ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book attests to my enduring fascination with spaces and places. While writing this book over the years, I have had the good fortune of hiking above an ocean of fog in Big Sur, sneaking into the catacombs of Paris at night, walking through an inhabited cemetery in Cairo, and contemplating an unending sea of cornfields in Champaign. But a book is made of more than nostalgic atmospheres. Innumerable friends and colleagues have nourished this project with their time and insight. Nearly every sentence bears the trace of a conversation (real or imagined) with a dear friend, to the extent that rereading my text is like traveling across a virtual space of memory. Textual time travel is all the more important when it becomes the only way to communicate with those who have passed away.

This book began life as a dissertation at Harvard, the idea for which came from seminars on authorship and literary theory taught by Abby Zanger and Naomi Schor. My advisor, Janet Beizer, and my readers, Tom Conley and Christie McDonald, offered not only a wealth of knowledge and insight, but have followed the project through all its stages. I am grateful for their mentoring and remain awed by their scholarship. Nelly Furman has been a friend and mentor from the beginning; her enthusiasm inspired me to become a dix-neuvièmiste. Lawrence Kritzman, through his devotion to the study of literature and the warmth of his friendship, has taught me the value of an intellectual community.

The Bibliothèque municipale de Grenoble graciously allowed me to consult the manuscript of Stendhal’s Vie de Henry Brulard, which proved invaluable to the first two chapters. Stanley Hoffman and Michel Zinc facilitated my entry into the Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France, where I was able to scrutinize firsthand Gérard de Nerval’s “Généalogie fantastique.” I owe thanks to the Sablé Center at the University of Toronto for allowing me to consult their materials on Zola’s dossiers for the Rougon-Macquart. I have benefited from the financial support of several institutions whose help was crucial to the realization of this project and for which I am duly grateful. I received a dissertation completion fellowship granted by the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation, a summer faculty fellowship from Indiana University, a Hewlett international research travel grant, and a
humanities released time grant as well as a publication subvention from
the University of Illinois. I would also like to thank Jonathan Strauss,
Emily Apter, and Lawrence Kritzman for generously inviting me to speak
at their institutions; the Zola chapters of the book have greatly benefited
from the discussions that ensued.

Significant portions of the book were read at different stages by Lia
Brozgal, Ross Chambers, Elisabeth Hodges, Natasha Lee, Richard Rego-
sin, Philip Usher, Armine Mortimer, and Lawrence Schehr. I thank all of
them for their encouragement, their careful reading, and especially for
their patience in correcting my myriad typographical whims and rhetori-
cal flights of fancy. My editor, Henry Carrigan Jr., deserves special thanks
for believing in the project from an early stage and shepherding it through
the review process. I would like to thank Andrea Goulet and David Bell,
whose comments enriched the final manuscript.

The support, friendship, and dynamic energy from three intellectual
communities have sustained me during the project. At both the Nineteenth-
Century French Studies and the Twentieth- and Twenty-First Century
French and Francophone Studies Colloquia, an incredible group of friends
and scholars meets once a year and inspires me throughout the year: Bet-
tina Lerner, Ari Blatt, Sara Pappas, Jonathan Strauss, Marina van Zuylen,
Deborah Jenson, Maurie Samuels, Dorian Bell, Lauren Fortner, Alison
James, Steve Spaulding, Alison Rice, Jeff Fort, Joseph Mai, and countless
others. At Indiana University, I particularly appreciated the intellectual
camaraderie of Sonya Stephens, Oana Panaïté, Margot Gray, Caroline
Strobbe, Gil Chaitin, and Jérôme Brillaud. At the University of Illinois, I
would like to express my gratitude to everyone in the French Department
for their warm welcome and continued support: Jean-Philippe Mathy, Ar-
mine Mortimer, Karen Fresco, Margaret C. Flinn, Alain Fresco, Laurence
Mall, Adlai Murdoch, Peter Golato, Zsuzsanna Fagyál, Marcus Keller,
Annie Tremblay, and Émile Talbot. Larry Schehr’s critical insight, humor,
and friendship cannot be replaced. Students in my graduate seminars
on literary and spatial theory engaged in exciting discussions with me
and helped to refine my arguments. I am particularly indebted to Jenelle
Grant, Elizabeth Black, and Audrey Évrard. Other colleagues at Illinois
have expanded my intellectual horizons and have created an incredibly
rich community of friends and scholars (in no particular order, and with
apologies to anyone unintentionally left out): Jim Hansen, Renée Trilling,
Justine Murison, Derek Riddle, Rob Rushing, Lilya Kaganovsky, Car-
oline Szylowicz, Jane Kuntz, Richard Powers, David O’Brien, Jennifer
Greenhill, Irene Small, Masumi Iriye, Lauren Goodlad, Michael Rothen-
berg, Eleanor Courtemanche, and Ted Underwood.
Jean-Louis Jeannelle, Louis-Georges Tin, Estelle Castro, Julien Artero, Pauline Perrignon, Julien Meyer, and Catherine Meyer have all provided friendship, thrilling conversation, editorial advice, lodging, and numerous lessons on how to be a French intellectual. Maj-Britt Eagle first brought me to literature, philosophy, and critical theory, and inadvertently saved me from medical school. I am deeply grateful to my parents, Pamela Bray and David Rydland, for instilling in me a love of books and an understanding of the vital importance of beautiful landscapes. I owe an unpayable debt to my late grandparents, Gordon and Luella Dague, for their countless sacrifices and unwavering support.

I dedicate this book to my wife Maggie and to my son Sebastian—may we continue to build beautiful things together.