

# Praise for *Beyond a Boundary*

Named one of the Top 50 Sports Books of All Time by *Sports Illustrated*

“*Beyond a Boundary* . . . should find its place on the team with Izaak Walton, Ivan Turgenev, A. J. Liebling, and Ernest Hemingway.”—Derek Walcott, *The New York Times Book Review* (1984)

“As a player, James the writer was able to see in cricket a metaphor for art and politics, the collective experience providing a focus for group effort and individual performance. . . . [In] his scintillating memoir of his life in cricket, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), James devoted some of his finest pages to this theme.”—Edward Said, *The Washington Post* (1989)

“*Beyond a Boundary* is a book of remarkable richness and force, which vastly expands our understanding of sports as an element of popular culture in the Western and colonial world.”  
—Mark Naison, *The Nation*

“Everything James has done has had the mark of originality, of his own flexible, sensitive, and deeply cultured intelligence. He conveys not a rigid doctrine but a delight and curiosity in all the manifestations of life, and the clue to everything lies in his proper appreciation of the game of cricket.”—E. P. Thompson, author of *The Making of the English Working Class*

“*Beyond a Boundary* is technically a book about West Indian cricket in the twentieth century, but it is first and foremost an autobiography of a living legend—probably the greatest social theorist of our times. . . . As a testament to a dying colonial society, and a harbinger of a Marxist cultural tradition which views human freedom as its central focus, *Beyond a Boundary* is a classic.”  
—Manning Marable, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*

“*Beyond a Boundary* appeared in 1963. It is part memoir and part sports book . . . but it is really an attempt by James to define the world of politics and the world of art. The great triumph of *Beyond a Boundary* is its ability to rise above genre and in its very form explore the complex nature of colonial West Indian society. It accomplished this by placing at its allegorical heart the most quintessentially English of games. James admired cricket because it was a great team sport and a great individual sport: the game allowed for sudden savage onslaughts of batting or bowling, and suddenly it could turn and demand that the individual subordinate himself to the collectivity. This ‘moral’ game, he maintained, mirrored the unpredictability of life, in that it was both personal and social, highly formal yet open to abuse. As Derek Walcott pointed out in 1984, ‘he [James] loves cricket above everything else, not because it is a sport, but because he has found in it all the decencies required for a culture.’”—Caryl Phillips, *The New Republic*

“*Beyond a Boundary* is an extraordinary work.”—David Lammy, *BBC History*

“Great claims have been made for [*Beyond a Boundary*]: that it is the greatest sports book ever written; that it brings the outsider a privileged insight into West Indian culture; that it is a severe examination of the colonial condition. All are true. . . . This book is where James offers the most complex, literary, and heartfelt synthesis of his preoccupations. Using cricket to blur boundaries between white and black, colonized and colonizer, ancient and modern, political and social, he stages a brilliant attack on ‘that categorization and specialization, that division of the human personality, which is the greatest curse of our time.’”

—Joseph O’Neill, author of the novel *Netherland*, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly*

“A work of double reverence—for the resilient, elegant ritualism of cricket and for the black people of the world.”—Whitney Balliett, *The New Yorker*

“It is an important part of James’s argument . . . that cricket is just as important an expression of a culture as the so-called higher arts. . . . His book endures . . . because it is, among other things, an exact account of a Caribbean upbringing towards the end of the colonial era. Insofar as it is about cricket, it seeks to place the game not just in English history . . . but in the explosive politics of the 1950s, in the West Indies in general and pre-independence Trinidad in particular.”

—Tony Gould, *New Statesman & Society*

“James is one of the literary masters of our time. His account tells us about the psychological and sociological meaning of sport in our lives in a touching form that moves us as only significant literature can.”—Warren I. Susman, author of *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*

“[James’s] semi-autobiographical meditation on the game of cricket, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), which beautifully blends witty recollection and shrewdly appreciative insight, is a classic of sportswriting, political analysis and esthetic theory.”

—William E. Cain, *The New York Times Book Review* (1992)

“Although C.L.R. James’s *Beyond a Boundary* is not autobiography in the traditional sense, it is more than a cricket memoir by a major West Indian writer. It is a complex narrative, rich in personal insight, seasoned with cricket history, cultural mythography, and Marxist polemics. In answer to the perennial question what do men live by? James, theorist, historian, Pan-Africanist, and pamphleteer, spins an intriguing, idiosyncratic tale of West Indian cultural emergence within the context of a national sport.”—Consuelo Lopez Springfield, *Caribbean Quarterly*

“Upon publication in England in 1963, [*Beyond a Boundary*] was hailed as a ‘classic.’ James affirmed his readers’ deepest feelings: cricket was not a diversion from the important business of life, but an art form no less than poetry or painting and more potent than either in molding individual and national character.”—Theodore Rosengarten, *The Washington Post* (1984)