Acknowledgments

Writing this book was a lengthy but never very arduous process. The latter is thanks to the many friends and colleagues in the English Department at the University of Zurich who were willing to listen to half-baked ideas, ask the right questions, and, if necessary, to distract me with intelligent or silly conversations – whichever was needed at the time. In particular, I would like to thank those among them who gave me feedback on one or several chapters: Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, Nicole Frey Büchel, Simone Heller-Andrist, Laura Marcus, Diane Piccitto, Rahel Rivera Godoy-Benesch, and Christa Schönfelder. I am especially grateful to Sarah Chevalier and Anja Neukom-Hermann, whose insightful comments on the manuscript helped me to identify and correct some major argumentative flaws. In addition, I am indebted to my supervisors, Martin Heusser and Fritz Gutbrodt, as well as to Pam Morris and Randall Stevenson, for their support, encouragement, and useful suggestions.

Many friends already appear in the previous paragraph. Of the others, I would like to mention Normand Beaudry, Patricia Chronis, Pascal Dubacher, Nicole Eberle, Francesca Falk, Landson Ferrer de Albuquerque, Claudia Holy, Frances Imberger, Susan and John Jay, Daniela Landert, Ezequiel ‘Pato’ Lentz, Veer Navavatty, Arnaud Praplan, Daniela Schönenberger, Marcel Schwendener, Larssyn Staley, Nicole and Dieter Studer, Daniel Weibel, and Katherine J. Williams. Without them, I would feel less at home in the world.

I agree with the narrator of Salman Rushdie’s novel Midnight’s Children, who suggests that “[m]ost of what matters in our lives takes place in our absence” (14). This book could not have been written without the – direct or indirect – support of unnamed strangers who harvested, sold, or cooked food; cleaned rooms; drove buses, trams, and trains; paid the taxes that financed my research; or worked in mines and factories to produce cell phones, furniture, and other goods I use in my daily life. The boundaries of home are permeable, and far too many of its comforts depend on the exploitation of others. I thank all of you, whoever you are, as well as those who strive for greater equality and justice.

Without the unwavering support and affection of my parents, my brother, and his family I would not be able to feel as passionately about home and belonging as I do. They have made me feel safe, accepted, and loved, and it is thanks to them that I know how much joy home can bring.