



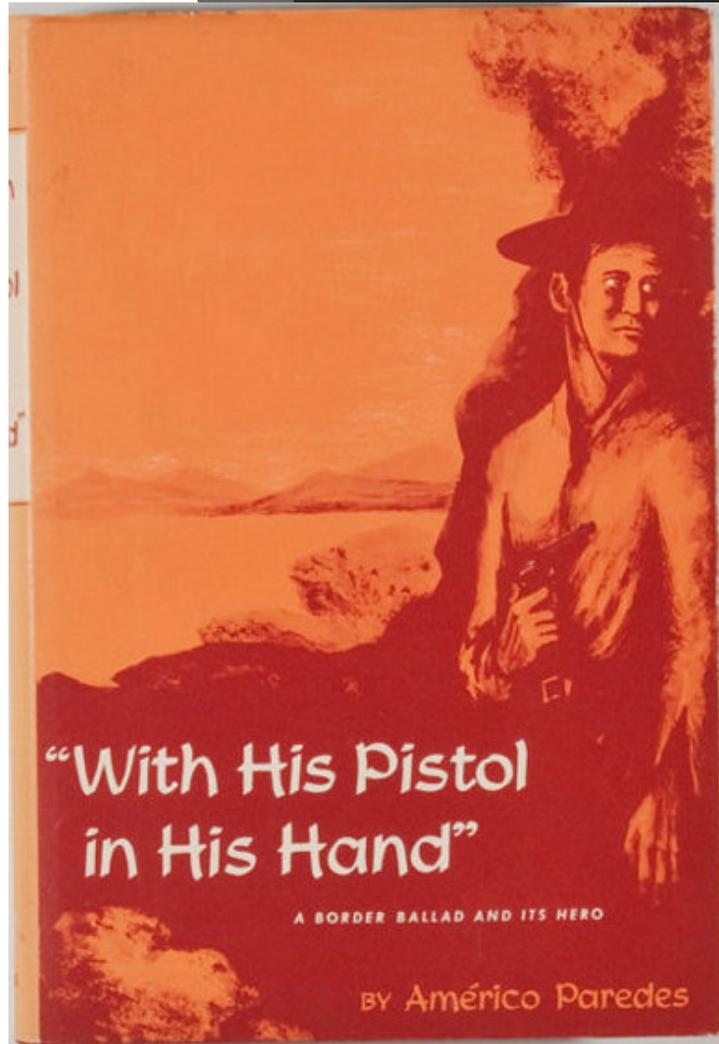
**SPAN322:  
“North of the Río Grande”  
US Latino/Chicano  
Literature**

