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The banana [re]public: A study of trans/national popular culture consumption among young Chinese living in the Netherlands

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Acknowledgments

I have thought of several ways to start this section. In the end, I decided I would start this way.

Thank you, my dear mother, Shing Chow, for showing me how important popular culture must be. For all my primary school years, you brought me and a group of children in our poor neighbourhood to the cheap, second-run cinema, almost every day. You would even come to my classroom and ask my teacher to hand me my ticket, because you did not want to wait for me and miss the opening scene of the film. You loved action films and horror films, and I saw all the Dirty Harry's and all the Frankensteins. The last film we saw together was *2012*, when you were 82. Raising up my sister and me entirely on your own, you must have found some of your strength in that passion of yours, in those heroes and monsters. No wonder I fell in love with popular culture myself, to the extent that I started producing it, and, years later, studying it. You departed too soon.

And then, Prof. Dr. Liesbet van Zoonen, my dear supervisor. I had the luck to attend your course for my Master's degree. You would never really believe how scared I was when I asked you to be my Master's dissertation supervisor. When I wrote my first dissertation for an undergraduate course, I got a D. Years later, your encouraging comments and your 9.5 grading embraced me away from that terrifying shadow. Did I tell you how shocked that shadow was when you asked me if I had ever considered doing a PhD? Without your confidence in me, without your efforts in securing funding, without you, I would have never gone this far.

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Indeed, one of the pleasures in entering a new field, a new profession, is in meeting new people. Through my PhD project, I had the luck of coming across scholars who impressed me not only with their minds, but, more endearingly, with their openness and closeness, to me. More specifically, I want to thank Chen Kuan-hsien, Rey Chow, Chua Beng Huat, John Erni, Anthony Fung, Giselinde Kuipers, Helen Leung, Song Hwee Lim, Ngo Takwing, Hyunjoon Shin, Jan Teurlings, Peter van de Veer, you all inspired me in your own charming ways.

Talking about meeting new people, of course, I must mention the young men and women who trusted me so much that they shared their stories with me. I want to articulate my gratitude in particular to Amy, Daniel, Terence, Tjung Wai, TK, Waiyee, and Way. Remember when you were at my place, ordering pizza's after a focus group meeting? You were talking about your dreams, and all the delights and frustrations in your everyday lives. I breathed the worth of my PhD project.

This project would not have progressed so smoothly without the support of cultural producers. I want to thank Warner Records, TVB and in particular Chiwah and Kevin Chow of OrienTouch. And I was so happy in having Liangwai Chan as my wonderful research assistant. You were always there.

As if to underline the transnationality of this project, the editorial and printing responsibilities were shared by people, in fact, my friends, based in different localities. In Amsterdam, Pat Crowley checked my English and translated some of my Dutch texts. In Macau, Rebecca Chan edited everything ("I have to say it is a mess," she told me with typical Dutch directness, or actually Chinese?). In Hong Kong, Yuan Siu Cheong reformatted some of my files; Constance Lam graced the project with a new design; and Xaddy Lam supervised the whole production as carefully as her own publishing projects. I thank you all for the beautiful book now in the hands of my readers. You also made me realize, again, how difficult it must have been if I did not have people like you around me. In the Netherlands, Andy, Anne, Anneke, Apple, Christa, Constance, Corné, Dineke, Gladys, Henk, Jinhong, Jos, Kam Wai, Kam Wing, Loi Che, Marcel (X2), Nicolaas, Onno, Pat, Rebecca, Suk Ha, Takwing, Tin Chau, you helped me feel at home in this strange country. I thank the family de Kloet-Baars, for treating me as one of you. I missed my family and friends in Hong Kong, not all the time, fortunately, but when it hit, it hit intensely. I remain grateful to my family there, particularly my sister Mei Sin, who indulged my choices in life by taking care of our mother during the years I stayed away, and now by keeping a place I feel I can always return to. This smacks of gender inequality, I know.

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Finally, I turn to Jeroen de Kloet. I was your first interview when you started your PhD project, back in 1996. Remember I quoted Foucault when we said goodbye? How pretentious. Your flamboyance in academy, your sincerity in knowledge, your interest in people, you persuaded me to try and enjoy intellectual life the way you did. You thanked me in your thesis acknowledgments, but let me assure you, you have paid it back extravagantly. You helped me so much, Jeroen. I will stop here before I get too emotional and sentimental. Allow me to conclude with this. A few years ago, we made a new year's resolution called 'Read and Eat,' that is, we would assign a day every season to do some serious cooking while discussing a piece of serious writing. It did not exactly work out that year. And we kept on making the same resolution. I am not sure if we will ever actualize it, but I am quite sure we will continue reading and eating, probably less seriously, but together, enjoying.