity,” one fan in support of Wu’s innocence mentioned that they would apologize and cancel their Weibo account if the accused was found guilty, and hoped others would apologize if Wu was found innocent. They seemed to trust that the legal justice system would exonerate innocent people, and they encouraged Kris Wu to defend his rights. One fan wrote: “We trust the law of the People’s Republic of China, and we trust legal justice, and it will clear innocent people.” Another fan wrote: “China is a federal society, so we refuse any kind of defamation, and we should defend our rights. I support Chris Wu to defend his rights.” Another fan summed up the general feelings among these fans in a statement that affirmed trust in Kris Wu’s innocence, that the police would clear his name, and that the public should trust the legal system and avoid spreading rumors that could damage Wu’s reputation. In an indirect criticism of Meizhu, one fan suggested that if “someone” experiences “unfairness,” they should take legal action rather than trying to resolve the issue through social media. The fan noted that even when journalists can expose cases and social media users can amplify an issue, the legal court is the appropriate place to settle a lawsuit.

Other fans were more direct. In one comment directed at Meizhu, a fan wrote: “let’s believe in law and the police. Please don’t try to settle a lawsuit on Weibo anymore, Miss.” Another fan put it this way:

If you have evidence to support that it is true, then show us. If not, you can't spread that case and try to settle a lawsuit on Weibo. Every time you post on Weibo, you do not dare to mention Kris Wu, and I suspect you aim to avail yourself of the loopholes. Please call the police, and let's see whether you are in hell or not?

These fans often used legal terms to frame their perspective. Some referred to the idea that Wu deserved the presumption of "innocence until proven guilty." They were frustrated with those who were questioning the government's legal procedures and its safeguard for presumption of innocence. These fans were defending Wu against those who were spreading rumors and trying to damage his reputation before the legal system had a chance to investigate the allegations against him. These fans were expressing their belief in the importance of legal rights and due process, at the same time that they were advocating for Kris Wu to be given a fair trial.

Theme 3: Us versus Them - Fan Community in Defense of Wu

This thematic emphasis was found in the comments of fans who asserted their strong identification with Wu as they saw themselves as part of a tight-knit, loyal community who were standing by Kris Wu and against accusers, doubters, and even potential government unfairness. They viewed Wu as a victim and made emotional connections to the celebrity. In this case, Wu's innocence was not the center of the discourse but rather the group's loyalty to Wu, no matter the outcome of the legal process. Their loyalty was performed by attacking or dismissing Wu's accusers. These

fans drew a line between loyal fans (us) and accusers of Wu who did not share the beliefs and values of the fan community (them). Some fans expressed a strong sense of belonging to Wu's camp and urged non-fans to leave. For instance, one fan wrote that Wu's arrest:

doesn't mean he was sentenced. He is to be a suspect but that doesn't mean he is convicted. If you are not a member of our group, please go away and don't validate your existence here. We won't question political decisions, but what we do and say is not your job.

The fans drew a clear boundary between themselves and those who were not part of the group, asserting that only members had the right to express their opinions about Wu's case and that outsiders should not interfere. A fan used strong language to express disgust towards those who were willing to cooperate with the investigation against Wu, calling them criminals and telling them to "fuck off." This fan viewed cooperation with the authorities as a betrayal and was repulsed by it.

Among these fans, there were expressions of emotional connection, primarily love and loyalty, at the time when Wu was arrested and jailed to await trial. For instance, a fan wrote: "I won't leave, and I will wait for you to come back." This loyal fan was standing by Wu and willing to support him through his imprisonment and after his release. Another fan suggested humorously that she would go to extreme lengths to help Kris Wu, and asked the "community" of fans: "are there any sisters planning to join me in rescuing Wu Yifan from prison? If successful, you and Fanfan can flee, while I stay behind and serve time." This fan used playful language to express her feelings for Kris Wu.

Some other fans focused on offering material resources to assist Wu, such as “contacting a lawyer” or “offering financial assistance” if needed. One fan stated: “I am already contacting a lawyer, and I am willing to provide bail money to help brother Fan” (Kris Wu’s nickname). These comments could be seen as manifestations of diverse personal emotions towards Wu, who, in their view, was the victim. Fans thus expressed empathy for Kris Wu.

Affect and Parasocial Interactions

Overall, the reactions of fans upon hearing the news of Wu’s alleged criminal behavior and arrest showed strong emotional connections to the celebrity. The emotions at this time were complex and multifaceted. When directed toward Du Meizhu, emotions expressed gender-specific hate, disrespect, indifference towards the victim, self-righteousness, and disgust and anger towards those who did not support Wu or would cooperate with the investigation. The derogatory and offensive comments directed towards the accusers demonstrate the negative impact of positive PSI with a celebrity when taken to the extreme, with fans expressing disrespectful and hateful attitudes towards those they felt were not supportive of their celebrity.

In contrast, the emotions suggested in comments that centered on Wu’s innocence referred to feelings of disbelief (upon hearing the allegations), trust (in Wu and in the legal system), empathy, loyalty, compassion, willingness to sacrifice, and sense of group identity. The language used by these fans reveals emotional attachments and a sense of personal investment in Kris Wu’s well-being. These expressions of positive PSI

demonstrate how fans develop deep emotional connections and attachments to public figures, even in the absence of direct personal contact. Through the expressions of these feelings, these fans demonstrated how positive PSR can foster a sense of community and connection, even across vast distances and cultural divides. At the same time, they demonstrated how these emotional ties can obscure reason and impede fairness toward others outside the fan community.

While it could be expected that fans would ardently defend Kris Wu's innocence and believe that the legal system would clear his name, the silences and omissions in the discourse were also noteworthy. For instance, faced with the news about criminal charges against Wu, most fans did not call attention to the serious nature of the accusations of sexual assault. Further, none of the fans' messages I examined recognized that the legal system may not always provide a fair and just outcome for all, particularly in cases of female victims of sexual assault and misconduct, where the burden of proof can be difficult to meet. It is not uncommon for victims of sexual assault to come forward publicly on social media because they may not feel comfortable or safe pursuing legal action, or because they may not trust the legal system to provide a fair outcome. Fans who defended Wu against critics and those who validated the government's legal procedures and trust in the system, both failed to consider these larger questions about legality and gender equity.

Part Two: Conclusion

In summer 2021, at the critical moment of Kris Wu's accusation, arrest, and imprisonment to await trial, the recurrence of thematic clusters suggest how performance of positive PSIs when the celebrity is in peril turned simultaneously into negative interactions with those outside the fan community that posed a threat to or criticism of the celebrity figure. Here, positive PSIs took the form of empathy, support, and identification with Wu as the victim of women trying to exploit him. These interactions can be interpreted through Banister and Cocker's (2013) typology of fan relationships with media figures. In the case of Wu, some of his fans reacted to his public scandal and downfall as empathetic, supportive friends would do. Others stressed their continued trust in his innocence, or his continued status as a source of inspiration for fans. Most chose to ignore the serious criminal charges against Wu or his problematic behavior. Negative PSIs targeted primarily Du Meizhu through hate speech filled with angry messages, gender-specific insults, threats, hostility, references to harming her body, and even wishing death on Meizhu.

Across fans, affective communication took center stage, as very emotional appeals to loyalty, sense of group identity, trust of Wu and the legal system, anger and hate toward the accuser, and rejection of non-fans on the site dominated the discourse.

Part 3. Fans PSI and Affect at the Time of Wu's Sentencing in 2022

On November 25, 2022, Kris Wu was sentenced by a court in Beijing to 13 years in jail, after being found guilty of rape and other sexual offences. The court convicted Wu

of raping three women at his residence while they were unable to resist due to alcohol intoxication, and of organizing two women to engage in “promiscuous activities” while intoxicated at his residence. Wu was sentenced to 11.5 years for rape and 22 months for assembling a crowd to engage in promiscuous activities, resulting in a fixed-term sentence of 13 years. The court stated that Wu would be deported after finishing his sentence. On the same day, Du Meizhu, the victim, posted: “Finally, I’ve been waiting for this.”

In this section, I analyze fan comments on Weibo and Instagram at the time of the legal resolution of Kris Wu’s case. As expected, the salient themes identified during this period of coverage were more diverse and complex since fans’ trust in the court system to prove Wu’s innocence turned out to be betrayed by the sentencing. This analysis examines how fans responded to the legal outcome and how their responses were influenced by emotional and irrational attachments to the celebrity, as well as by fans’ disillusionment, indignation, and break-ups in their relationship with Wu after learning about the conviction. This analysis also highlights the negative consequences, such as continued victim-blaming and cyberbullying, and the ways in which affect can shape fans’ perceptions of the situation.

The most salient themes include a continuation of three of the themes discussed above and the emergence of two additional themes that signal a disruption in the fans’ discourse of identification, support, and gender bias toward the celebrity. The recurring themes are: (1) Cyberbullying and Hate Speech; (2) Identification with Wu as an Inspirational Figure; and (3) Us versus Them - Fan Community in Defense of Wu. The

two new themes at this juncture are: (4) Defense of Meizhu for Advocating Justice for Victims of Sexual Violence, (5) Para-Love Shock: Fan Indignation and Breakup, and (6) trust in the legal system and defense of Wu's legal rights . The new themes expose critical voices denouncing Wu's behavior, the way violence against women is condoned and victims are silenced and denied justice in society, and praising Du Meizhu for bringing the case forward and giving voice to this issue.

Interestingly, fan indignation and outrage against Wu's sexual crimes and the defense of Du Meizhu did not emerge openly in the selection of messages analyzed until the verdict was known. This is noteworthy as it may suggest some of the dynamics of PSIs when celebrities transgress moral and legal boundaries. As expected, the range of emotion and feelings at this moment is the widest, revealing the split in the fan community in the face of the downfall of their celebrity.

Theme 1: Cyberbullying and Hate Speech

As in 2021, when Wu was first accused, arrested, and jailed, some fans identified with Wu and took his side by using derogatory language towards Du Meizhu, portraying her as a money-seeking, attention-seeking fraudster, and even a prostitute. Even after the sentencing, some fans chose to support Wu by discrediting Meizhu, which indicated a bias towards their preferred celebrity rather than an objective analysis of the situation. For example, some fans never believed that she was a victim and saw her as “extorting Wu for money,” or “sponging off the incident to gain attention.” Some also questioned her motives and character, claiming she was a “prostitute” who hypocritically portrayed

herself as pure and chaste. Another fan wrote: “Yes, Du Meizhu is just a prostitute who had a one-night stand. To avoid being condemned, she hypocritically put up a façade of being pure and chaste!”

Some used emojis and internet slang like “eating popcorn (吃瓜 chī guā),” which implies being a spectator or bystander in a drama or scandal, typically without taking sides or getting involved, or “sponging off traffic (吸流量)” to refer to using popular or contentious topics to attract attention to one’s content without contributing any originality or value to the conversation. These terms suggest an amused or detached tone towards the situation, indicating that some commentators were simply observing the drama of fans without investing too much emotional energy or taking sides. Overall, the quotes reflect a complex range of emotions that are characteristic of online fan discourse.

Theme 2: Identification with Wu as an Inspirational Figure

In 2022, at a turning point for the worst in Wu’s career, many of his fans used social media to affirm their love, admiration, and unequivocal support for the celebrity despite unfavorable legal outcomes. In the comments analyzed, fans seem to show Wu a proof of their loyalty and to grieve with Wu after the sentencing. They also seem to send a consoling and encouraging gesture to support him in dark moments.

Some fans appealed to their empathy with Wu as the victim, as in the fan expression “Poor Wu Yifan (Kris Wu).” This expression of support showed a clear sentiment of sympathy or concern for him. Others chose to affirm their affection in direct interpellations like: “My love for you has never stopped” and “I miss you.” Other

comments revealed parasocial interactions in the fans' encouragement to Kris Wu to "take care of himself" and return to the public eye. This type of PSI shows a sense of intimacy and personal closeness to the celebrity. It also shows a one-sided relationship where fans feel connected to a celebrity they have never met, and they care about his well-being in a time of crisis as if he were a close friend.

Other fans responded to the situation with uplifting messages asserting the role of Wu as a "beam of light" and source of inspiration. One fan wrote: "I know that every moment of liking you is filled with the courage to live." Fans also expressed appreciation for the courage Wu inspired in them and positive influence on fans' mental health and well-being. This type of language can be inspiring and uplifting, giving hope and motivation, but it also suggests how fans can be dependent on the celebrity for emotional support.

Some fans focused on affirming their appreciation and admiration for Wu's artistic impact. They praised him for his popular songs and their impact on audiences, for Wu's talent and world-class influence, and for Wu's positive impact on their own individual lives. They reassured Wu that he was better than his competitors by using the phrase "cows and horses that can't compete." This type of comparison elevates Kris Wu's status in the eyes of his fans. The fans' desire to see Kris Wu continue his career in the entertainment industry also reveals how fans invested emotionally in the success of someone they don't know personally.

Theme 3: Us versus Them - Fan Community in Defense of Wu

In addition to cyberbullying and hate speech toward Meizhu, another instance of negative PSIs toward critics of Wu appeared in the defense of Kris Wu's contributions to *The Rap of China* and comments against entertainment figures who accepted the guilty verdict. *The Rap of China* is a Chinese reality show that began in 2017, where up-and-coming rappers compete for a recording contract. The show is credited with promoting rap music in China and launching the careers of various Chinese rappers.