*“With His Pistol in His Hand” IIb*

February 6, 2020

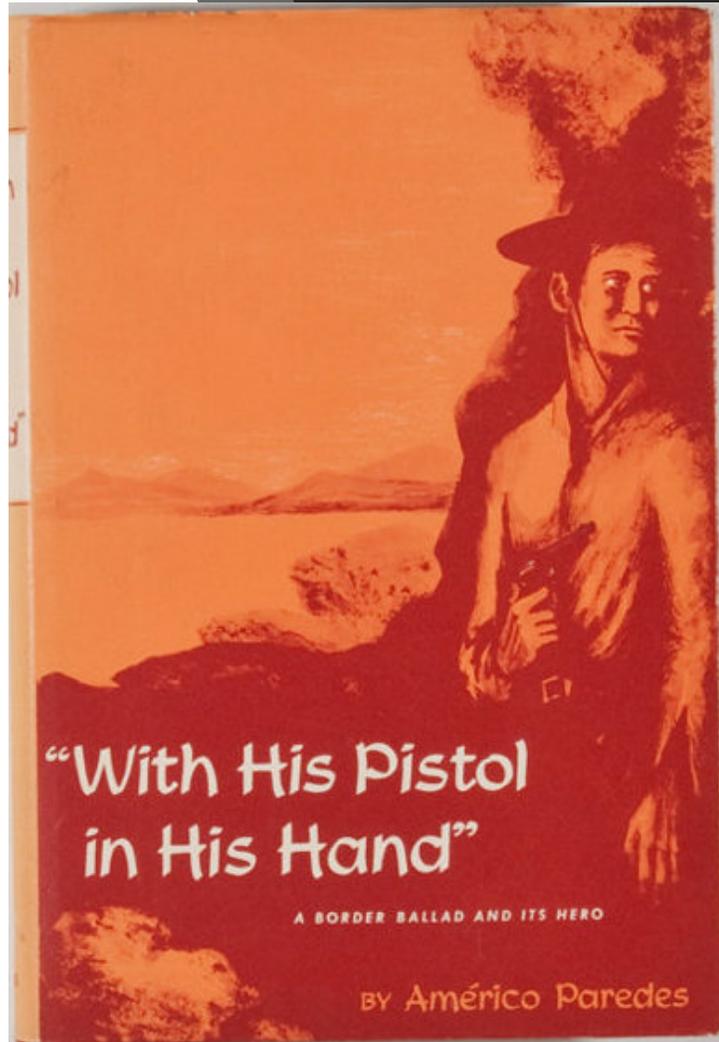
**“WITH HIS PISTOL IN HIS  
HAND”**

# *“With His Pistol in His Hand”*



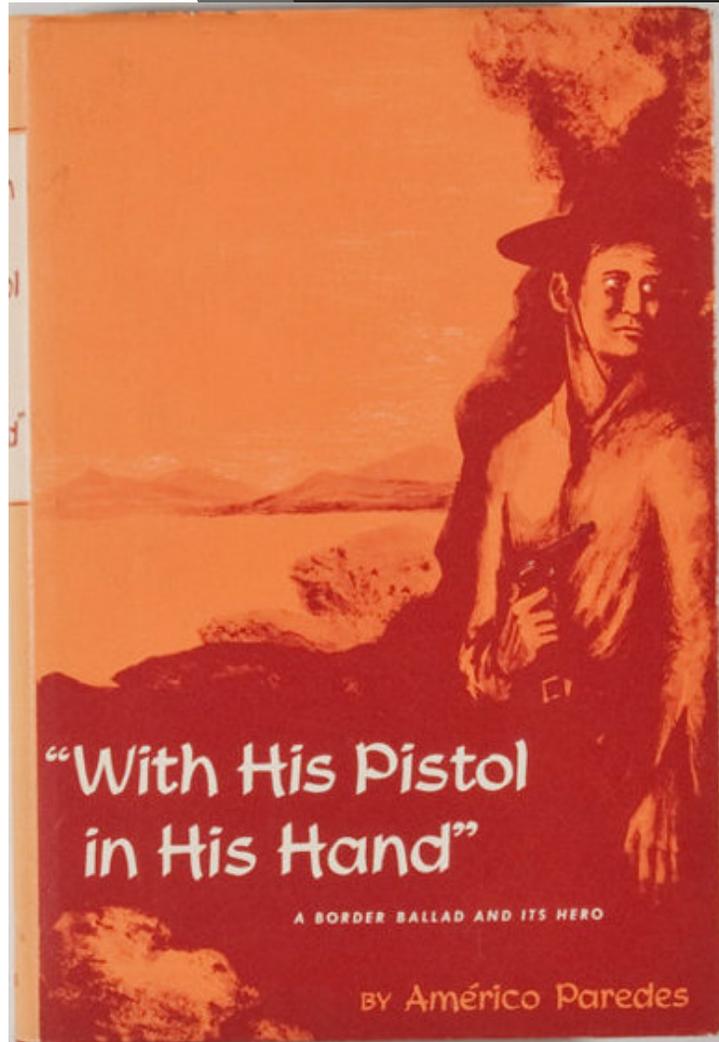
- What are the different kinds of conflict that this book depicts?
- How does the presence of a border influence culture, politics, or history in Southern Texas?
- What is the use, purpose, or social function of a) oral “legend” and b) popular balladry? Is this “literature”?
- What does the book say about History and the best way to study Chicano history?

