Bookshelf 2015

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In order to give NWIG readers and contributors (as well as the authors of books reviewed in the journal) a window on the current state of Caribbean book publishing, we offer a brief analysis, based on eleven of the most recent issues of the NWIG (volume 85–1&2 [2011] through volume 89–1&2 [2016]). Note that this rundown includes only those nonfiction books that, given our current mandate to review fifty-plus books per issue, were selected out of a much larger number published during the relevant period.

During these five and a half years, we published full reviews of 505 books from 107 publishers. Twelve publishers provided ten or more titles, accounting for 43 percent of the total, with Palgrave Macmillan contributing the most (32 titles). The others, in order, were University of the West Indies Press, University of North Carolina Press, University Press of Florida, Ian Randle, Duke University Press, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Liverpool University Press, University of Virginia Press, Routledge, and University of Mississippi Press. Another 27 publishers contributed four to nine books each, accounting for 32 percent of books reviewed. The remaining 70 publishers provided one to three titles, accounting for 25 percent of the books reviewed.

If we consider the contents of our annual Bookshelf round-up (which, unlike the reviews, includes fiction and poetry), the number of publishers more than doubles (as does the number of books). The Bookshelf essays in our eleven-issue sample have discussed or listed 788 titles from an additional 162 publishers, which brings the total number of publishers we’ve been dealing with during the period to 269.

Caribbean publishing, then, is widely dispersed, representing a specialty for only a handful of publishers. The majority of books on the region are provided by publishers that bring out only one or two annually.

In terms of disciplines covered in the reviews, history dominated (about 40 percent), with literature, including a consistently strong Francophone component, weighing in at about half that many. Anthropology followed (some 13
percent of reviews), with politics, cultural studies, music/art/dance, archaeology, and linguistics completing the list.

In terms of regions, 25 percent of reviews were devoted to books that considered the Caribbean, or the Atlantic World, as a whole, and nearly as many dealt mainly with the Anglophone Caribbean. Books about Cuba dominate the country list (about 20 percent of books reviewed), followed by Haiti (10 percent), Jamaica (6 percent), and Puerto Rico (4 percent).

Moving on to the current issue, we begin by expressing our gratitude to all the reviewers who have, collectively, provided such a rich resource for keeping up with writing on the region. At the same time, we must lament the fact that some of the people who’ve accepted a book and promised to review it have, despite a series of gentle reminders over a year or two, never shared their reactions to the book with _NEW_ readers. With our apologies to the authors of books that have therefore not been given their due in these pages, we simply list them here.


_The Poetics and Politics of Diaspora: Transatlantic Musings_, by Jerome C. Branche (New York: Routledge, 2014, cloth US$125.00)

_Desire Between Women in Caribbean Literature_, by Keja L. Valens (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, cloth US$90.00)

_Disease, Resistance, and Lies: The Demise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to Brazil and Cuba_, by Dale T. Graden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014, paper US$35.00)

_Cuba under Raúl Castro: Assessing the Reforms_, by Carmelo Mesa-Lago & Jorge Pérez-López (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013, cloth US$65.00)

_Postscripts: Caribbean Perspectives on the British Canon from Shakespeare to Dickens_, edited by Giselle Rampaul & Barbara Lalla (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014, cloth US$49.95)

_The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imagination: Radical Horizons, Conservative Constraints_, by Philip Kaisary (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014, paper US$29.50)

_Locked In, Locked Out: Gated Communities in a Puerto Rican City_, by Zaire Zenit Dinzezy-Flores (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013, cloth US$65.00)