One of Wu's supporters expressed their sentiments in a direct interpellation of Wu: "Without you, the program *The Rap of China* would not have existed in the first place. Referring to Che "Fat" (the program's director) as a despicable person, and to "those Tuha" (contestants from the countryside), the fan stated that they "are enjoying the benefits you have brought them while secretly stabbing you in the back. Nowadays, Chinese hip-hop and rap are becoming more and more vulgar, and are only suitable to be buried underground."

These supporters of Kris Wu disregarded the charges filed against him, claiming that they were merely rumors and unfounded accusations. They defended Wu by highlighting the strong moral character of his associates and requested that he be treated with respect and consideration. They also praised his contributions to the show and criticized the show's director and contestants, whom they perceived as ungrateful and hypocritical for failing to support Wu in the face of his accusers.

As in 2016 and 2021, this behavior from a segment of Wu's fans exemplified a form of tribalism wherein fans aligned themselves with Wu in a defensive stance to

defend him against perceived attacks on him by others. This was the tendency whether the perceived attack involved a minor issue like negative criticism of his performance in the movie *Sweet Sixteen*, or accusations of a serious sexual crime and a prison sentence in 2022. This behavior seems to have been driven by emotional attachment to Wu and a sense of identification with a community that gave fans a sense of social belonging.

Theme 4: Defense of Meizhu for Advocating Justice for Victims of Sexual Violence

This is an alternative theme offered by fans who supported Du Meizhu for her role in bringing attention to Kris Wu's alleged sexual assault and advocating for justice for the victims. This is one of only two themes where fans engaged in negative PSIs with the celebrity. Although less frequent than supportive themes, in 9 out of 55 postings, the emergence of this theme after Wu's sentencing is important.

This theme reveals that some fans may have withdrawn their support from a celebrity brand, when they were hurt by the allegations, needed to dissolve their one-sided relationship with the celebrity, and were more likely to express it publicly after the conclusion of the trial and sentencing. One fan said: "It's been 13 years, brother, it's too miserable. You said you didn't do well, even if you went to whoring. Okay, why would you do such a thing? You're still underage, you're confused. Come out. Just go back to Canada and be a good person." It implies a sense of disappointment and calls for Wu to go back to Canada and be a good person, suggesting that the transgression may have affected how some fans viewed him.

Some of these fans also viewed Du Meizhu as a hero for speaking out and bringing attention to the issue of sexual assault in the entertainment industry, and they expressed frustration and anger towards Kris Wu for his actions. These expressions of support for the victims and the legal system can be seen as a reflection of fans' values and beliefs and a positive response to the legal outcome in favor of the victim of sexual assault. Some fans wrote: "Can you [interpellating Wu] live up to so many fans?" and "Without Du Meizhu, would anyone dare to speak up??? She is a catalyst! Without her, many people would not dare to come out." These comments reflect a sentiment among some fans that Du Meizhu was a hero for speaking out about sexual assault and that her actions led to a positive outcome for the victim and the legal system.

The expressions of support for Du Meizhu and the legal system can be seen as a positive reflection of fans regarding their own social values and beliefs in contrast to the values of Kris Wu. Some believed that justice had been served and that the punishment was appropriate for Kris Wu's actions. One fan expressed their belief that Wu's actions could lead to further consequences in the future, stating, "Wu Yifan will eventually go to prison, who asked him to have such taste? He might have gotten away with it this time, but what about next time, and the time after that?" Overall, these fans believed that justice had been served, even if they had negative opinions about Du Meizhu, as was the case with the fan who commented, "Although Wu did something deserving of punishment, I don't think Du Meizhu is a good person either."

They also expressed frustration and anger at Kris Wu for his actions and believed that he got off too lightly with only 13 years of sentence/probation. These fans felt that

Wu had harmed minors and deserved to be held accountable for his actions. Some fans expressed their satisfaction with the 13-year sentence Wu received, such as one who commented, "Wu Yifan has been sentenced to 13 years. Hahaha." However, others felt that the punishment was not harsh enough. For example, one fan wrote, "Rot in jail. Rapists should not come out and harm minors."

Such fans viewed Du Meizhu as a hero for speaking out and believed that her actions were crucial in ensuring that justice was served. They expressed empathy for the victims of sexual assault and believed that their bravery in speaking out should be recognized and honored. For example, some fans commented, "How does it not matter? If it weren't for her stirring up such a big public opinion, this might not have been investigated so thoroughly," and "If it weren't for her exposing it, the other girls who were violated wouldn't know when he would be punished! To put it bluntly, if she hadn't come forward to expose him, this 'high-quality idol' would continue to make money off everyone and dance in front of everyone for who knows how many years!"

Theme 5: Para-Love Shock, Fan Indignation and Breakup

In contrast to fans who continued supporting Wu after his sentencing, there were some who withdrew their support from the celebrity brand when they were hurt by his actions, as proven in court, and needed to reify the dissolution of their one-sided relationship. This theme reflects one of only two contexts in which fans engaged in negative PSIs with Wu.

Overall, the fans' comments reflect a sense of disillusionment and betrayal towards their celebrity idol and a recognition of the harm he caused to the victims.

One fan wrote: "Who gave Wu Yifan the right to engage in such reprehensible behavior (sleeping with minors)? It's only a matter of time before he ends up behind bars. If he gets away with it this time, what's to stop him from repeating it in the future?" This quote implies that the fan had lost trust in the celebrity, questioned his rehabilitation, and was concerned about his potential future actions. It suggests that they were (and perhaps still are) unwilling to continue supporting him due to his past criminal sexual behavior.

Fans also expressed disappointment by trying to persuade other fans to give up on him and to support the punishment for his alleged crimes. According to a fan who expressed their disappointment, it was suggested that "Wu Yifan is hopeless, and fans should give up, considering that he has been sentenced to 13 years. The fan then added a mocking tone with a laughter expression 'Hahaha'." Another fan echoed this sentiment, stating, "Fans of Wu Yifan, let's all give up together. Don't spend any more time or money on him." This reaction shows a strong sense of accountability and justice for the victims, and a desire to see Kris Wu held responsible for his actions.

In addition to expressing disappointment and anger towards Kris Wu for his actions, some fans used derogatory and hostile language towards him. One fan wrote, "Rot in jail. Rapists should not come out and harm minors." Another fan called him "disgusting" and "a monster, a criminal." Additionally, many fans expressed their belief that Kris Wu's punishment was not severe enough, with one fan commenting, "He got off easy with just 13 years. He should have gotten life in prison." These statements reflect a

sense of indignation and disillusionment among fans who may have previously admired and supported Kris Wu but now viewed him as a criminal who deserved harsh punishment.

In sum, these reactions reflect a sense of finality and closure of the relation with Wu among some fans. They suggest a lack of empathy for Wu and a desire to see him punished for his actions. The reactions reflect a sense of justice and support for the victims, but also a lack of forgiveness or compassion towards Kris Wu.

Fan Communication of Affect

During this critical time in 2022 for Wu and his fans, the feelings suggested by their comments covered a much wider range of feelings that had been the case in either 2016 or 2021. Among those fans who defended Wu's innocence even after the sentencing, the feelings ranged from anger, gendered-specific hate, hostility, and revenge toward Du Meizhu and those validating the court's verdict to affirmations of love, compassion, admiration, support, loyalty, and empathy toward Kris Wu--whom they considered the victim--during his dark hour. By the same token, these fans showed lack of empathy toward the victims of sexual assault and disregard for the moral and legal transgressions involved.

In addition, there were a range of other emotions involved in fan communication related to gender and sexuality in the context of this celebrity scandal. For example, fans may have felt a sense of betrayal if they had previously idolized the celebrity in question,

or they may have felt conflicted if they had enjoyed the celebrity's work but were now grappling with negative allegations.

From the fans who came to express a critical perspective on Wu after the trial, the comments suggested disillusionment, disappointment, loss of trust, and sense of betrayal by Wu. These fans, simultaneously, showed feelings of empathy and solidarity with the victims. Arguably, these fans' values and identity positions led them to rethink their virtual relation to Kris Wu. They also expanded the discourse of personal emotion to show a sense of social solidarity and advocacy for better treatment of victims and survivors of sexual assault, as well as frustration or disappointment towards those who perpetuate harmful attitudes and behaviors. Overall, the emotions involved in fan communication surrounding a celebrity scandal can be complex and multifaceted.

Part 3: Conclusion

The themes discussed for the year 2022 revealed the continuing of positive and negative PSIs between fans, celebrities, and other sources and commentators. Some fans remained emotionally attached and biased towards Wu's defense, extolling his virtues and professing admiration for his positive impact, while engaging in cyberbullying against Du Meizhu and any critic of Wu. This behavior perpetuated sexism, hate, lack of civility, lack of respect for differences of opinion, and lack of objective analysis of a situation.

Another type of negative PSIs was observed in fans' attacks on antagonists to Wu. In these, fans were more concerned about joining their voices as a tight-knit community

to defend the celebrity against critics or accusers than about acknowledging the wrongdoing that was committed or engaging in dialogue with critics. The support of fans thus involved a negative parasocial relationship with people outside the fan-community.

Despite these dominant patterns in the discourse, some fans disrupted the discourse with two different types of PSIs at the time of Wu's guilty sentence. Some engaged in negative interactions to state that Wu deserved punishment for his crimes and saw his conviction as an act of justice. Others who were critical of Wu concentrated, instead, on praising the victim, Du Meizhu, as a hero for speaking out for herself and other victims of sexual violence.

In the next chapter, I will discuss my findings in relation to the research questions for this thesis and offer some general conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusions

Celebrity culture is a pervasive element of contemporary society, and social media platforms have become critical spaces for fan engagement and parasocial relationships with celebrities. The rise and fall of Kris Wu, a popular Chinese film celebrity, provided an opportunity to examine the creation, maintenance and rupture of parasocial and affective relationships in online interactions with celebrities who face scandals for moral and legal transgression. I analyzed the use of Weibo, Zhihu, and Instagram by Kris Wu's fans to identify parasocial and affective communication before and after Wu's legal transgressions involving rape and other sexual crimes. I sought to explore the dynamics of parasocial and affective communication within the dynamics of celebrity culture in China, and in the particular context of Wu's moral and legal transgressions.

In this chapter, I conclude by offering a summary answer and expanded discussion of the findings of the analysis in relation to the research questions and theoretical problems posed in the thesis. The research questions guiding this investigation were:

- 1) What does a thematic analysis of comments posted on social media at a time of high popularity for Kris Wu in 2016 reveal about parasocial interactions (PSI) and affective communication among Wu's fans?
- 2) What patterns of continuity and change in the thematic content of fans' social media comments and their PSI and affective communication are salient at the time of Wu's arrest, prosecution, and conviction on charges of rape in 2021 and 2022?

3) What does this case reveal about PSI and affect communication within the dynamics of celebrity culture in China?

RQ1: What does a thematic analysis of comments in 2016 reveal about parasocial interactions (PSI) and affective communication among Wu's fans?

Before his public scandal and legal problems, Kris Wu enjoyed a massive following on social media platforms such as Weibo, Zhihu, and Instagram, where fans engaged in parasocial and affective communication with the celebrity. As the analysis in Chapter 4 demonstrated, two salient themes emerged in fans' comments at the time of the release of his popular film *Sweet Sixteen*, in 2016: (1) identification of Wu with a heroic character through expressions of liking, admiration, praise, empathy, loyalty, and even worship for his good looks and physical appearance; and (2) support for Wu through a defensive, emotional position as in a "Us vs. Them" approach to critics of his acting.

The first thematic emphasis suggested that fans engaged in positive PSI through identification with Wu as an inspirational figure, with expressions of affinity and friendship towards him. Wu's fans admired him for his talent, personality, looks, and achievements. Additionally, fans formed illusory relationships with Wu, where they project their own desires and fantasies onto him. The second thematic emphasis suggested the generation of both positive PSIs. On the one hand, fans created a sense of connection and belonging, as they shared a bond and expressed a need to stand together as a loyal community against critics of Wu. In doing so, they projected negative PSIs toward those outside of the fan community through rejection, criticism, and self-righteousness. As in PSIs, fans' feelings towards Wu were not based on real-life relationships but rather one-sided, self- and media-driven relationships. In the case of

Wu, the intensity of fans' PSIs was likely driven by their long-term following of his career and his high exposure across various media platforms.

RQ2: How were patterns of continuity and change in the thematic content and fans' PSI and affective communication made salient at the time of Wu's arrest, prosecution, and conviction on charges of rape in 2021 and 2022?

The following table (Table 3) summarizes the thematic content in fans comments for the years examined and point out the repetition or continuity of the themes as well as the themes emerging after Wu's arrest and conviction.