# “With His Pistol in His Hand”



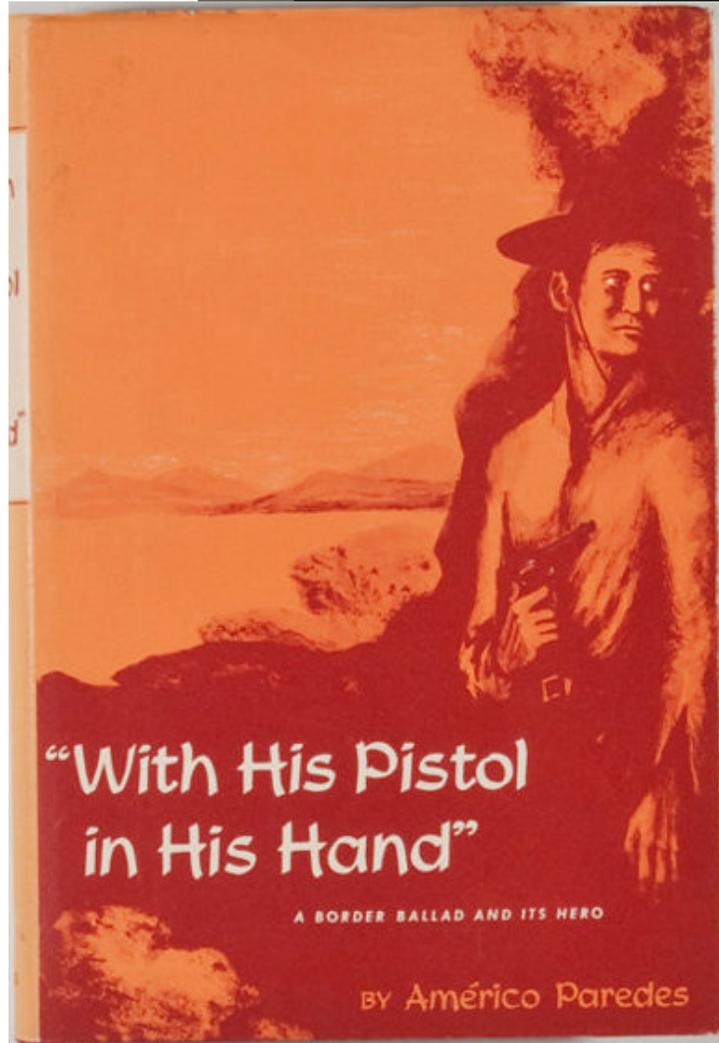
- What does the book say about History and the best way to study Chicano history?
- History is not simply written history: “documented old men’s tales.” There are other stories / *historias*.
- History is multiple. It requires access to multiple sources, and multiple kinds of source.
- Legend (“legenda”) can also be read with care and attention.
- History and memory are not the same, though they overlap, reinforce, or contradict each other.
- There may be a “subaltern” history, in tension with mainstream or dominant history.

# *“With His Pistol in His Hand”*



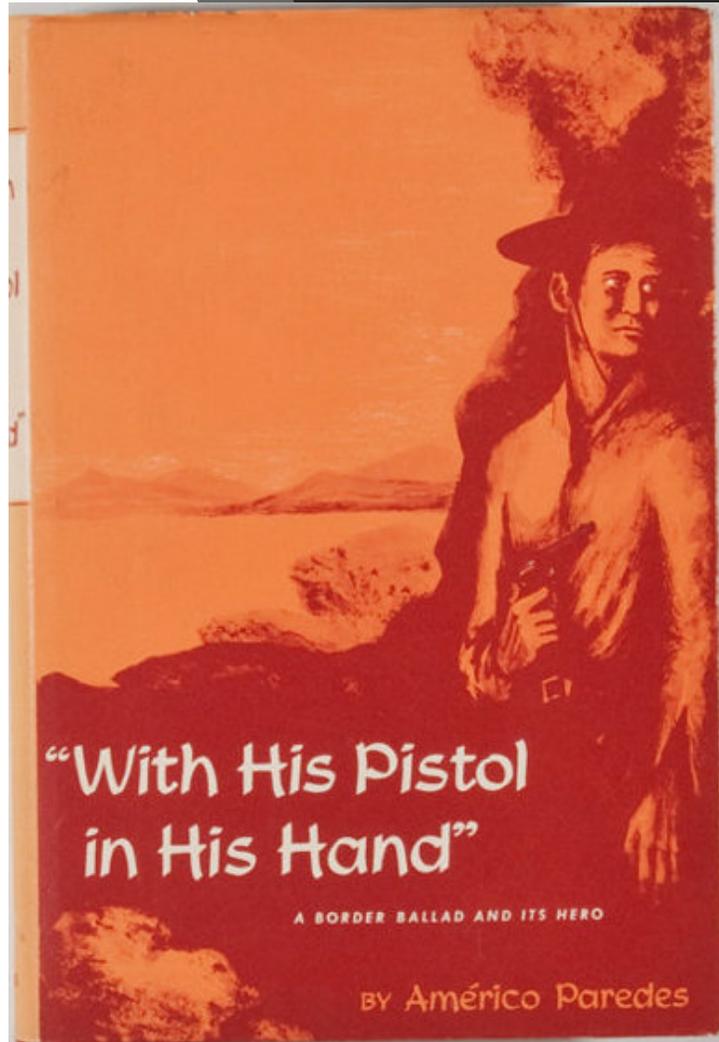
- What are the different kinds of conflict that this book depicts?
- A long-term historical conflict between Anglos and Mexicans over land, territory, and resources.
- Sporadic concerted rebellions and social movements.
- Individual incidents of violence and criminality.
- Both lynching (extra-judicial punishment) and the violence of the law, and of unjust conviction and incarceration.
- Perhaps above all, or most interestingly (for Paredés), conflicts over representation and interpretation.

