



Remembering the Hacienda: History and Memory in the Mexican American Southwest

Vincent Pérez

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What the plantation has been to the history and literature of the American South, the hacienda has been to Mexico and the American Southwest. In "Remembering the Hacienda", Vincent Perez makes the case that the hacienda offers the emblem of an "antebellum," agrarian social order that predates the United States. It is the site in which the Mexican American community's "heroic," genteel forebears lived in dignity and pride, and it is the heritage from which they were cast out as "orphans," both in mother Mexico by the Revolution and in the American Southwest when the wars of 1836 and 1846-48 and capitalist land grabs dispossessed the Mexican hacendados. The hacienda, Perez argues, had its own orphans, too: Indians, mestizos, women, and peons. To trace the importance of the hacienda and its heroes and orphans in Mexican American culture, Perez examines five novels and autobiographies: Jovita Gonzalez and Eve Raleigh's "Caballero: A Historical Novel" (written in the 1930s and 1940s and later published by Texas A&M University Press), Maria Maparo Ruiz de Burton's "The Squatter and the Don" (1885), Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo's "Historical and Personal Memoirs Relating to Alta, California" (1874), Leo Carrillo's "The California I Love" (1961), and Francisco Robles Perez's immigrant autobiography "Memorias." The last work is Perez's own grandfather's life narrative.

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