Table 3. Thematic Structure

Themes	2016 high popularity, before transgressions	2021 arrest and imprisonment	2022 sentencing
Identification of Wu with the Heroic Character of Xia Mu, and as source of admiration and inspiration	x	x	x
Us versus Them - Fan Community in Defense of Kris Wu	x	x	x
Cyberbullying and Hate Speech		x	x
Trust in the Legal System and Defense of Wu's Legal Rights		x	
Para-Love Shock: Fan Indignation and Breakup			x
Defense of Meizhu for Advocating Justice for Victims of Sexual Violence.			x

Continuity in Thematic Emphasis, PSI, and Affect

The analysis of this critical period in the relation between Wu and his fans revealed patterns of continuity and change in fans' PSIs with an intensification of affective communication as well as positive and negative interactions. The thematic emphases in 2021 and 2022 reflect the continuation of two themes across time: identification and support for Wu as an inspirational figure; and fan support and defense of Wu through a defensive, emotional "Us vs. Them" reaction against his critics,

accusers, prosecutors, or antagonists. The consistency of these two themes before and after Wu's moral and legal scandal is significant. Even after Wu's conviction, fans positively identified with Wu through liking, admiration, praise, empathy, loyalty, love, care, and even worship. They encouraged him to take care of himself, expressing their desire for him to return to the entertainment industry, and reassuring him that he was not alone in facing false accusations. In their PSIs, fans seemed pressured to support and prove their loyalty and fan identity to Wu in personal tones that resembled those one would employ to grieve, console, uplift, and support a friend in a time of crisis, as well as those one would employ to react to antagonists and opponents. Thus, they maintained negative interactions through a tone of defensive criticism and self-righteousness directed at commentators who posted negative criticism of Wu--whether the issue was related to minor differences in the appreciation of his acting skills or a serious criminal charge against him. These PSIs also reflected indifference toward the nature of the crimes committed, lack of empathy toward victims, and/or lack of social concern about the issue of sexual violence.

These findings for 2016, 2021, and 2022 support Banister and Cocker's (2013) research on types of consumer-celebrity parasocial relationships. The researchers proposed that consumers form inspirational relationships with celebrities, which include aspirational, admiring, and illusory relationships. The concept of affinity is also relevant here, as fans expressed liking, support, and friendship towards Wu, despite the one-sided nature of their relationship (Giles, 2002). These positive interactions with Wu during this time may also relate to Baumeister and Leary's (1995) examination of parasocial interactions in the new media environment as primarily positive and conducive to

developing a sense of intimacy, perceived friendship, and identification with celebrities. Likewise, the comments resonate with Jarzyna's (2020) observation that digitalization makes it easier for audiences to spend a larger amount of time on streamed programming and thus engage in more and intense virtual interactions with celebrities.

In terms of the thematic emphasis on "Us vs. Them - Fan Community in Defense of Wu," the findings add evidence to support Anderson's (2020) findings about negative effects of parasocial interactions in terms of leading fans and celebrities to verbal abuse or antisocial behaviors taking the forms of criticism, threats, and hostility. In the case studied, the negative PSIs were not directed at Wu but against critics of Wu who commented on social media.

Changes in 2021 and 2022 at the time of Wu's arrest and conviction

Fans' reactions to a celebrity's transgression can range from renewed loyalty to mixed feelings or complete withdrawal of support for the celebrity, following the concept of para-loveshock, as discussed by Jones et al. (2022). In 2021, two new thematic emphases emerged as the result of public scandal and legal prosecution, as fans learned of Wu's arrest, and expressed: Trust in the legal system and defense of Wu's legal rights, and cyberbullying and hate speech against Du Meizhu. In 2021, fans' comments reiterated primarily their trust in Wu's innocence and loyalty to him under all circumstances. This new emphasis did not fundamentally alter the positive PSIs and affect toward Kris Wu. However, cyberbullying introduced a significant change in the form of hateful interactions and overtly sexist and misogynist speech as a form of negative PSIs against the alleged victim(s) of rape.

Some of the fans' comments evidenced their certainty and full trust in Wu's innocence, as if they personally knew his personal character and could vouch for his innocence. Overall, the theme of trust in the Chinese legal system also signaled the fans' confidence that the courts would prove that Wu was the victim of Du Meizhu's lies and schemes. This position was built in part on gendered stereotypes and sexist ideologies that blame female victims for the sexual crimes of men.

Comments regarding the expected positive outcome for Wu in the court system included those of a few who supported the celebrity regardless of the outcome, as an unfair trial was a possibility for them. This position relates to the willingness to forgive in the parasocial realm explored by Sanderson and Emmons (2014). Although expressions of forgiveness of Wu's transgressions were not explicit--since his innocence was assumed--a belief in the potential for justice was affirmed. In the case of Wu, support and recognition of the difficulties faced by celebrities as targets of manipulative and exploitative women is seeking fame and fortune in the background of fans' expressions of support and loyalty to Wu. This position reflects the complex relationship between fans and celebrities, particularly the ways in which fans' emotional attachments can compromise perceptions of moral and legal accountability, justice for victims of sexual assault, and celebrity wrongdoing and redemption over time.

The theme of cyberbullying and hate speech against Du Meizhu in the context of the Kris Wu scandal reflects how fans engaged in negative parasocial interactions through expressions of anger, hostility, gender-specific hate speech, and threats to the body and life of the victim of rape. This behavior is similar to the maladaptive parasocial interactions identified by Sanderson et al. (2020) in the case of U.S. football celebrity

Cody Parke. The behavior of Kris Wu's fans towards Du Meizhu also highlights the potential negative consequences of parasocial interactions not only for a celebrity but also for other commentators posting on social media and for public figures identified in the online interactions in general. Fans can become so emotionally invested in their chosen celebrity or group that they engage in verbal abuse and harmful behavior towards others who are seen as a threat to their idol's reputation or status. This behavior reflects a troubling aspect of fan culture in the age of social media, where parasocial interactions can quickly turn into online harassment and bullying. Overall, the behavior of Kris Wu's fans illustrates the potential negative consequences of parasocial interactions and highlights the need for greater awareness of the risks associated with this phenomenon.

Changes in 2022 at the Time of Wu's Conviction and Imprisonment

In 2022, two additional themes emerged to open space for critical voices: the defense of Meizhu as an advocate for victims of sexual violence (and condemnation of Wu) and “para-love shock” in fan indignation and breakup.

A form of positive PSIs with Du Meizhu was found in comments that reflected a strong sense of support and solidarity for Meizhu for speaking about her experience of sexual assault and thus helping to bring attention to the issue of sexual violence in China. The comments praised her for being a “catalyst” and a “hero,” and for stirring up public opinion on the issue. The fans recognized the importance of her advocacy and the role she played in bringing justice to victims of sexual violence.

The concept of wishful identification (Giles, 2002) may be relevant to understanding the positive PSI towards Meizhu. In this type of identification, audiences wish to emulate the media figure they identify with. Fans of Meizhu may see her as a role

model for speaking out about sexual assault and advocating for justice for victims, and may wish to follow in her footsteps by also speaking out and raising awareness about the issue. Affinity may also be relevant, as fans may simply like and admire Meizhu for her actions and bravery. Overall, the positive PSI towards Meizhu reflects a strong sense of support and solidarity for her advocacy and the important role she played in bringing attention to the issue of sexual violence in China. Fans may identify with her actions and wish to emulate her.

These comments also reflected the fans' negative PSI by indirectly criticizing and condemning Wu and reflecting negative feelings towards him in maladaptive ways. In this case, Banister and Cocker's (2013) concept of negative celebrity relationships, which include feelings of antagonism and "not for me," can also be seen in reference to Kris Wu.

Lastly, in 2022, fan expressions of Para-Love Shock: Fan Indignation and Breakup emerged as distinct new themes. The concept of "para-loveshock" introduced by Jones et al. (2022) refers to the effects of falling out of love with a celebrity and how it can lead to changes in fan identity. This is reflected in the comments about fans withdrawing their support from Wu and needing to reify the dissolution of their one-sided relationship with him.

This theme is closely related to Jones et al.'s (2022) study of celebrity transgression, which explores the effects of falling out of love for fans. In the study, the authors observed that fans struggle to reconcile their moral integrity with their affection for a celebrity who has committed wrongdoing, which can result in feelings of grief, enfranchisement, flagellation, and indignation.

Indeed, the comments analyzed suggest that fans of Wu are struggling to balance their admiration for him with their moral expectations, resulting in a variety of emotional reactions, including anger, sympathy, disappointment, and a sense of betrayal. The comments about Wu's imprisonment and his fans' conflicting reactions to his behavior illustrate the complexities of these para-loveshock reactions.

When a celebrity's actions contradict their public image, it can result in a sense of betrayal among their fans. This betrayal can lead to dissatisfaction with the brand and a loss of trust in the celebrity's credibility. Reinikainen et al. (2021) conducted a study that highlights this phenomenon, showing how followers' feelings of intimacy and closeness with celebrities can quickly turn into feelings of betrayal. Reimann et al. (2018) further explained this with the concept brand betrayal, which involves a sense of psychological loss, self-castigation, indignation-focused anger, and rumination. The discovery of a celebrity's unethical or criminal behavior can trigger these negative emotions and lead to a significant drop in their brand value.

In many ways, what I observed may have been predictable. According to Erlandsson and Colliander (2015), when a celebrity transgresses a norm or rule, their perceived credibility among their audience can decline among some fans. If a celebrity's moral obligations are broken, or their integrity is in question, their old relationships with fans may be changed (Bostwick & Lookadoo, 2016; Hu, 2016). Even a slight departure from the original setting and personae that made them popular can lead to a parasocial breakup (Bostwick & Lookadoo, 2016; Hu, 2016).

When followers' feelings of intimacy and closeness with celebrities turn into feelings of betrayal, it can evoke a state of dissatisfaction (Reinikainen et al., 2021). This

can lead to feelings of psychological loss, self-castigation, and indignation-focused anger, among other things (Reimann et al., 2018). In cases where a celebrity undermines fans' trust and expectations, fans may struggle to balance their moral integrity with their affection for the celebrity (Jones et al., 2022).

Fans' reactions to a celebrity's transgression can range from mixed feelings to complete withdrawal of support for the celebrity brand, the concept of para-loveshock, as discussed by Jones et al. (2022), can help understand the changes in fan identity related to a celebrity's wrongdoing. Fans may engage in practices such as grief enfranchisement, flagellation, and indignation to cope with the trauma of a parasocial breakup with their beloved celebrity's brand. Ultimately, fans may feel the need to reify the dissolution of their one-sided relationship with their celebrities and withdraw their support when their trust and expectations are undermined. Hence, when a celebrity's actions contradict their public image, it can result in a sense of betrayal among their fans. Reinikainen et al. (2021) conducted a study that highlights this phenomenon, showing how followers' feelings of intimacy and closeness with celebrities can quickly turn into feelings of betrayal.

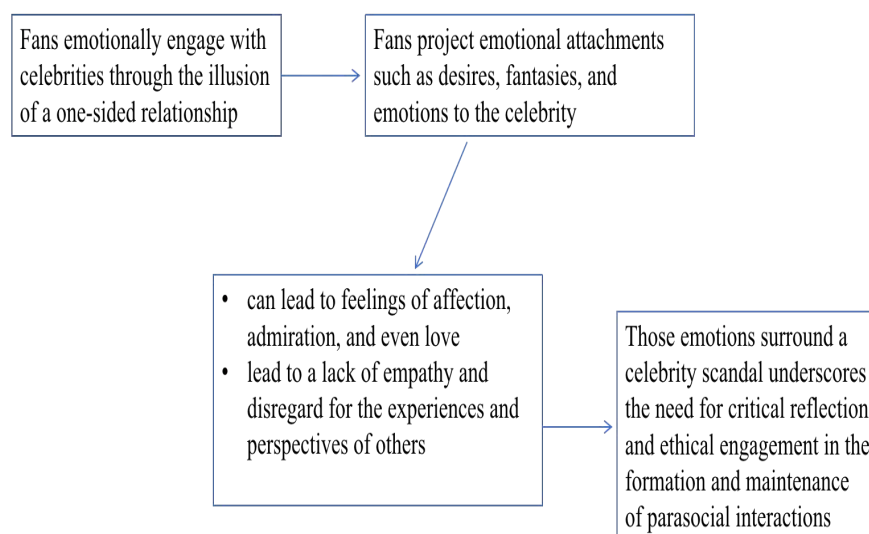
In sum, the legal problems involving sexual crimes against Kris Wu led to a significant shift in the parasocial and affective communication of some of his fans. Some fans continued to support Kris Wu, arguing that the accusations against him were baseless and that he was innocent until proven guilty. Other fans criticized Wu's behavior and distanced themselves from him. They expressed their disappointment, anger, and frustration at his alleged misconduct and called for accountability and justice for the

victims. Their comments show the fluidity of fans' positive and negative PSIs in online communication, depending on their perceptions of Wu's public image and personal character, and the circumstances surrounding his career and personal life. It suggests how fans' PSIs and emotional attachments to a celebrity can determine their continued support and admiration for a celebrity above matters of morality and legality, and how, at times, a celebrity's transgression can evoke feelings of betrayal and lead to the withdrawal of fan support.

This research also shows how cultural values and societal norms--notably on gender and sexuality in this case--can also influence fans' emotional responses to celebrities. Overall, I argue that this case demonstrates the complex and often fraught ways in which fans engage with issues of personal affect, power, and social justice in the context of their strong attachment to celebrities.

