First, I thank my two readers at The Ohio State University Press. More than anyone else, they are responsible for helping this project reach its fullest potential. Additionally, I am grateful to Sandy Crooms and the other staff members of the press for their interest in and commitment to my work, and to Sheri Englund for her instruction and guidance.

Of course, before anyone at Ohio State ever saw the manuscript, there were many others whose insight and generosity shaped my thinking and writing along the way. Jacques Lezra helped me see what I was saying sooner than I would have otherwise known I was saying it; Lynn Keller taught me how to think productively about form; and Rebecca Walkowitz offered professional mentoring and a firm grounding for my ideas. While endless revisions may have obscured their early contributions, their influence permeates the book.

In discussions both planned and impromptu, many friends and colleagues have sparked ideas, challenged my thinking, or emboldened me to pursue new paths. There are far too many to name, but I am particularly indebted to Dan Grausam, Mark Pedretti, Matt Wilkins, Peter Conroy, Jon Ewell, Temple Cone, Michael LeMahieu, and Cathy Turner. In addition to such supportive friends and colleagues, I have been similarly blessed with some fantastic students, all of whom have contributed to this work in ways they might never imagine. Specifically, I would like to thank the students in two seminars at UCLA—“Postmodernism after 9/11” and “Thomas Pynchon”—for the intellectual growth that those classroom experiences afforded me. Finally, I am grateful to the brilliant members of the Southern California Americanist Group (SCAG) whose comments and ideas substantially improved chapter 6.
Without the financial support and teaching leave granted by my home institutions, this book would have been several years longer in the making: College Misericordia provided useful summer research funding that accelerated the writing process, and the UCLA English Department has been more than generous in providing ample time, space, and funding for the completion of my research.

Some of the book’s chapters have appeared elsewhere and have thus benefited from the scrupulous attention of other editors and readers. The University of Minnesota Press published a version of chapter 1 in *Cultural Critique* 61.3 (2005) as “Knowing What We Are Doing: Time, Form, and the Reading of Postmodernity.” Janie Hinds, the editor of *The Multiple Worlds of Pynchon’s Mason & Dixon* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005) provided helpful comments that greatly improved an earlier version of chapter 2, “‘The Space that may not be seen’: The Form of Historicity in *Mason & Dixon*.” It is reprinted here with the permission of Camden House. Finally, a shorter version of chapter 3 appears in *Literature after 9/11* (New York: Routledge, 2008) as “Foer, Spiegelman, and 9/11’s Timely Traumas.” The comments and assistance I received from the editors of that collection, Ann Keniston and Jeanne Quinn, proved invaluable, and that piece appears here by permission of Routledge.

Finally, I thank my parents for teaching me the balance of curiosity and discipline required to complete a project of this size and scope. And most of all, I am grateful to my wife, Marissa López, whose advice, perspective, and intellect have enhanced my work on a daily basis. Her unconditional support and understanding are the foundations on which this book is built.