

Acknowledgments

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Pacheco, informal conversations). In 1982 Fernando del Paso responded in writing to my queries regarding *Palinuro de México*, which we discussed during brown-bag lunches on the lawn of the Hemeroteca Nacional (where I was reading about the student movement while he conducted research on Maximilian and Carlota). He also provided me with copies of articles about *Palinuro* published in European journals. José Agustín granted me an extensive interview regarding *Cerca del fuego* in September 1988 at his house in Cuaútlá, Morelos (forthcoming in *Nuevo Texto Crítico*).

My many conversations over the years with José Emilio Pacheco and Elena Poniatowska have been fundamental to my understanding of contemporary Mexican culture. I began reading José Emilio Pacheco's works in 1978, when he and I were colleagues in the Departamento de Investigaciones Históricas of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. The following year, as a visiting professor at Ohio State University, he wrote *Las batallas en el desierto* on the same typewriter, in the same office, where I, as an assistant professor at Ohio State, would later write my analysis of his novel. Pacheco took me on a walking tour of the Colonia Roma, the setting for *Las batallas*, in 1983, before the 1985 earthquake devastated the neighborhood. Yet even then it was a tour of a ghost town, of a "city of memory."

Elena Poniatowska has fed and sheltered me and has submitted to half a dozen taped interviews since 1981, in her homes in San Angel and Chimalistac, in my apartment in Seattle, and twice on the highway from Mexico City to Cuaútlá (to visit José Agustín). A synthesis of these latter conversations appeared in *Hispanamérica* 53–54 (1989). Elena graciously has given me free access to her library and archives, including notes for various of her projects, clippings of reviews and criticism of her books, drafts of *Hasta no verte Jesús mío*, and transcripts of many of her oral-history interviews with Josefina Bórquez. Also, she helped me to secure most of the photographs for this book.

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This book is for my parents, who encouraged their middle daughter's passion for reading and writing and who once spent the night in a Stockton bowling alley so that she could discover Mexico. I also dedicate it to the memory of Joseph Sommers (1924–1979), who had faith in my potential and who continues to be my model for democratic teaching and for responsible, committed research on Mexican culture.

**POLITICS, GENDER, AND THE MEXICAN NOVEL,
1968–1988**