Figure 1.

Emotions and Outcomes Over Three Years



RQ3: What does this case reveal about PSI and affect communication within the dynamics of celebrity culture in China?

The analysis of Kris Wu's rise and fall, and the reactions of his fans on social media, illustrate two significant dimensions of Chinese celebrity culture: governmentality and Chinese fan behaviors.

Governmentality

The fan comments reveal significant insights into some of the dynamics of celebrity governmentality in China. Researchers have traced the historical link between the status of a celebrity and governmentality, and how contemporary celebrities operate within the regulation and censorship of the Chinese system, particularly within an official discourse that exalts the positive role of celebrities in society.

By 2016, Wu's fame and visibility had grown immensely in China. Before Kris Wu's legal problems, fans' comments were mostly positive, praising his masculinity, sex appeal, and romantic image, but also his inspirational role, artistic talents, and career success. As discussed earlier, in addition to his role as an entertainer of great appeal to youth, he was an endorser of top brand names in advertisements and maintained a good relationship with the Chinese government. Most notably, he served as the ambassador for China's Jr. NBA program in 2016. His positive image as a mentor for basketball-loving youth can be interpreted in light of the dynamics of celebrity governmentality in Chinese culture. At this time, he was elevated as a role model for youth under the sponsorship of state institutions while maintaining his status as a powerhouse and wealthy entrepreneur.

Wu's status speaks to the historical roots of celebrity in China and to the dynamics of contemporary governmentality, where celebrities are designated "role

models” or “model workers” that need to represent the highest values and virtues promoted by the political system. As more market-led celebrities emerged since the economic reforms in China after the 1980s, more entertainers were upheld as celebrities expected to help promote the prosperity of the market economy while upholding their image as representatives of the morality and values promoted by the state (Jeffreys & Edwards, 2010). As Jeffreys (2012) has stated, the rise of market-led and media-manufactured celebrities in the entertainment field has led to a reinvented methodology by the Party-state that shifts emphasis from the past to serve the present and future. Mass media celebrities are used to drive people to learn and, most importantly, to apply the changing governmentalities of the Party-state and its associated constructions of modern China.

Wu’s celebrity standing changed dramatically when the court stated that between November 2020 and December 2020, he raped three women at his residence while they were unable or did not know how to resist due to alcohol intoxication. The court convicted Wu on two charges, rape and assembling a crowd to engage in promiscuous activities, and sentenced him to 11.5 years and 22 months, respectively.

However, after the arrest and conviction for rape, fans’ comments became more diverse and contradictory, where emotional connections with Wu led fans to question the court sentence and affirm Wu’s innocence. Fans’ reactions, including those studied here, raised issues about the social impact of the moral and ethical decisions of celebrities and their power to influence fan behavior in anti-social ways.

For example, some critical fans expressed their concerns about the impact of celebrity culture on gender and sexuality, arguing that the romanticization of male

celebrities and their power dynamics could contribute to the normalization of sexual misconduct and violence. In fact, the analysis of fan comments after Kris Wu's criminal charges in China reveals that some fans perpetuated harmful stereotypes and used hateful, derogatory language towards women and victims of sexual assault. Second, the case of Kris Wu also illustrates how celebrities can be powerful influences on fans, with the potential to lead fans to condone criminal behavior and to amplify harmful messages and attitudes, as the instances of cyberbullying illustrate. Third, while fans initially expressed full support for the Chinese laws and for the legal system as a trustworthy institution, their continuing support of Wu's innocence, even after his conviction in court, undermined such trust in the system. The case of Kris Wu also raised questions about accountability and ethical behavior in the entertainment industry in China.

The prosecution and conviction of Wu's crimes by the Chinese government relates to the strategies through which the government censors and even removes undesirable celebrities from the public eye as a governing strategy for political control. In Wu's case, one in which a celebrity transgressed specific government laws and policies, he was sent to prison (Xu and Yang, 2021).

Chinese Fandom in Tension with Governmentality

The analysis of fan PSIs and affect in fan comments relates the practices of Kris Wu's fans to some of the distinctive characteristics attributed to Chinese fans by scholars. For instance, Spaanjaars and Zerbib (2022) have noted that Chinese fans are special because they see themselves as "mother figures" who would love to take care of the idols they follow, including by purchasing the products these celebrities promote in their advertisements; additionally, Chinese fans think they are expressing their love for their

idols through support in their fan circles. The thematic emphasis on supporting Wu and appealing to a sense of community of fans to defend against his critics, accusers, or prosecutors certainly position Wu's fans in this dynamic.

Other characteristics of Chinese fandom discussed in the research literature seem to be supported by my findings. Williams (2015) has argued that there is a self-reflective mechanism of fans because the object of fandom serves as an extension of self or as a mirror to help fans to find themselves, to be clear about their self-identity and build up their self-narratives (Williams, 2015). Being a follower may involve a deeper degree of passion and engagement (Hao, 2020; Obiegbu, Larsen, Ellis, & O'Reilly, 2019; Thorne & Bruner, 2006) for the same object of affection as well as shared memories and collective mission (Sundet & Peteresen, 2020). My findings suggest that these processes were at work in this case.

In sum, the analysis identifies the types of PSIs and the affective communication supporting fan interactions as well as the patterns of continuity and change in the fans' emotional attachments and responses to Wu before and after his legal problems. It thus shows the fluidity of fans' positive and negative PSIs in online communication, depending on their perceptions of Wu's public image and personal character, and the circumstances surrounding his career and personal life. It suggests how fans' PSIs and emotional attachments to a celebrity can prioritize their continued support and admiration for a celebrity above matters of morality and legality, and how, at times, a celebrity's transgression can evoke feelings of betrayal and lead to the withdrawal of fan support. It also shows how cultural values and societal norms--notably on gender and sexuality in this case--can also influence fans' emotional responses to celebrities. Overall, I argue that

this case demonstrates the complex and often fraught ways in which fans engage with issues of personal affect, power, and social justice in the context of their strong attachment to celebrities.

To understand affect as governmentality, in the context of Kris Wu's case, suggests that the Chinese government used celebrities like Kris Wu as a means of promoting certain values and virtues that align with the political system, such as promoting the image of a successful and moral celebrity who can serve as a role model for young people. The government can also use the prosecution and conviction of celebrities who transgress specific government laws and policies as a governing strategy for political control, as seen in the case of Kris Wu. In this way, the affective responses of fans to celebrities like Kris Wu can be seen as part of a larger system of governmentality, where emotions and affective attachments are harnessed by the government to shape public opinion and reinforce certain values and norms.

Index:

“Sweet Sixteen” fan comments on Zhihu

(1)

吴亦凡在剧中很好的继承了表演靠脸靠吼靠眉毛的特点。也用行动成功的诠释了一个轻微自闭孩子应有的样子。

但吴亦凡演技不好至少长得帅啊，舔个屏总可以吧。

导演偏偏不。摄像团队好像是一块五一天从路边雇来的，就连用吴亦凡的脸卖个帅都做不到。

整部电影下来没看到一个吴亦凡的完美身材和帅气侧脸，仅有的几个特写镜头^Q全都推到了吴亦凡的鼻子眼儿上。

导演你是让我看鼻屎还是数鼻毛？

Kris Wu in the play successfully inherited the characteristic of acting through his face, shouting and eyebrows. He also successfully interpreted what a slightly introverted child should look like through his actions. But Kris Wu's acting skills are not good, at least he looks handsome, right? At least you can admire the screen. But the director doesn't. The camera team seems to be hired from the side of the road on May Day, and they can't even use Kris Wu's face to sell their handsomeness. Director, are you making me look at snot or count nose hairs?

(2)



浅浅酱

不过夏有乔木作者不都是认同了觉得吴亦凡是饰演夏木最合适的人选了，我们也没有什么好诟病的。这部戏其实比吴亦凡之前拍的戏要好非常多，不能说演技很棒，但是他的一些细节部分眼神真的很到位，吴亦凡真的挺适合演夏木的。

再说说这个小说，这部小说也算是很多人的回忆了，不管剧情狗不狗血。

其实我也算是吴亦凡的小迷妹，不过看到你这么说，我也没生气，毕竟我是理智粉。

2016-08-09

👍 35

However, not all the authors of Summer with the Trees agree that Kris Wu is the best choice to play Xia Mu. We don't have much to criticize. In fact, this play is much better than the ones Kris Wu acted in before. It can't be said that his acting skills are excellent, but some of his eye movements are really well-placed, and Kris Wu is really suitable for playing Xia Mu. As for the novel, this novel is also a memory for many people,

regardless of the storyline being bloody or not. Actually, I'm also a small fan of Kris Wu, but after seeing what you said, I'm not angry either, after all, I'm a rational fan."

(3)



浅浅酱 ▸ 风太大我听不见

看到一个回答者写的：

看电影的时候，真是觉得，夏木就是这样了：冷漠 疏离 空洞。

"从面部轮廓到身形线条再到个性内核，读透着洒落锐硬的骨骼感。"就是夏木。

有一个场景我印象很深，舒雅望从背后抱着夏木教他画画的时候，吴亦凡一如既往的表情冷漠，眼帘低垂的同时，不自觉的拱起了身子，锁骨线条毕现，像极了一只受惊的猫。

当时朋友在旁边轻声说，锁骨都在演戏啊。

我心里的夏木就是这样的，"习惯了小心翼翼的稳住情绪，就像端着一只斟满得起了凸面的酒杯，生怕一不留神溢出来。"一个暗恋姐姐的小男孩，沉默寡言带着些傲娇和小得意。

"我不喜欢看电影。"

"活该，女孩子夜不归宿，不矜持。"

"明明当面戈矛相对一身金甲簌簌作响，无人处又偷偷自言自语"其实当时好想抱你一下"。就是这种感觉了，再拒人于千里之外，恨不能隔离世界，也是个暗恋都不敢说出口的别扭小孩。

When watching the movie, it feels that that's just how Xiamu is: cold, detached, and hollow. "From the facial contour to the body lines, and down to the core of his personality, it reveals a sharp and hard bone feeling." That's Xiamu. There is a scene that left a deep impression on me. When Shuya hugged Xiamu from behind and taught him how to paint, Kris Wu's expression remained as cold as ever. While his eyelids drooped, his body unconsciously arched, revealing his collarbone lines, looking exactly like a frightened cat. My friend whispered beside me, "Even the collarbone is acting." That's the Xiamu in my heart, "Used to being careful and stabilizing his emotions, it's like holding a cup filled with a bulging surface, afraid of overflowing if he's not careful." A boy who has a crush on his sister, he is quiet and reserved with a hint of arrogance and pride. "I don't like watching movies." "That's what you get, a girl who stays out all night, she's not reserved." When watching the movie, there is a feeling that Xiamu is like this: indifferent, aloof, and hollow. "From the facial contour to the body lines and down to the core of personality, reading the sharp and hard bones." That is Xiamu.

It is this kind of feeling, when two weapons clashed with each other face to face, and no one was around, he secretly whispered to himself, "In fact, I really wanted to hug you at that time." He is such a quirky kid who has a crush but dare not say it out loud. Kris Wu handles this emotion well, including Suya's unconscious intimate actions when she doesn't know his feelings, and Xiamu's shy and flustered appearance when his eyes wandered around. I also watched his portrayal of being young, because I have read the novel "Marie and Her Lover". Perhaps because of his good physical conditions, Kris Wu took on the role of the male lead in the world of the "Marie and Her Lover" novel. I think he handles Xiamu's emotions better than his understanding of Chengzheng, probably because Xiamu's character has more layers.

The most striking part of the whole movie is the moment when Xiamu knew that Suya was raped and without any hesitation, he took a gun and rushed out. He transformed from a cat to a wolf. The shock when he knew that Qu Weiran was the one who bullied Suya was amazing, his cheek trembling when he ran out and roared while driving, his ruthlessness when he fired the gun, the determination and regret in his eyes when Suya came in and pressed down his hand that was holding the gun, the fear gradually revealed when Suya wanted to pull him away. When watching this scene, the whole audience was very quiet, even I was shocked, and he portrayed Chengzheng completely differently.

(4)



加菲猫爱消除

这本书就是这么写的，吴亦凡的气质挺符合原著的，你们也去怼怼书吧，片是烂片，书肯定也是烂书了！可这本书的书粉也挺多的，可为什么书没被黑？因为看小说的人总是会把自己当成主角:~)。

2017-10-09

👍 1

This book is written this way, Kris Wu's temperament is very consistent with the original work, you also go and fight the book. The movie is a bad movie, the book must also be a bad book! But this book has a lot of fans, why hasn't the book been criticized? Because people who read novels always see themselves as the protagonist.

(5)



小熊软糖

舔屏吴亦凡

2016-08-09

👍 7

"Worshipping Kris Wu on the screen."

(6)



刘事事儿

哈哈，你们知道吗，我第一次去看吴亦凡的电影，叫有一个地方。。。看到一半真是醉了就跟旁边朋友说“他能不能有个表情，皱皱眉也行啊”我朋友说“人家都出脸了，还要什么演技，要什么自行车”我当时就释然了，不过现在的他会动眉毛了还是有进步的，毕竟颜值高就是任性

2016-08-09

👍 11

Ha ha, do you guys know the first time I watched Kris Wu's movie, called "There is a Place..." I was so drunk in the middle that I told my friend next to me "Can he have some expression, wrinkling his eyebrows is also fine." My friend said "He's already showing his face, what else do you want, what else do you want a bike for?" At that time I was relieved, but now he can move his eyebrows, he has improved. After all, having a high face value is just being capricious.