# *“With His Pistol in His Hand”*



- Is it important that Paredes is himself a Chicano, and indeed a “Border Mexican”?
- Does it make a difference to his account that he is?
- Could or should someone else have written the same book (or one like it)?
- Do the same strictures on authorship and “rights” also apply to academic work?
- Is “distance” an advantage or a disadvantage?

# *“With His Pistol in His Hand”*



- What are the “kinks” in this book?
- Cortez is a kink, or treated as such, as a criminal or “crook.” Also as singular or different, a rogue.
- His story is full of twists and turns, as he tries to foil fate and an inevitable outcome.
- The numerous variants of the ballad also suggest kinks: a textual tangle.
- Border culture as a whole is a kink, a deviation from mainstream or national culture (whether Anglo or Mexican). It is not just a hybrid or mix.
- It is “its own thing,” just as Cortez was “his own man.”

**WIKIPEDIA**

# Editing Wikipedia

- Minor edits alone won't get us much closer towards Featured Article status. We need a sense of what needs to be done, and an overall plan for the article.
- Look at models and guidelines on how to write featured articles. What sections are required? What will be the article structure? What information is needed?
- We will then need to divide up the tasks that we've identified. Who is going to do what and when?



# Editing Wikipedia

- An encyclopedia article is very different from an argumentative essay, which is driven by a thesis.
- An encyclopedia article is a synthesis of “reliable sources.” You are compiling information that comes from elsewhere.
- What matters is “verifiability” (and not “truth”!)
- The “Five Pillars” include a “neutral point of view” (NPOV).



# Editing Wikipedia

- It is important to be able to evaluate sources. What makes a source “reliable” or trustworthy?
- What agenda might a particular source (or a particular author) have?
- How can we balance different points of view?
- Overall, what should be the balance between different elements of the article?



# Editing Wikipedia

- Do not worry about minor details (formatting, code, templates, style). These are easy to fix.
- Do not worry about images. These are a pain because of Wikipedia's rules on copyright.
- What you can and should be providing in the first instance is well-sourced substance, plus a strategic view of the article as a whole.



