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Technologies of similarities and differences : on the interdependence of nature and technology in the Human Genome Diversity Project

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Words of Thank

Just like any other text, this book embodies many hidden stories. It combines various different worlds and contexts, and contains the help and efforts of many colleagues and friends. Although writing involves solitary journeys, I could not have realised that the key to getting a Ph.D. research done lies in collective work. In a sense this book produced its networks of intellectual exchange, it taught me many things about work and life in academia, and it had gifted me a number of very good friends. It got written, but it has also written my life.

One day in 1996 I called Annemarie Mol. I told her that I had been to the lab, had gathered all that material, but did not have a clue what to do with it. She suggested that I would come and visit her in Utrecht. We had a long walk in the woods nearby. She made me talk about the lab and the material I had, and as we came out of the woods many hours later we had a structure for the book. From that day on Annemarie Mol had become the most crucial adviser for this thesis. Her voice is unmistakably in the chapters that follow, but I want to thank her for the process that led to this thesis. While giving me the feeling that we were heading somewhere, Annemarie was strict, critical and indeed “supervising” the project. I appreciated her professional way of working, which consists of a fine balance between tutoring and caring, though never taking over or taking the responsibility out of my hands. Her enthusiasm, her wit and support made working together real fun. Although it seems to me now that it could not have been otherwise, I am extremely happy (and lucky) that I dared to pick up the receiver that day in '96.

Next to Annemarie Mol, this thesis has three other advisors, Gert-Jan van Ommen, Ruth Oldenziel en Selma Leydesdorff. Although not formally, Gert-Jan was involved in my research from the beginning. I thank him for long and insightful discussions, and for opening the doors to the community of geneticists, which was crucial for my research. Gert-Jan turned out to be a very careful reader of my work, providing me with comments and suggestions. I thank him for that, but especially for thinking along with my arguments and my specific ways of looking at genetic practices. Ruth Oldenziel was responsible for taking me into the Belle van Zuylen Institute. She encouraged me to apply and to do a Ph.D. within her group. I very much thank her for this opportunity. We had our ups and downs along the way, but I am content that we managed to sort out our differences and similarities, and appreciate her enthusiasm once the manuscript was there. Selma, I first of all thank for providing the space and the infrastructure for my research, and for willing to take two advisors on board from outside of the Institute. I especially thank her for moral support during the finishing job and for providing practical means to do so.

The Belle van Zuylen Institute is one of a kind. It houses different interdisciplinary research and an incredible number of very talented and wonderful colleagues. These are the ingredients that make me sometimes long back to it. I want to thank my colleagues for being mates, for good fun and for intellectual and moral support: Tineke Jansen, Yvette Kopijn, Monica Scholten, Wendy Janssen, Gerjan Sterk, Ellis Jonker, Irene Ciraad, Christien Brouwer, Judith Metz, Carianne van Dorst en Hanne Drogendijk. During the couple of month that Ruth was on leave, Gertrud Blauwhof was charged with supervising my research. This was not an easy task, since it was just after I had started. It was pleasant working together. The "Promotie Club" is a gathering within the Belle van Zuylen where those who are working on a Ph.D. thesis can present and discuss their work. My work has benefited a lot from these gatherings. I also thank colleagues from outside of the Belle van Zuylen for their feedback, especially Odille Jansen, Annemie Halsema, Sandra Veen and Susan van Velzen. Two members of the "Belle" were crucial during the period I was there: Barbara van Balen (former office manager) and Wilma Cohen (former secretary). Barbara has a talent for community building and she gave me the feeling that I belonged there. I appreciated her support and enthusiasm, and her unorthodox ways of solving problems. Wilma was the centre of the institute. She made the secretary office into a place of coming together, where stories, coffee and cake was shared. I thank Wilma not only for endless practical help, whenever I needed it, but especially for a warm friendship.

Marion de Zanger is an inspiring colleague from which I learned a lot. Her work and distinct way of looking at things has grown valuable to me. Marion's comradeship, engagement and great humour make me long for our next dinner party. In her own way Inge Boer has always been a supportive and inspiring member of the institute. It was pleasant having her around. On my leaving the institute many new members entered. Francis Gouda is a new professor at the "Belle". In a very short period of time I learned to appreciate her company and contribution to the institute at large. I very much thank her for her support and positive approach. Astrit Blommestijn, Ingrid Helsloot, and Patricia Lulof are thanked for practical support. Astrit's professional way of taking work out of my hand, when I was rounding up, and her wonderful spirit always produced moments of ease even when the pressure was high.

Sybille Lammes and Catherine Lord have fulfilled my human condition of being among friends on a daily basis. I am indebted to them. Sybille, Catherine and I shared the same room, and every other thing that comes with doing a Ph.D. We exchanged ideas about our work and our lives, shared our dreams and our anxieties, and advised and supported each other. We became a join of three, *The Spice Warriors*. Catherine's brilliance and

interest in the spaces in between; between art and science, between gossip and academic life, between film and improvisation, made virtually every late afternoon into an event. In daily life, Sybille's methodological "cut the crap" approach goes hand in hand with an enormous space where there are dreams, interconnections and joint efforts. Her broad interests, creativity and wit made our joint intellectual journeys into adventures.

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