(7)



惨绿青年

你知道我家吴亦凡有多努力吗!!! 😊

2016-08-09

👍 5

Do you know how hardworking Kris Wu is in my family?

(8)



周大青

说实话 我是看过小说才去看的电影 吴亦凡是跟夏木这个角色很合适的 满足了我对夏木外形气质的所有想象 很多bug书粉是很难感受到的...因为导演拍不出的书粉全部都能自行脑补出来 就像夏木一出来我就已经想到后面种种就想哭了 还没等他开演。说实话之所以很多人觉得这片不好 我觉得一个很大的原因就是它根本就不适合拍成电影 书里本身说的故事就非常脱离现实 如果只是看书 看的人是可以自己想象出很大一出戏 并且感动得不行 但是电影九十分钟很多细小的东西它交代不清楚 这些东西累积起来又很重要 这样的故事用真人来演 观众只会看他们演了什么 电影里拍了什么 而不会去根据很多描写来自己体会脑补他们之间怎么了 就像郭敬明的《悲伤逆流成河》最好别拍成电影什么的 个人感觉也非常不适合拍电影 太不接现实共鸣的轨道 就好好地看书就好

2016-08-11

👍 3

Honestly, I only watched the movie because I had read the novel first. Kris Wu was perfect for the role of Xia Mu and fulfilled all my imagination of Xia Mu's appearance and temperament. Many readers might have difficulty experiencing this because what the director cannot show, readers can imagine for themselves. When Xia Mu appeared on the screen, I already knew what was going to happen later and I felt like crying. Before the performance even started. To be honest, the reason why many people think the movie is not good is because it's not suitable to be made into a movie. The story itself in the book is very unrealistic. If you only read the book, you can imagine a great performance and be deeply moved. But in a 90-minute movie, many small details are not clear and these things accumulate to be very important. If you use real people to perform such a story, the audience will only see what they act and what was shot in the movie, but will not experience how the relationship between the characters evolves based on the description. It's like Guo Jingming's "Sadness Floods into a River," it's best not to make it into a movie. Personally, I feel that it's not suitable to make into a movie either because it's too unrealistic to resonate with the audience. Just stick to reading the book.

(9)



一只白熊

不是谁的粉丝，觉得这个根据小说改编的电影还是可以的啊，还原度是有的，吴亦凡也演出了夏木的感觉～

2016-08-11

👍 1

I'm not a fan of anyone, but I think this movie based on the novel is okay, the degree of restoration is there, Kris Wu also played the feeling of Xia Mu.

(10)



梓酱

同意啊！本来就是冲着吴亦凡的颜去看的剧情什么谁在意啊这种题材这样的鲜肉演员能有什么好片啊！结果颜都没看够就结束了！生气！

2016-08-31

👍 2

Agreed! I went to watch the drama because of Kris Wu's face. Who cares about the plot? With such a theme and fresh actor, what good film could there be? And now, I didn't even get to see enough of his face before it ended! I'm angry!

(11)



Bamu巴姆

剧情很原著很接近了，答主没有看过原著就不要凭自己的主观喜好评价了好吗？剧情逻辑之类电影时间原因不够详尽，至于演员，我最满意的就是吴亦凡一个了，所以，不要吐槽了。

2016-09-14

👍 1

The plot is very close to the original work. If you haven't read the original work, can you please not evaluate it based on your subjective preferences? Due to time constraints, the film may not be as detailed in terms of (book)plot logic. As for the actors, I was most satisfied with Kris Wu. So, please don't criticize.

(12)



一只白熊

不是谁的粉丝，觉得这个根据小说改编的电影还是可以的啊，还原度是有的，吴亦凡也演出了夏木的感觉～

2016-08-11

👍 1

I am not a fan of anyone. I think this movie based on the novel is still okay. The degree of restoration is there and Kris Wu also portrayed the feeling of Xia Mu.

Honestly, after watching the original work, you will find that this movie is indeed readable. But due to time constraints, many details and reasons have not been clearly explained.

(13)

However, as a fan of the original work, I am satisfied.

Who can say that youth is all positive energy? Speaking of positive energy, isn't love considered positive energy? Xia Mu's pure love is not the best positive energy?!

(14)



DROP.V白

我也觉得其实这一部吴亦凡演的真的还好.....没有吐槽的那么的烂，我觉得还是挺还原原著的夏木的。ps.我是原著粉

2018-06-10



Honestly, I think Kris Wu's performance in this movie is actually okay... It's not as bad as what others criticize, I think it still captures the essence of the original character of Xia Mu. PS: I am a fan of the original novel.

(15)



網翹豐

你看过书吗 没看过瞎评论什么 我觉得吴亦凡把夏木演活了 虽然致青春2真的很烂 但我觉得这部不错的 没看过书别瞎逼逼

2018-04-01



Have you read the book? Don't make random comments if you haven't. I think Kris Wu brought life to the character of Xia Mu. Although "Youth 2" was really terrible, I think this movie is not bad. Don't bullshit if you haven't read the book.

(16)



少年喵

当初看小说的时候觉得很狗血，还是看完了，小说里面描写的夏木，我想象中就是吴亦凡的样子，哈哈，没想到，后来过了两年，果然是他演得。喜欢他，但不是脑残粉，黑他的骂他的也随便，言论自由，我不会喷人家，反正吴亦凡也不会搭理。就酱紫。

2018-03-21



I originally thought the novel was cheesy when I read it, but I still finished it. I imagined the character of Xia Mu to look like Kris Wu. Haha, I never expected that two years later, he would actually be the one playing him. I like him, but I'm not a brainless fan. I won't criticize those who insult or swear at him. Freedom of speech. Kris Wu won't pay attention to it anyway. So be it.

(17)



薄饮

一个简单的原著粉 大概是小时候的一种偏爱 并不觉得烂 也不觉得它是所谓的青春片啊 电影跟小说情节还是挺符合的 不管吴是不是面瘫 反正我心中夏木就是他这样的冷漠酷脸

2016-12-07

👍 赞

I'm just a simple fan of the original novel. Perhaps it's a childhood preference. I don't think it's bad, and I don't consider it a so-called youth film. The movie and the novel's plot are quite consistent. Regardless of whether Wu is expressionless, in my heart, Xiamu is still his cold and cool-looking face.

(18)



匿名用户

14 人赞同了该回答

吴演技还不错啊 没有出戏 夏木很让人心疼 片子在言情里算很不错的了。

发布于 2016-08-04 20:39

▲ 赞同 14



● 11 条评论

🔗 分享

★ 收藏

♥ 喜欢

"Wu's acting skills are pretty good, and Xia Mu is very heart-wrenching. The movie is considered quite good in the romance genre."

(19)



雨雪

太棒了 挺你!!

2016-08-05

👍 赞

Great job, I support you!!

(20)



当断不断

凡凡确实很帅，这角色也没啥深度，凭啥演不了，支持！

2016-08-05

赞

"Fanfan is really handsome, and this role doesn't have much depth. Why can't he act in it? I support him!"

(21)



岁月静好

本来只是在知乎看各种专业人士的专业回答的，但现在却成了粉黑大战的战场，吴亦凡的演技有喜欢的，有不喜欢的，这是很正常的，因为演技本身就是主观的感觉。我喜欢，我觉得他每个角色都大不一样又很有自己的特色。

2016-08-22

2

"I originally just read professional answers from various professionals on Zhihu, but now it has become a battleground for fans and haters. Some people like Kris Wu's acting, while others don't, and this is normal because acting itself is a subjective feeling. Personally, I like him and I think he portrays each character very differently and has his own unique style."

(22)



陆离
图文控。

+ 关注

55 人赞同了该回答

此前我以为知乎是个观点多而立场清晰，各持见地而不随俗沉浮的净土。今天看了这个问题里许多回答真是失望。一个个自以为是知识分子的狭隘之徒，操着一副清高自负的嘴脸站在尊贵的“路人”视觉来批判一名演员的专业素质（而这位演员近期已获得专业影评人员诸如“眼神流露自然情绪饱满层次递进”、“人家说高颜值加演技是最可怕的，但最可怕的终于来了。”的高度评价），还要“连坐”嘲讽他的粉丝，粉丝同时也是影迷，给自己喜爱的演员点赞，在有限的的能力范围内极其谨慎地为偶像减少恶意的不客观批评，难道有错吗？这种事情试问粉丝不做，还有谁来做？难道有人天生带着粉丝的属性？一颗颗热诚的喜爱之心就该被践踏？可怕的不是粉丝，而是一些随意谩骂粉丝并攻击偶像仿佛自己是正派优质的代表来排除“异己”！

而作为影迷同时还是书迷，我的映后短评——故事线很饱满，有笑点有泪点不乏味也不过分煽情，是吴亦凡迄今台词最少的电影作品。台词的缺失势必考量演员的情绪本身，眼神里的东西骗不了人。我相信去影院看过影片的人都知道每当夏木抿了唇、抬眸静静地望过来时，大家都说不出话，一种力透纸背、一种绵长而不尖锐的情挚从屏幕那端渗出来，这是鲜活的夏木。演技有如实质般厚积薄发。而看官们，其实这才是吴亦凡回国后主演的第二部作品。

顺便提一下，吴亦凡接下来的电影除了郭敬明大型CG制作《爵迹》，还有徐克导演周星驰监制的《西游伏妖篇》、D·J·卡卢索导演范·迪塞尔等参演的《极限特工3》、吕克贝松导演戴恩·德哈恩等参演的《星际特工千星之城》、与梁朝伟合作的《欧洲攻略》

发布于 2016-08-08 18:47

"Previously, I thought that Zhihu was a place where there were many different opinions but clear stances, where people held their own views without being swayed by the masses. However, after reading many of the answers in this question, I am disappointed. Many of these self-proclaimed intellectuals have a narrow-minded attitude and speak with a condescending tone, criticizing the professional quality of an actor (who has recently received high praise from professional film critics such as 'natural and full of emotional expression through his eyes' and 'they say that the combination of good looks and acting skills is the most terrifying, but the most terrifying has finally arrived'). They even mock the actor's fans and criticize them, even though these fans are also movie lovers who give likes to their favorite actors and provide objective criticism within their limited abilities. Is there anything wrong with that? If fans don't do this, then who will? Does anyone have the innate attribute of being a fan? Should the sincere love of each fan be trampled on? The terrible thing is not the fans, but some who casually curse and attack fans and idols as if they are representatives of the righteous and high-quality to exclude 'others'!

As a movie and book lover, my short review after watching this movie is that the story is very rich, with both humor and sadness, not boring but not overly sentimental. It is also

Kris Wu's film with the fewest lines to date. The lack of lines necessarily depends on the actor's emotions themselves, and the things in his eyes cannot deceive people. I believe that everyone who has watched the movie in the theater knows that every time Xiamu purses his lips and looks up quietly, everyone is speechless, a kind of powerful but not sharp emotion oozes out from the screen, this is the vivid Xiamu. Acting skills are like a substantial accumulation that finally breaks out. And for the audience, this is actually Kris Wu's second leading role in a movie after returning to China.

By the way, Kris Wu's upcoming movies include the large-scale CG production "L.O.R.D" directed by Guo Jingming, "Journey to the West: The Demons Strike Back" produced by Stephen Chow and directed by Tsui Hark, "xXx: Return of Xander Cage" directed by D.J. Caruso and starring Vin Diesel, "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets" directed by Luc Besson and starring Dane DeHaan, and "Europe Raiders" in which he co-stars with Tony Leung."

(23)



喋喋

这部电影虽然凡凡台词不多但每一句都十分到位，让人心疼，眼神的层次，情感的爆发极大程度的还原了书中的夏木，连作者都认同他就是夏木。希望每个路人都能客观评价。

2016-08-08 · 热评

👍 17

Although there aren't many lines for Fanfan in this movie, every sentence is very appropriate, making people feel heartbroken. The level of his gaze and the intensity of his emotions greatly restore Xia Mu from the book. Even the author agrees that he is Xia Mu. I hope every passerby can objectively evaluate it.

(24)



serene chiu

+ 关注

4 人赞同了该回答

吴亦凡的眼神是亮点，如赵真奎导演所说，他在吴亦凡身上找到这部戏的灵魂。夏有乔木也好，致青春也好，书和电影我都有看，各有特点，他在影片中表现出来的各种神态动作，也能在原著中找到相应的描写。夏木自闭孤僻，只能靠眼神来传达他的内心；程铮阳光霸道有带有点小幼稚，喜怒哀乐自然全写在脸上，吴亦凡把角色性格特点演绎得很好，是我心目中的夏木和程铮，期待他未来更多的角色。

发布于 2016-08-14 00:19

▲ 赞同 4 ▼

● 添加评论

🔗 分享

★ 收藏

♥ 喜欢

“Kris Wu's gaze is a highlight, as director Zhao Zhenkui said, he found the soul of this film in Kris Wu. Whether it's "So Young" or "To Our Youth That is Fading Away," I have read both the book and seen the movie versions. They each have their own characteristics. Various expressions and gestures that he displayed in the film can also be found in the corresponding descriptions in the original work. Xia Muhou is introverted and reclusive, and can only convey his inner feelings through his eyes. Cheng Zheng is sunny, domineering, and a bit childish. Kris Wu portrayed their character traits very well, and he is my ideal Xia Muhou and Cheng Zheng. I look forward to seeing him play more roles in the future.”

