



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The turning point in the conception of this book was my first trip to Guadeloupe in 1999 to visit my in-laws. My discovery of the island ignited in me a renewed interest in the subject of my dissertation which I had completed the year before. I came across unexpected traces of the slave past everywhere I set foot and realized to what extent the memory of slavery constituted a problematic element of Guadeloupean society to this day. Particularly noteworthy was my visit of the *Musée du Rhum* that advertises a discovery of Guadeloupean history through the sugarcane plantations and rum production. Surprisingly, slavery is completely absent from the narratives of the museum displays. How is it possible that the principle actors of the story of sugarcane planting and harvest over a period of more than two hundred years have simply been left out? Awed by the bizarre way in which the memory of slavery is simultaneously remembered and forgotten, I decided to make this contemporary reality the cornerstone of my work.

As my project unfolded, many were the colleagues and friends who helped me progress. I would like to thank Thomas Buchanan, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow at the University of Memphis at the time, whose careful reading of my dissertation, insightful comments, and firm belief in the validity of my argument, gave me the initial impetus to begin reframing my research and rewriting all the chapters. Doris Y. Kadish from the University of Georgia has encouraged my work on slave writings for many years and gave me the opportunity to publish the first results of my research. I would like to thank her especially for supporting my application for the National

Endowment for the Humanities Summer Fellowship. The 2001 NEH Summer Fellowship gave me the time, materials and support necessary to complete the photography project of sites of memory in Martinique and Guadeloupe so essential to this book. Without the active interest Caribbean historians and writers including Myriam Cottias, Alain Yacou, and Gérard Delvert as well as the staff of the *Office du Tourisme de la Martinique*, the *Conseil Général de la Martinique* and the *Maison du Patrimoine de la Ville de Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe* took in my project, I would not have been able to compile the wealth of documentation that permitted the writing of the last chapter. In particular, I would like to thank Maryse Condé who graciously allowed me to interview her on two occasions in her home in Guadeloupe. Our discussions greatly inspired my own writing. Living in Guadeloupe and looking for sites of memory was made particularly enjoyable by Lise Zacaïr's wonderful hospitality. Joseph and Thierry Zacaïr shared with me their great familiarity with the island to help me locate some well-hidden sites of memory. I am particularly thankful to them.

Many thanks go to the staffs of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Archives Nationales de France, the Archives d'Outre-Mer, the Archives Départementales de la Guadeloupe, the Archives Départementales de la Martinique and the Interlibrary Loan Office at the University of California, Santa Barbara who worked with me to find the documentary evidence needed for my project. Finally, I would like to thank Lieve Spaas, the series editor of *Polygons*, for her initial encouragement to submit my work, the outside press reviewer for his insightful comments and suggestions for improvement, and the editorial staff at Berghahn Books, in particular Michael Dempsey, for patiently working with me through the final stages of the manuscript.

On a more personal note, I am most indebted to my husband Philippe Zacaïr. Were it not for our on-going and passionate discussions about Caribbean history, culture and literature during the past ten years, this book could have never existed. His perspective as a historian, combined with his personal experience as a Guadeloupean allowed me to approach the French Enlightenment from a Caribbean point of view. Throughout my dissertation and the writing of my book, he has tirelessly encouraged me, believed in me and collaborated with me. I thank him for his patience.

My deepest thanks go to my parents Annie and Viktor Reinhardt. Their unwavering belief in my ability to realize my

dreams has allowed me never to give up. Their personal investment at all stages of the project provided me with much support. Finally, the playfulness and joy of my children, Cecilia and Nicolas, has made this long endeavor a pleasurable one.