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Su fidelidad indeclinable a lo hispánico, su dedicación profesional, su constancia y seriedad en la pesquisa erudita, su interés estético y humano nunca desmentido, son cualidades altamente apreciables que se derivan, sin duda, de la lectura de esta obra del Profesor Englekirk.

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José HERNÁNDEZ, *The gaucho Martín Fierro*. Bilingual ed. English version by C. E. Ward. Annotated and rev. by Frank G. Carrino and Alberto J. Carlos. Coordinated and with an introd. by Carlos Alberto Astiz. Illus. by Antonio Berni. Albany, State University of New York Press, 1967. xvii, 507 p., illus. US \$10.00.

The two poems which, together, are popularly known as the *Martín Fierro* form what is often regarded as the greatest single Spanish American work in creative literature. Appropriately, it draws from Spain the language and verse forms which have long been the vehicle of improvisation, the didactic folk wisdom of old Spanish proverbs, the Spanish interest in law whether formally codified in the *fueros* and the *Siete Partidas* or informally mocked by the *placeros* in its practical application, and the Spanish emphasis upon individual worth and independence.

Even more directly, the *Martín Fierro* is national in feeling, portraying the Argentine rural scene and the social aspirations, institutions and events of a great transition period of Argentine history. The language is modified by localisms, but the singing vowels still speed the rhymes that tell a national story, which is also of universal appeal in its call for justice under the law, pity for the unfortunate, dignity and patriotism in the individual. "My countrymen will keep me forever in their memories," Martín Fierro believes, for "the sorrows I've told are those of all my brothers too" (Part II, lines 4881-4882 and 4876-4877).

Finally, from this poem come those rarest of literary creations—memorable characters who, as Livorno would have said, are more real than their creator. Not only is Viasacha, for example, a living personality, but the entire poem has a vitality of its own. How else could it have procreated the whole genre of gaucho literature, to become a basic, unifying part of the Argentine scene? Rooted in Spain, Argentine in content, universal in interest, the *Martín Fierro* is one of the world's great books and should be more widely known abroad.

But Spanish was made for poetry. English is an intransigent language which does not lend itself to easy rhyming. Take any two stanzas and compare; for example, the first two, which in Spanish have *a* and *o* as dominant vowels. Thus Spanish verses ending in *cañter*, *vigüela*, *deñola*, *estradiñasia*, *salitania* and *conañela* become in English *song*, *guller*, *sleep*, *sorrow*, *singing* and *bird*. Again, *cielo*, *pensamiento*, *momento*, *historia*, *memoria* and *entendimiento* lead to *heaven*, *thoughts*, *now*, *story*, *memory* and *clear*. It would take poets of the skill of a Poe

The gaucho Martín Fierro [artículo] Madaline W. Nichols.

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