(25)



匿名用户

6 人赞同了该回答

中午刚看完，说实话我觉得电影还不错，配乐和情节很相配，歌词也很美，一出来就真的想哭。表示自己是个泪点比较高的人了，但是今天看这场电影有好几次都感觉特别压抑特别想哭。至于吴亦凡的演技——我不知道演技怎样才算好，但我知道我能看下去的电影对我来说演技都还不错，何况结束过后还感觉意犹未尽。他演的夏木，真的是从骨子里透出来那种孤独，对雅望隐忍的爱，用尽全身力气去爱，不惜牺牲自己。从一个小小的跟屁虫到能保护自己所爱之人的男人。雅望忘记接他时的孤寂，婉言拒绝他时的落寞，得知雅望被QJ时的绝望疯狂...真的很喜欢他饰演的夏木。

发布于 2016-08-05 03:09

▲ 赞同 6



● 1 条评论

🔗 分享

★ 收藏

♥ 喜欢

“I just finished watching the movie at noon. To be honest, I think the movie is pretty good. The music and the plot are well-matched, and the lyrics are beautiful. I really wanted to cry as soon as it started. I admit that I'm a person who is easily moved to tears, but today, while watching this movie, I felt particularly suppressed and wanted to cry several times.

As for Kris Wu's acting - I don't know what makes good acting, but I know that for me, a movie that I can watch through has decent acting, and after it ends, I still feel that it's not enough. He played Xia Mu so well that the loneliness, restrained love for Ya Wang, and the willingness to love with all his might and sacrifice himself were all clearly conveyed from the depths of his being. From being a mere follower to becoming a man who can protect the one he loves; he went through a complete transformation. I really liked the character of Xia Mu that he played.”

Fans Analysis on Weibo

When accusations are made public, and Wu is arrested and jailed to await trial

(1)



One of the fans said: “really speechless, a wave to ride.”

(2)



7548203149 commented: “bitch, do you want to drink green tea? Or you want to drink sulfuric acid? Do you feel good by smearing other’s reputation to sensationalize yourself? Do you want this fire to be famous? Do you want a fire to burn you out?”

(Green tea refers to Chinese popular memes, and it means young girls who use their youth to attract men and even sell their body to earn fame.)

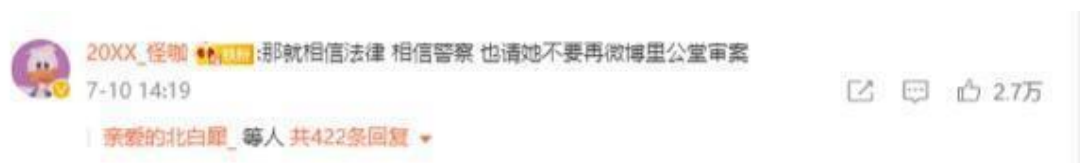
(3)



Are

you a whore who anyone can sleep with? Bitch.”

(4)



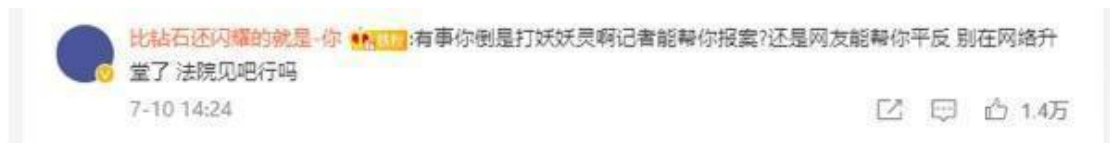
“Let's believe in law and the police. Please don't try to settle a lawsuit on Weibo anymore, Miss.”

(5)



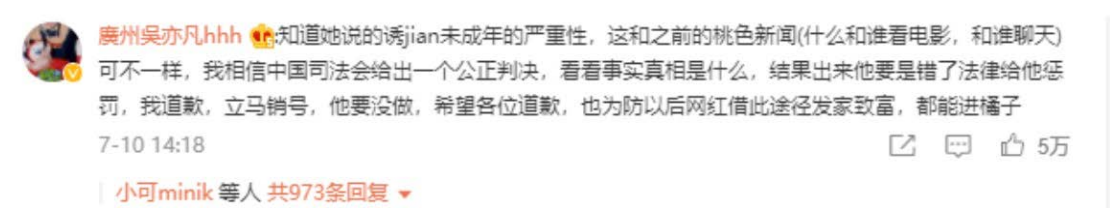
“If you have evidence to support it is true, then show us. If not, you can’t spread that case and try to settle a lawsuit on Weibo. Every time you post on Weibo, you do not dare to mention Chris Wu, and I suspect you aim to avail yourself of the loopholes. Please call the police, and let’s see whether you are in hell or not?”

(6)



“if you experience unfairness you catch that evil. While can journalists put your case in file legally? Or social media users can help you rehabilitate your situation? Please don’t try to settle a lawsuit on social media, and let’s meet in law court. Okay?”

(7)



"I understand the seriousness of the enticement to rape of a minor that she talked about, which is different from the previous tabloid news (about watching movies and chatting

with someone). I believe the Chinese judiciary will give a fair judgment to reveal the truth. If he is wrong, the law will punish him accordingly. I will apologize and immediately cancel my account. If he did not commit the crime, I hope everyone will apologize. This is also to prevent future internet celebrities from using this method to get rich and end up in jail."

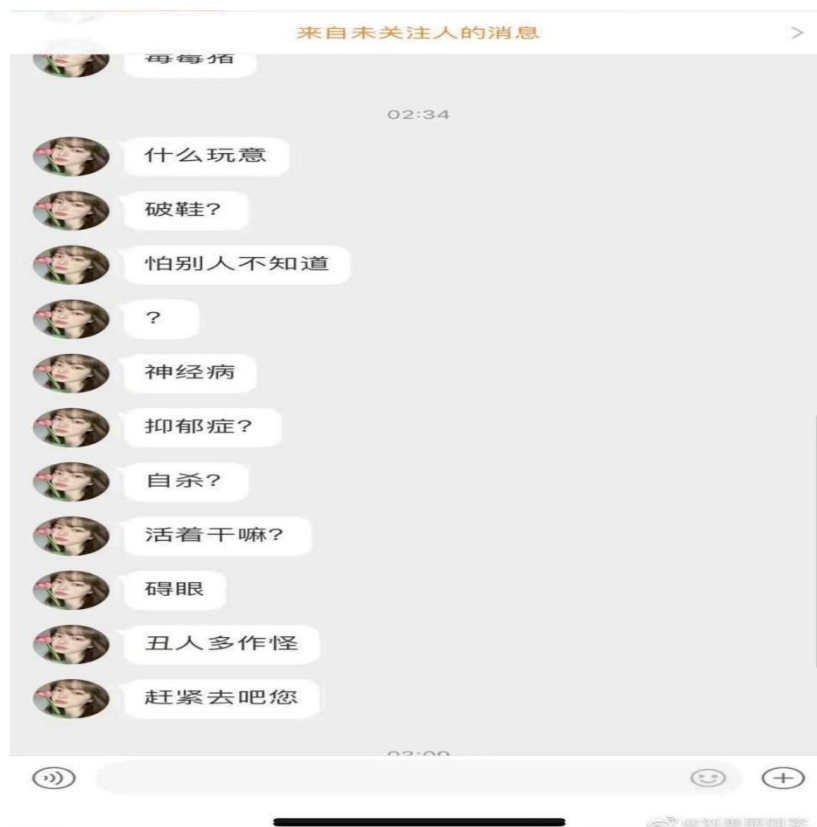
(8)



"take your worst photoshop skills and go away. You said you are depressed, and why don't you just commit suicide? Please die right away, and get out. After riding the wave of Chris Wu, you just open a live show on Tiktok. It is such a turn-off. Bummer, why don't you call the police? don't you dare? Or is it because you don't have any evidence?"

(9)

“What the hell are you? a disposable washrag ? Are you expected to let more people know you? Are you freaking mental? Depressed? Suicidal? Why are you still alive? You rub us the wrong way. Ugly people do strange things, please die as soon as possible.”



(10)



来自: 青少年妄想 2021-07-19 01:26:44

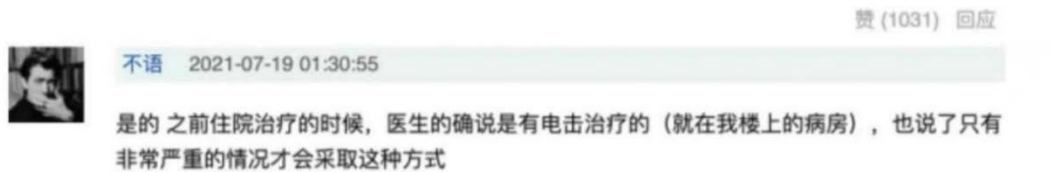
都美竹跟我当时去的是一家医院。科普一下吧，肯定是不存在她装抑郁来博眼球这种事的。北京安定医院在做电击(MECT, 电休克治疗)前会做非常完整的测评，不只是心理问卷那种，是有生理指标的检测的。不是抑郁非常严重不会允许她做 MECT, MECT 的副作用非常大，人的记忆会出现不小的紊乱，有可能一段时间内想不起来自己妈叫什么。上 MECT 的一般都是自杀倾向严重的人，电一电让人没那么想死这样。当时安定医院医生也有建议我不行就电一电，我觉得变傻还不如死就没电。我那个时候就挺严重的。我认为这种级别的痛苦不应该被嘲讽和质疑。这种状态要出来以一当十为身后所有人发声绝不可能是为了钱，活都不想活了要钱干什么，自己葬礼办得体面一点？

[查看翻译](#)

“Du Meizhu went to the same hospital as me. Let me explain that she wasn’t trying to attract more people by acting to be depressed. Beijing Anding Hospital provides electroconvulsive therapy (MECT), and they will do an entire test which includes not only mental questionnaires but includes a physiological index test. This means if her depression is not very serious, the hospital won’t allow her to do MECT. In addition, the negative effects of MECT are strong; people might experience memory disorders and even can’t remember their mother’s name for a short time. MECT is for people who are tend for suicide seriously, so it is helpful for those kind people diminish the thought of death. At that time, Anding Hospital physician also recommended me to do MECT, but I prefer to die compared to being foolish after the treatment. My depression condition was very poor at that time. Thus I think this level of pain should be ridiculed and suspected. At this medical condition, she stands up and speaks for all victims that are not for money.

If she doesn't care about life, why does she care about money? Is it to make her funeral look better?"

(11)



"yes, when I was in hospital for depression treatment, the physician told me MECT is only for people are in a serious condition, and the MECT room is just on up floor of mine."

(12)



"if so, when she is in court, will her testimony be suspect?"

(13)



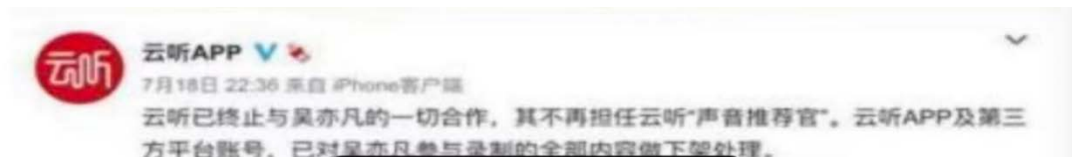
"Kans cosmetics has sent Kris Wu "celebrity endorsement termination letter, so we have terminated any kinds of branding cooperation."

(14)



“Beststore’s business relationship with endorser Kris Wu has expired on November 2020 and all the advocacy work has stopped.”

(15)



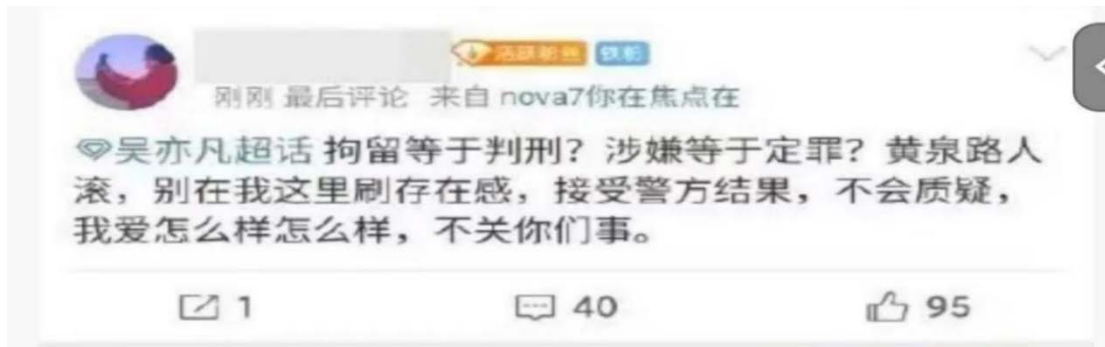
Yunting app, which is a popular podcast app, said “they have terminated the business cooperation with Kris Wu, and he won’t hold the position of ‘podcast endorser.’ in addition, they will remove all of productions related to Kris Wu on Yunting app and other relative platforms.”

