

Acknowledgments

Work at the border may foster creative transformations. My small daughter crayoned for each of her toys a passport, which border controllers solemnly stamped. A bear, sock-doll, and beaver followed and displaced her own travels; they helped her to recall and renegotiate disruptions, losses, and passages. By marking the borders, she acknowledged separations, differences, connections. For me, this book has been that kind of passport: after I constructed the frame, many colleagues placed their marks in it. In the process, the essays that came to my desk led me to perceptions of comparative practice which my first frame could not accommodate. I had to let go of my preconceptions in order to let other approaches in. Once on a trip to the Van Gogh museum at Arnhem, I found myself outside the country before I realized the train was traveling in the wrong direction; then as now, however, there have been many polyglot counselors to help me reach the goal.

A collection of this kind depends on contributions from countless people: teachers, colleagues, students, friends, enemies, and “frenemies.” Not only did the contributors themselves exchange papers and comments, but other readers also helped tighten the threads of argument in this web of thought. Foremost were Celeste Schenck and Margaret Ferguson, whose incisive and detailed comments dramatically transformed the manuscript. I am grateful that they found time to mother this project as they were nurturing their own children. My own work has benefited from the acuity, reflective proposals, and support of Doris Sommer, Harriet Ritvo, and Regina Barreca.

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M. R. H.

Borderwork