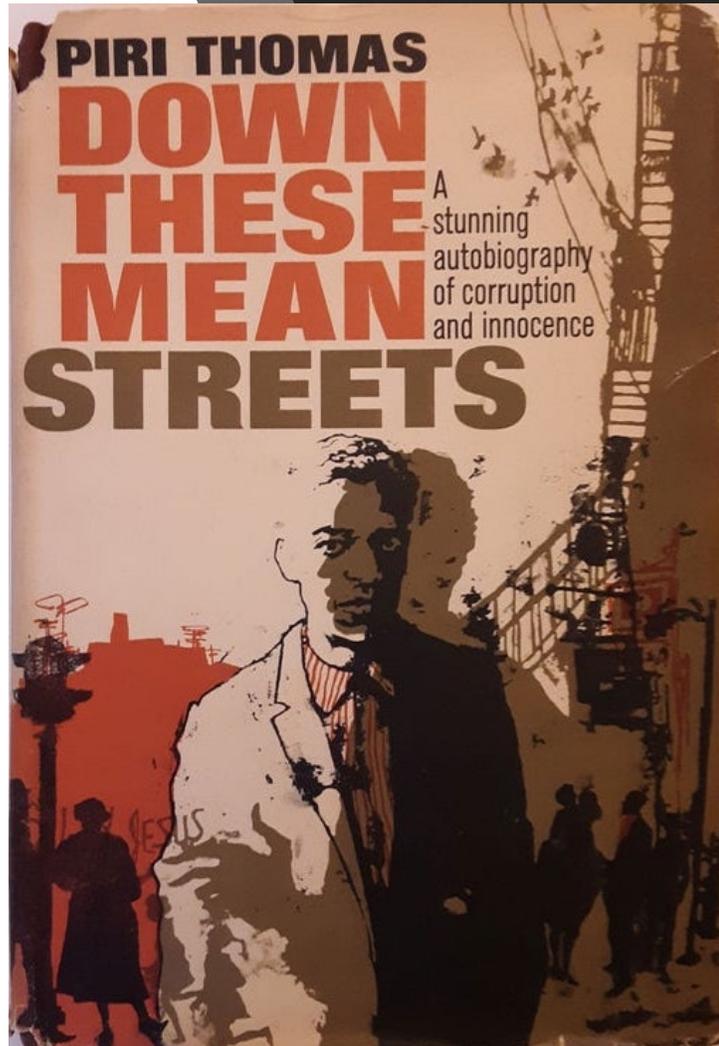
# Editing Wikipedia

- I strongly encourage you to communicate/ coordinate on Wikipedia itself (not Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.).
- This will allow you to show other editors what you are doing. It will mean you are less likely to get pushback.
- And it will help you to get more accustomed to the Wikipedia editing interface.



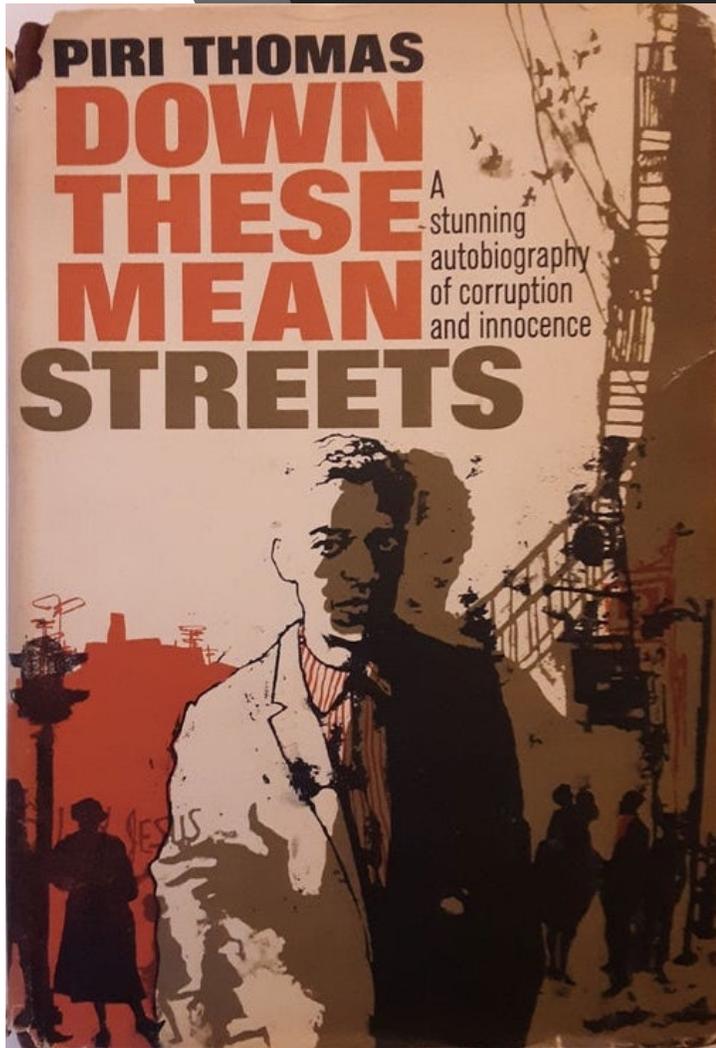
**DOWN THESE MEAN  
STREETS**

# *Down These Mean Streets*



- By Piri Thomas (1928-2011), a key figure in the “Nuyorican” movements of 1960s and 1970s
- A memoir / autobiography, published 1967
- Deals, among other things, with Thomas’s racial ambiguity: perceived as black, he identifies as Latino
- “A classic portrait of ghetto life”

# *Down These Mean Streets*



- What or who is the narrator? How does his sense of identity or belonging change?
- How does the urban setting affect the ways identity is produced and perceived?
- What is the relationship between different minorities? What conflicts or tensions does the book highlight?
- How does the law figure? What is Thomas's relationship to authority or the state?
- What is "heart"? How does affect play out in this book?

**NEXT STEPS**

# For Tuesday

- Read the first half of *Down These Mean Streets* (to page 178, end of chapter 18).
- Write a blog post (c. 400 words) about your reading, and publish it Monday evening.