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Exotic Nations

Renata Wasserman

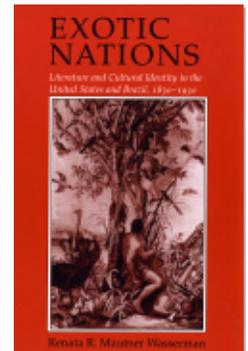
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Preface

As a first-generation Brazilian and later as an American citizen, I have always lived in more than one culture, always had before me an amalgam of nationalities, cultures, and beliefs. Long ago I recognized that identity is necessary but contingent, a construct, but so made as to seem inevitable and “natural.”

This book grew out of my observations about identity, necessity, power, contact. I hope it does justice to the virtues of those among whom I grew up, from whom I learned: my argumentative parents and their friends; Vilém Flusser, in whose house all ideas were welcome and none taken for granted; Antônio Cândido, whose pioneering course in literary theory at the University of São Paulo shaped my thoughts about literature in general and about Brazilian literature in particular.

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Earlier versions of portions of this book have appeared as articles.

Parts of Chapter 2 appeared as "Travelers' Tales about Brazil: Variations," in *L'esprit créateur* 30 (Fall 1990): 15–26; parts of Chapters 6 and 7 appeared as "The Red and the White: The 'Indian' Novels of José de Alencar," in *PMLA* 98 (October 1983): 815–27; "Re-inventing the New World: Cooper and Alencar," in *Comparative Literature* 36 (Spring 1984): 183–200; and "The Reception of Cooper's Work and the Image of America," in *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 32.3 (1986): 130–45; an early version of Chapter 8 appeared as "Preguiça and Power: Mário de Andrade's *Macunaima*," in *Luso-Brazilian Review* 21 (Summer 1984): 99–116. I thank the journals for permission to use these materials.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this book are my own.

Finally I thank my husband, Rick, and my children, Sarah and Daniel, for advice, patience, encouragement, and joy.

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