(16)



Wu’s fans used Weibo Chaohua to comment the case when Wu is arrested and jailed to await trial, one of his fans said: “I won’t leave and I will wait for you to come back.”

(17)



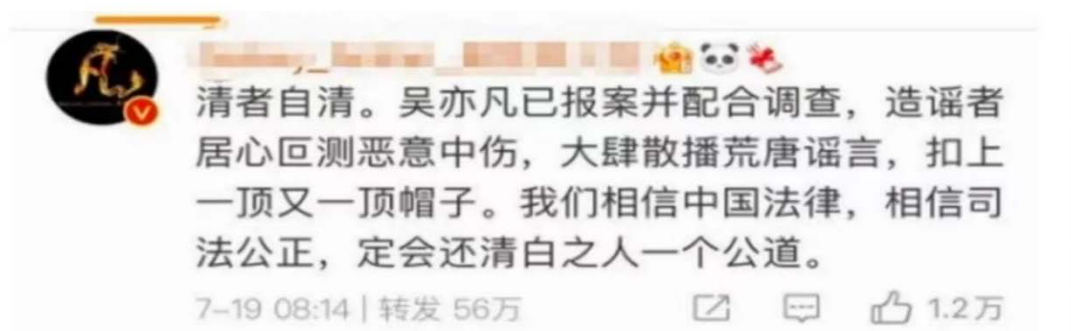
Another fans explained Wu's arrest "doesn't mean he was sentenced. He is to be a suspect but that doesn't mean he is convicted. If you are not a member of our group, please go away and don't validate your existence here. We won't question political decisions, but what we do and say is not your job."

(18)



Other fans said: "cooperating with the investigation is a crime. Don't come to Chaohua to unlucky us. Fuck off."

(19)



“If he didn’t do anything, the policeman will clear Chris Wu’s name. Since Kris Wu is involved with criminal investigation, the rumormongers shouldn't intentionally spread rumors to damage his reputation and force people to accept all the undecided things. We trust the law of the people’s republic of China, and we trust legal justice and it will clear innocent people.”

(20)



The other said: “China is a federal society, so we refuse any kind of defamation and we should defend our rights. I support for Chris Wu to defend his rights.”

(21)



(22)

“if he didn’t do anything, the law will give us a fair decision, and the truth is coming.”

(23)



今天去书店买醉了

我已经在联系律师 我愿意出保释金帮凡哥

"I am already contacting a lawyer, and I am willing to provide bail money to help brother Fan" (Kris Wu's nickname).

(24)



风间小樱 李嘉恒超话

7-31 23:33 来自 iPhone 客户端

+关注

李嘉恒超话 有没有姐妹打算和我一起去劫场，成功了你们和凡凡远走高飞，我留下来坐牢 😊

"Are there any sisters planning to join me in rescuing Wu Yifan from prison? If successful, you and Fanfan can flee, while I stay behind and serve time."

(25)



不是我质疑中国法律，我只是怕这样明晃晃的不公真的发生在他身上，他还是顶流呢，那这个世界太黑暗了。我不怕他有罪入狱，做错了事就应该得到法律制裁，我怕的事一场有一场你情我愿的约，被篡改成了强奸，让他含冤入狱。这样太不公也太可怕了，所以我真的无法接受他强奸这个事。说他吸，我都有可能信。疑点重重，一是觉得就算排除他的身份地位，他的颜值脸蛋他没必要这么做，二是他做了还敢坦荡报案自己锤自己？三是他如果自身难保为何要捐款三百万呢？太多解释不通的疑点了，我想我现在或许不是在支持他，而是需要一个真相，我比任何都需要知道真相到底如何，我想知道这其中的细枝末节。这么多年他到底做了什么？怎么就变成这样了？怎么会这样呢

"It's not that I question Chinese law. I'm just afraid that such an obvious injustice will happen to him. He's a top celebrity, and if this can happen to him, then the world is too dark. I don't mind if he goes to jail if he's guilty of a crime. If you do something wrong, you should be punished by the law. What I'm afraid of is that a consensual date was distorted and he was wrongfully convicted. It's too unfair and scary. That's why I really can't accept the rape allegation. I might even believe it if someone said he just flirted with me. There are too many doubts. First, even if we disregard his status and fame, he's good-looking and popular. Why would he do such a thing? Second, if he did it, why would he report himself to the police? Third, if he was in trouble, why would he donate 3 million yuan? There are too many unexplained mysteries. Maybe I'm not supporting him right now, but I need to know the truth. I need to know every detail. What has he been doing for all these years? How did he end up like this? Why did this happen?"

When the Chinese government announced the sentencing of Wu

(1)



itsYou \

虽然吴是做了罪有应得之事，但觉得都美竹也不是什么好人咯。

22-11-25 01:31 来自广东



42

(2)

"Although Wu did something deserving of punishment, I don't think Du Meizhu is a good person either."

(3)



世初侃侃 铁粉4

她是为了钱好吗

22-11-25 01:54 来自广东



47

"She is just for money, ok?[Sigh]"

(4)



避孕套我一般用雕牌ing

她向吴索要800万

22-11-25 01:58 来自广东



21

"She asked Wu for 8 million [Sweat]"

(5)



Yzmissmom

她是敲诈呀

22-11-25 01:47 来自上海



16

"She's extorting [Kris Wu]."

(6)



北方的羊kS: 姓都的这个也不过是诈骗未遂的货色而已。

2022-11-25 16:28 来自广东

回复



104

"The guy named Dou is nothing but a failed scammer."

(7)

原天柿饼: 那请你报警把她抓进去

2022-11-25 17:00 来自四川


回复



55

"Then please call the police and arrest her [Rabbit]".


(8)

**MMichela**: 她是被害人啊。

2022-11-25 16:26 来自重庆

回复 | 2

"She is the victim".

**一只小寒冷**


没有都美竹，有人敢发声吗？？？ 她是一个导火索！ 没有她，很多人不敢出来

22-11-25 19:35 来自上海

🔗 💬 👍 1

"Without Dou Meizhu, would anyone dare to speak up??? She is a catalyst! Without her, many people would not dare to come out."

(9)


**岩雪的雪** 🏆 铁粉5: 她都被吹捧成女英雄了😁

2022-11-26 13:10 来自四川

回复 | 1

"She has been touted as a female hero".

(10)

**一芽瓜** 🏆: 怎么没关系呢 要不是她掀起那么大的舆论 可能这是也不会被这么查

22-11-25 01:23 来自四川

🔗 💬 👍 279

"How does it not matter? If it weren't for her stirring up such a big public opinion, this might not have been investigated so thoroughly."

(11)



香哄哄-: 如果没有她曝光, 被侵犯的其他女孩不知道什么时候才能看到他被惩罚! 退一万步讲, 如果不是她先站出来曝光, 这样一个“优质偶像”还要捞各位的钱、在各位眼前蹦跶不知道多少年!

2022-11-25 16:52 来自北京

回复 | 6

"If it weren't for her exposing it, the other girls who were violated wouldn't know when he would be punished! To put it bluntly, if she hadn't come forward to expose him, this "high-quality idol" would continue to make money off everyone and dance in front of everyone for who knows how many years!"

(12)



myluu66 🐱: 本次事件最大受益者, 都女士, 掌握流量密码, 把网友拿捏的恰到好处🐱

2022-11-26 10:26 来自江苏

回复 | 1

“The biggest beneficiary of this incident is Ms. Dou, who holds the key to the online popularity and perfectly controls the netizens' reactions. [doge]”

(13)



冈本国文化指导员 📌铁粉5: 两个骗子, 一个骗炮, 一个骗钱

2022-11-25 20:08 来自广西

回复 | 2

"Two swindlers, one cheats for sex, the other cheats for money."

(14)



如梦令清风舞凤: 诈骗犯未遂 所以把事主拉下水🤔

2022-11-25 16:41 来自山西

回复 | 2

"The attempted fraudster failed, so they implicated the victim [吃瓜].""[吃瓜]" ("popcorn" or "eating popcorn") is an internet slang used in Chinese social media to express a spectator's attitude towards a situation, often with a tone of amusement or indifference.

(15)



RuicoKissMoneyLuckypositive: 又再蹭流量, 吴亦凡有错, 但你也不是什么正经女人

2022-11-25 16:40 来自广东

回复 | 3

"Sponging off traffic again, Wu Yifan is at fault, but you are not a decent woman either."

蹭流量 is a Chinese slang term that refers to the act of using a popular or trending topic to gain attention or internet traffic. It can also mean "sponging off traffic" or "riding the wave of popularity".

(16)



麻烦你——鱼丸粗面: 她功不可没, 不要抹杀她的功劳!

2022-11-25 17:08 来自广东

回复 | 赞

"She deserves credit, don't overlook her contribution!"

(17)



闹小羊: 是啊, 都美竹只是个鸡, 约了次泡而已, 为了不引导自己身上, 才假模假样的立起了贞洁牌坊!

2022-11-25 17:06 来自湖南

回复 | 1

"Yes, Dou Meizhu is just a prostitute who had a one-night stand. In order to avoid being condemned, she hypocritically put up a façade of being pure and chaste!"

(18)



你们都是什么鬼_: 真的, 希望都别立人设了, 什么为女人发声啥的, 其实就是自己不服气吧🤔
(吴也罪有应得)

2022-11-25 17:00 来自黑龙江

回复 | 赞

"Really, I hope no one creates a persona. Things like advocating for women's voices are just a matter of not accepting oneself [sadness emoji]. (Wu also deserves his punishment.)"

(19)



下雨的海-: 13年驱逐出境! 真的见证内娱历史了。

2022-11-25 16:59 来自江西

回复 | 赞

"Really, I hope no one creates a persona. Things like advocating for women's voices are just a matter of not accepting oneself [sadness emoji]. (Wu also deserves his punishment.)"

(20)



sagelake 铁粉3: 吴亦凡迟早要进监狱, 谁叫他好这口呢? 这次能逃掉, 下次呢, 下下次呢?

2022-11-26 09:05 来自广东

回复 | 赞

"Wu Yifan will eventually go to prison, who asked him to have such a taste? He might have gotten away with it this time, but what about next time, and the time after that?"

(21)



小豆芽ooo: 所以明星们的谎言真是张嘴就来😏

2022-11-25 19:00 来自上海

回复 | 赞

"So the lies of celebrities just come out of their mouths easily [puzzling emoji]."

(22)



别碰我钱83577: 才13年便宜他了

2022-11-25 16:57 来自福建

回复 | 赞

"He got off cheaply with only 13 years [of sentence/probation]." (Note: The translation may vary depending on the context of the sentence.)

(23)



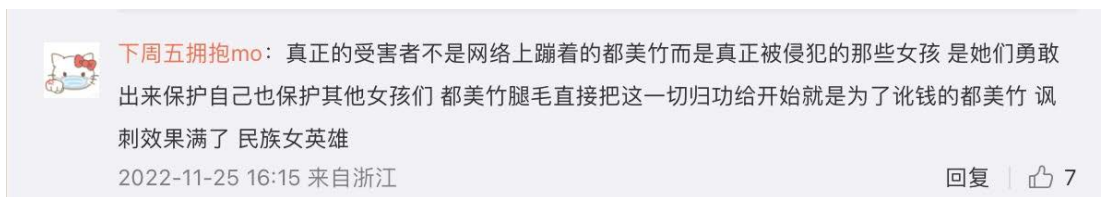
预先悲哀: 她就是蹭热度, 她以为自己很牛呢。吴亦凡被判, 也是法律正义。

2022-11-25 16:56 来自湖北

回复 | 赞

"She's just trying to gain attention by piggybacking on hot topics. She thinks highly of herself. Wu Yifan's conviction is also an act of justice."

(24)



"The real victims are not the famous people bouncing around on the internet like Dou Meizhu, but those girls who have actually been violated. It is their bravery to speak out to protect themselves and other girls. Dou Meizhu attributes everything to her original intention of extorting money, and the irony is complete. She becomes a national heroine."

(25)



"Poor Wu Yifan (Kris Wu)."

Fan Comments on Instagram

(1)

- **krisyi4314** 6w
所有的事总会慢慢慢慢慢慢好起来的!
Reply See translation
- **krisyi4314** 6w
愿你是道光，我愿成为追光者 ❤️
Reply See translation
- **krisyi4314** 6w
你于我而言，如山间清风，如古城暖阳 ❤️
Reply See translation
- **krisyi4314** 6w
你是年少的欢喜，反过来念也一样 ❤️
Reply See translation
- **krisyi4314** 6w
每当想到你，我的心中，花开满世界 ❤️
Reply See translation
- **krisyi4314** 6w
❤️❤️❤️
Reply
- **krisyi4314** 6w
一定要好好的! 💪 @kriswu
Reply

“Everything will slowly get better! I hope you are a beam of light, and I am willing to be the one who follows it. To me, you are like a clear breeze in the mountains and a warm sunshine in an ancient city. You bring me the joy of youth, and even when I say your name backward, it still sounds the same. Whenever I think of you, my heart is filled with blooming flowers. Take good care!”

