

STEPHEN HENIGHAN. *Sandino's Nation. Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez Writing Nicaragua, 1940-2012*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 2014. 776 pp.

Henighan has written what will become one of the most important works on the literature of two key figures of Sandinista Nicaragua, and not just because of the incredible breadth of his study that examines over half a decade of literature by two seminal authors. Henighan first visited Nicaragua thirty years ago and has researched the literature of Central America for most of his academic career. He has developed relationships with the authors studied and methodically explored their archives; he quotes, for example, from Ramírez's correspondence and from unpublished interviews he conducted with both authors in 2006. The twenty-two-page bibliography includes the who's who of Central American criticism. Beyond this specific repertoire, Henighan's vast wealth of knowledge on the literary world also shines in this volume, which showcases his precise style and some lyrical passages (he has published a number of works of fiction).

Along with being recognized as iconic figures of the Nicaraguan Revolution, Ramírez and Cardenal are much studied by researchers in the field of Central American literature since, along with being politicians, they are two of the most prolific and influential authors of the region in their respective areas: the former as a novelist and short-story writer and the latter as a poet. However, contrary to many studies on these authors that tend to group them with other authors from the Revolution or according to their particular genre, Henighan goes beyond the authors' most memorable works and meticulously analyses all the literary corpus of both from the perspective of their political participation. He sheds new light on familiar texts, highlights lesser-known writings, and challenges some previous analyses.

Shunning cultural studies because of the field's "neglect of the literary work, or its misrepresentation through selective, tendentious readings of its contents" (4), Henighan situates his study squarely in the field of literary studies, his area of expertise, at its intersection with political history of Nicaragua. In fact, for Henighan, "one of the best ways to understand a nation's deep historical evolution is through close readings of engaged literary texts" (686). Three brief chapters (two, six and nine) are exclusively dedicated to synthesizing the major events in the history of Nicaragua, in preparation for the chapters dedicated to the examined authors. Henighan includes a particular emphasis on the organization of the Sandinista movement because of the authors' connections to this enterprise.

Although both authors receive similar coverage in terms of pages, four chapters are dedicated to Cardenal while three go to Ramírez. Each author's section begins with a thorough biography that allows Henighan to minimize biographical details in the subsequent chapters, even though it is impossible to eliminate them given his approach.

This volume could easily have been divided into two separate (and lengthy) tomes on each author but the binary structure provides a stimulating insight into their contrasting identities and works. This comparison is something Henighan is interested in fleshing out because of the status both men achieved, lost and regained, as intellectuals that "commanded axiomatic authority in the public sphere" (6). His assessments of the works of both authors are tied to their relationship to the construction of the revolutionary nation, although not exclusively. For example, he lauds Ramírez's *Castigo divino* as "the work of a writer committed to narrating the development of his society" (316) who "defies his own male mentors and their traditions" (307). Henighan's ability to synthesize the works' essence is remarkable; Cardenal's *Canto cósmico* is described as "an epic poem that uses science and materialism to create a mystical Christian vision of the trajectory of the life-force from Big Bang to the end of time and presents the Nicaraguan Revolution as an integral part of this cosmic destiny" (402).

Henighan is equally eloquent analyzing poetry, memoir and fiction. His analysis of Cardenal's *Hora Cero* is particularly impressive. However, he does misconstrue Spanish-language editions as best-sellers on a global scale in a discussion of Ramírez's *Margarita, está linda el mar*. While Henighan agrees with Arturo Arias' comment that the novel is written for "consumption in metropolitan centers" (quoted by Henighan, 496), its translation into English, ten years after its 1998 publication, belies its select readership. In fact, only a selection of Ramírez's and Cardenal's books are available in English and Henighan's inclusion of bilingual quotes throughout his study offers several texts for the first time in English (in translations done by the author himself). This aspect of the book may be cumbersome for readers not fluent in one of the two languages.

Henighan's sustained mischievous portrayal of Cardenal's vow of celibacy is entertaining; for example, he references the priest's correspondence with his mentor Thomas Merton as "impassioned" (50) and describes Cardenal as "the coquettish soul pining for the attention of a loving but evanescent deity" (196). Readers unfamiliar with certain details of the Revolution might need further clarification about the identity of Roque Dalton (415), a substantiation of assertions such as "very un-Central American lack of desire for children" (164) or "some citizens felt coerced

into voting for [Hugo Chávez]" (629), and of occurrences such as Rosario Murillo's "overt hostility" to Mayra Jiménez (55).

This extensive analysis ends with a conclusion in which Henighan tries to update his study for publication by adding in a section that he fittingly titles "Ortega's Nation." Though this study of three of the authors' works from 2007-2011 is thought-provoking in light of Daniel Ortega's reelection in 2006, Henighan's last chapter is definitely his weakest, perhaps because he combines analysis of Ramírez's novel *La fugitiva* and two more of Cardenal's poetry collections, along with the historical context. However, this final chapter will provide him with material for what will (hopefully) become his next research project since both authors have continued to publish profusely since the end of Henighan's study.

SOPHIE M. LAVOIE

*University of New Brunswick-Fredericton*

JAVIER KRAUEL. *Imperial Emotions: Cultural Responses to Myths of Empire in Fin-de-Siècle Spain*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013. x + 206 pp.

Among the shortcomings of scholarship on Spain's *Generación del 98* is the following: while the catalyzing event of *el desastre*, that is, Spain's 1898 military defeat by the United States, is conventionally described from the Spanish perspective as having induced national trauma, humiliation, and mourning, essays written by Spanish intellectuals in the years surrounding 1898 tend to be analyzed as more-or-less rational arguments for national renewal. Too often the emotions that impelled writers like Miguel de Unamuno, Ángel Ganivet, and Ramiro de Maeztu to put pen to paper - emotions that are legible in their essays - are overlooked. In *Imperial Emotions: Cultural Responses to Myths of Empire in Fin-de-Siècle Spain*, Javier Krauel makes the welcome argument that the "emotional investment" underlying essays like Unamuno's *En torno al casticismo* (1895), Ganivet's *Idearium español* (1897), and Maeztu's *Hacia otra España* (1899), along with Catalan intellectual and politician Enric Prat de la Riba's *La nacionalitat catalana* (1906), must be addressed if we are to properly understand these texts (2).

A common feature of these essays, *La nacionalitat catalana* excepted, is their ambivalent characterization of Spain's imperial legacy. This theme lends coherence to Krauel's readings, which follow a preliminary chapter on Spain's 1892 commemorations of Columbus's "discovery" of America. Krauel focuses specifically on the emotions of mourning (Unamuno), melancholia (Ganivet), indignation (Maeztu), and shame and pride (Prat).