(2)



zhangxiaodanaifanfan 7w

凡凡早上好，这几天工作太累了，一直得忙到3月份，好烦但会努力的💪，每天看到凡凡的视频，听着凡凡的歌曲，真的是太想你了吴亦凡🐯💚💚💚



2 likes Reply See translation

Good morning, Fanfan, these past few days have been exhausting at work, and I have to keep busy until March. It's frustrating, but I will work hard. Every day, watching your videos and listening to your songs, I really miss you, Wu Yifan.

(3)



meigeni78 7w

没有你，中国有嘻哈这个节目根本就不会出现，车胖子这个小人真的太恶心🤢，还有那些土哈，一边享受你带给它们的红利，一边又背地里刺向你。现在中国的嘻哈、说唱是越来越low了，只配埋在地下。



4 likes Reply See translation

Without you, the program "The Rap of China" would not have existed in the first place. Che "Fat" (referring to the director is a despicable person, and those "Tuha" (referring to the contestants from the countryside) are enjoying the benefits you have brought them while secretly stabbing you in the back. Nowadays, Chinese hip-hop and rap are becoming more and more vulgar, and are only suitable to be buried underground.

(4)



iamreal_dodge 7w

烂在牢里吧，强奸犯别出来祸害未成年了



7 likes Reply See translation

— View 5 more replies

“Rot in jail. Rapists should not come out and harm minors.”

(5)

”I am waiting for you and hoping you come back soon. I miss you. You're looking out for the big picture, but what about yourself?”

(6)



exo_bibexo 7w

不离不弃我们是彼此的依靠 说好每分每秒不见不散
守候你到老 我喜欢你 吴亦凡 ❤️ 每个你一直在
@KrisWu



3 likes Reply See translation

"Never leave nor forsake, we rely on each other, let's promise to never be apart even for a second. I will wait for you till we grow old. I like you, Wu Yifan, you have always been ther

(7)

- 

kwgem_cb 7w

等你回来❤️

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡
- 

kwgem_cb 7w

永远爱你

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡
- 

kwgem_cb 7w

一直喜欢你 支持你 相信你

1 like

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡
- 

kwgem_cb 7w

加油❤️👏👏

[Reply](#)

♡
- 

kwgem_cb 7w

我们一直在❤️

1 like

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡

"Waiting for you to come back. Forever love you. I have always liked you, supported you, and believed in you. Keep going. We are always here."

(8)

- 

galaxyfanbao1106 7w

现在内网各平台都各种审核，言论越发不自由，举报成风，压抑的环境让人真的很抑郁

1 like

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡

[View 1 more reply](#)
- 

galaxyfanbao1106 7w

我今天又一个微博账号被炸了，不知道为什么，其实我已经很久没有发微博了，被炸号我猜估计是我之前吐槽了疫情政策的相关内容吧

2 likes

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡

[View 2 more replies](#)
- 

galaxyfanbao1106 7w

希望有一天能在网飞看到宝贝你主演的《青簪行》

1 like

[Reply](#)
[See translation](#)

♡

"My Weibo account got hacked again today, I don't know why. In fact, I haven't posted on Weibo for a long time. I guess the reason for my account being hacked is

because I criticized the policies related to the pandemic earlier. I hope to see you starring in 'The Long Ballad' on Netflix one day."

(9)



kriswu____fanfan 7w

没你我根本不会去看新说唱,



2 likes Reply See translation

"Without you, I wouldn't even bother watching the new rap competition show."

(10)



kriswu____fanfan 7w

原来因为网络舆情就可以抓人, 难怪现在人人都爱在网络上写小作文



1 like Reply See translation

"So people can be arrested just because of online public opinion. No wonder everyone loves to write short articles on the internet now."

(11)



real_maleii 7w

你对得起这么多粉丝吗?

3 likes Reply See translation



— View 1 more reply

"Can you live up to so many fans?"

(12)



iamreal_dodge 8w

使劲踩缝纫机，别出来了

12 likes Reply See translation



"Keep working hard on the sewing machine in prison, don't come out."

(13)



234566aasd 8w

只能在这里看你了😭😭😭

Reply See translation



"I can only see you here (Instagram)."

(14)



dear_mirabelle 8w

糊涂啊哥，以后好好做人吧

2 likes Reply See translation



— View 5 more replies

"Be sensible, brother. Be a good person in the future."

(15)



sinianwusurendereneryi3 8w

给你鼓励，支撑下来。那么多冤案主角都支撑下来了不是吗？@kriswu

2 likes Reply See translation



sinianwusurendereneryi3 8w

加油 🙌 @kriswu

1 like Reply



sinianwusurendereneryi3 8w

加油吧，吴亦凡 @kriswu

Reply See translation



"I encourage you to hang in there. Haven't so many innocent victims persevered through false accusations? Keep going. Keep going, Kris Wu (@kriswu)."

(16)



lly6904 8w

你的歌在抖音又火了，你留下的余温都足以烫熟这些牛马 没一个能打的，一批比一批完蛋 有人说那天聚会你兄弟在场 我觉得她在胡说 以你兄弟的性格，要是看到那种女的，估计会直接报警或者扯着她头发顺窗户撇出去吧。如果他在可能一切真的不会这样。

1 like Reply See translation



"Your song is popular on Douyin again, and the residual heat you left behind is enough to burn those cows and horses that can't compete. Some people say that at the

gathering that day, your brothers were present and I think she's talking nonsense. Based on your brothers' personalities, if they saw that kind of woman, they would probably either call the police directly or grab her hair and throw her out the window. If he was there, everything probably wouldn't have gone down like that.”

(17)



kriswu____fanfan 8w

发疯的想你，比以前任何时候都想，越来越控制不住自己的情绪了，我竟然会失控，很奇怪的感觉。不管怎样，我只要你好好的就行



4 likes Reply See translation

"I'm going crazy missing you, more than ever before. I'm losing control of my emotions and it's a strange feeling. Anyway, as long as you're doing well, that's all that matters."

(18)



kriswu____fanfan 8w

思念依然强烈，每一天都更爱你



5 likes Reply See translation

"My yearning for you is still strong, and I love you more every day."

(19)



kriswu____fanfan 8w

时间太久，我很担心你。不知道你的腰伤有没有再犯



2 likes Reply See translation

"It's been too long and I'm very worried about you. I don't know if your back injury has recurred."

(20)



fuyun_fffww 8w

不喜欢他的人请不要来这里打扰别人的清静，你们不觉得无聊吗？把自己的欢乐建立在别人的痛苦之上。



5 likes Reply See translation

— View 1 more reply

"If you don't like him, please don't come here to disturb others' peace. Don't you find it boring to build your own joy on others' pain?"

(21)



kriswu___fanfan 8w

凡凡一定要相信每个你对你的爱 还有很多很多人都
在的



3 likes Reply See translation



kriswu___fanfan 8w

等你回来! 我一直在!



1 like Reply See translation

"Fanfan, you must believe that there are many, many people who love you and are waiting for you to come back! I'm always here for you!"

(22)



fox___o.o 8w

吴凡没救了粉丝放弃吧 ❤️



Reply See translation

— View 6 more replies



fox___o.o 8w

吴亦凡判了十三年吸吸吸



Reply See translation

— View 4 more replies

"Wu Yifan is hopeless. Fans should give up. Wu Yifan has been sentenced to 13 years. Hahaha."

(23)



lo_nna_h 8w

中国一两百年才会出一个吴亦凡这样有世界级影响力的全方位年轻之星。几代人还海外漂泊不定的游子，以为自己回家了，他可能死都不会想到这样子对待他，侮辱他，毫无怜悯，真的太可惜了。出于妒忌他年少成名吧。希望凡哥安好，相信有一天能解脱出来。🙏🍀



1 like Reply See translation

"It takes China one or two hundred years to produce a young star like Wu Yifan, who has a world-class influence in all aspects. For generations, many overseas Chinese who have been wandering aimlessly may not have thought that they would be treated and insulted in this way when they return home. It's really a pity. Perhaps it's because of jealousy that he achieved success at a young age. I hope Fan brother is safe and believe that one day he will be able to break free."

(24)



baekiloveu 8w

想他的人是疯了吗 🤔



4 likes Reply See translation

— View 1 more reply

"Are people who miss him crazy?"

(25)



kriswu____fanfan 8w

我不再相信法律

2 likes Reply



— View 1 more reply

"I no longer believe in the law."

(26)



yuhaiyue1003 8w

凡哥跟 2035 有个约 ❤️

3 likes Reply See translation



“Brother Wu has a date with 2035.”

(27)



nymen_why 9w

真13年啊哥 太惨了 哎你说你做啥不好 哪怕去嫖也行啊 干嘛去做这种事呢 还碰未成年 糊涂啊 出来了就回加拿大 好好做人吧

Reply See translation



— View 5 more replies

“It's been 13 years, brother, it's too miserable. You said you didn't do well, even if you went to whoring Okay, why would you do such a thing? You're still underage, you're confused. Come out. Just go back to Canada and be a good person.”

(28)



kriston1106 9w

天荒地老 不离不弃 一起闯天地 ❤️👊



1 like Reply See translation

"Through thick and thin, we stick together and conquer the world."

(29)



marrykrismas 9w

没停止过对你的爱 从来没有



1 like Reply See translation



marrykrismas 9w

元旦快乐



2 likes Reply See translation



marrykrismas 9w

想你



Reply



marrykrismas 9w

宝宝我终于登上了0.0



1 like Reply See translation

"My love for you has never stopped. Happy New Year. I miss you. Baby, I finally joined Instagram."

(30)



jing20152016 9w

2023新年愿望。吴亦凡案，所有的加害者：北京公检法中故意制造冤假错案者；诬告醉酒性交的三捞女；制造黑舆论和组织网络举报的新浪犯罪团伙；网暴的毒娼粉和都捞鸡信徒；所有的加害者出门都被车撞死！！



2 likes Reply See translation

2023 new year wishes. Wu Yifan case, all perpetrators: Beijing Those who intentionally fabricate unjust, false and wrongly decided cases in the public prosecutor's law; Fishing girls; Sina criminal group that creates black public opinion and organizes online reports gangs; drug prostitution fans of Internet violence and believers in dulao chicken; all perpetrators come out The door was hit by a car!!!

(31)



kriswu____fanfan 9w

从出道起你所传递给每个你的都是正能量，每一句话都深深打动着，希望我们的坚持和守候也能传递给你爱和温暖



"Since your debut, you have been spreading positive energy to everyone you meet, and every word you say deeply touches me. I hope our persistence and waiting can also convey love and warmth to you."

(32)



camilleyannn31 9w

没有你的跨年演唱会 都不看了

1 like Reply See translation



camilleyannn31 9w

新年愿望就是希望你可以早日沉冤得雪

3 likes Reply See translation



"I won't watch the New Year's Eve concert without you. My New Year's wish is that you can clear your name as soon as possible."

(33)



wnl9412 9w

我会把监狱炸了把你救出来的

Reply See translation



wnl9412 9w

凡凡坚持住，我马上来救你

Reply See translation



wnl9412 9w

凡凡，我要越狱救你

Reply See translation



"I will blow up the prison to get you out. Hang in there, Fanfan. I'll come save you soon. Fanfan, I'll break you out of jail."

(34)



haoxiangyangzhimao6 9w

2022.12.31 明年就是喜欢你的第六年 😎



1 like Reply See translation

2022.12.31 - It will be the sixth year of loving you next year.

(35)



krisyi4314 9w

是哪一瞬间喜欢上你的？我自己也说不清。但我知道，喜欢着你的每个瞬间，都充满了生活的勇气，仿佛在黑夜里点亮了一盏明灯，指引我走向人生的目标，指引我去完成未完成的梦想。



Reply See translation



krisyi4314 9w

不经历点烂事，算什么人生，
但凡要不了你命，人生随时重启！



1 like Reply See translation



krisyi4314 9w

愿你成为这样的人：外表平静如水，内心坚定如山。



1 like Reply See translation



krisyi4314 9w

你所历经的那些苦，终会成为你生命的意义。



Reply See translation



krisyi4314 9w

若有一天 你的情绪 不能用语言说出来 那你就抬头看看天空吧 它那么大 一定可以包容你所有的难过和委屈♡



Reply See translation



krisyi4314 9w

对自己承诺：我要强大到任何事情都无法破坏我内心的平和。



Reply See translation

I can't pinpoint the exact moment when I started liking you. But I know that every moment of liking you is filled with the courage to live, as if lighting up a bright lamp in the dark night, guiding me towards the goals of life and completing the unfinished dreams. What is life without experiencing some tough times? As long as it doesn't take your life, life can always be restarted anytime! May you become the kind of person who appears calm on the outside but is firm on the inside, like a mountain. The hardships you have gone through will eventually become the meaning of your life. If one day you can't express your emotions in words, just look up at the sky. It's so vast that it can hold all your sorrows and grievances. Make a promise to yourself: I will become strong enough that nothing can destroy the peace in my heart.

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