David Featherstone, Christopher Gair, Christian Høgsbjerg, and Andrew Smith, EDITORS

MARXISM, COLONIALISM, AND CRICKET

C. L. R. JAMES'S *BEYOND A BOUNDARY*

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THE C. L. R. JAMES ARCHIVES recovers and reproduces for a contemporary audience the work of one of the great intellectual figures of the twentieth century, in all their rich texture, and will present, over and above historical works, new and current scholarly explorations of James's oeuvre.

Robert A. Hill, Series Editor

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C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary*

DAVID FEATHERSTONE,

CHRISTOPHER GAIR, CHRISTIAN HØGSBJERG,

AND ANDREW SMITH, EDITORS

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Cover art: West Indies captain Frank Worrell leading his team onto the field, followed by fast bowler Wes Hall. The Saffrons, Eastbourne, England, 1963. Photo by Ken Kelly/Popperfoto/Getty Images.

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FOREWORD | Opening Up

DAVID FEATHERSTONE, CHRISTOPHER GAIR, CHRISTIAN HØGSBJERG, AND ANDREW SMITH

Beyond a Boundary is that rarest of things: a serious book about popular culture, a book that reckons with the ways in which sporting practices can express political meanings and can act as the "muster points" of political struggle while also being shaped in themselves by the passions and divisions of the historical contexts in which people play and watch sports. Rarer still, perhaps, it is a serious book that has become profoundly popular, taken up not just by scholars or by the cricket cognoscenti but by audiences across the world. (The first translated version, to the best of our knowledge, has just been completed in Japan by Ted Motohashi, under the title *Kyokai wo Koete* [境界を越えて].) The enduring popularity of James's book is, in that respect, both a testament to the lucidity of his writing and a vindication of his lifelong defense of the capacity for astute critical awareness on the part of ordinary readers. This volume brings together a collection of new essays and reflections on *Beyond a Boundary* by writers from the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Caribbean. In the wake of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the text, it provides the first collection of critical studies dedicated to James's masterpiece. These essays acknowledge and celebrate James's achievement, but they also recognize the truth of Stuart Hall's injunction that to honor James means taking his ideas "seriously and debating them, extending them, quarrelling with them and making them live again" (Hall 1992: 3). In that respect they include critical questioning of—among other things—James's treatment of gender, his historical analysis of cricketing development, the representative qualities that he ascribed to leading players of the game, and the effects of James's own background on his ideas and presumptions. We hope, in this respect, that they open up new ways to engage with and make use of *Beyond a Boundary* for the future.

This volume has its roots in a conference held at the University of Glasgow in 2013, timed to coincide with, and celebrate, the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Beyond a Boundary*. We received considerable financial support from a range of sources, which made the conference possible. In particular, we acknowledge the support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (ESRC Grant ES/K002198/1) and, at the University of Glasgow, the School of Critical Studies, the School of Social and Political Sciences, and the Human Geography Research Group. All sessions at the conference were filmed by the cooperative filmmaking group World Write, whose feature-length documentary on James, *Every Cook Can Govern: The Life, Impact and Works of C. L. R. James*, was released in 2016. Footage from the conference is available via World Write's online portal dedicated to James and his work (www.clrjames.uk). The site also includes the video record of a keynote address by Robert A. Hill that compellingly situates *Beyond a Boundary* in its historical and political context, as well as further keynote addresses by Wai Chee Dimock and Mike Brearley and a closing plenary discussion involving Selwyn Cudjoe, Clem Seecharan, and Selma James. The presence of the filmmakers at the conference was enabled by the support of the Glasgow University Knowledge Exchange Fund.

During the course of the writing of this volume a number of significant scholars and activists who contributed to our understanding of *Beyond a Boundary* and the wider politics of sporting and cultural practices in our world, died. By way of tribute we would just like to record their names here: Lionel Cliffe, both a pioneering political economist of Africa and an anti-racist campaigner in Yorkshire cricket; Stuart Hall, whose work engaged so persistently and originally with conjectures and intersections which were of interest to James; Darcus Howe, James's great-nephew and himself a theorist, activist, and West Indian cricket fan; Mike Marqusee, whose penetrating readings of the politics of contemporary cricket are so much in the spirit of James himself; Frank Rosengarten, whose critical study of James remains necessary reading for anyone interested in understanding his work. Finally, we owe a debt of thanks to all of those who attended the conference in Glasgow and whose papers and other contributions made it such a stimulating event, as well as to the many students and administrative staff who worked very hard, behind the scenes, to make sure that things ran smoothly.

INTRODUCTION | *Beyond a Boundary* at Fifty

DAVID FEATHERSTONE, CHRISTOPHER GAIR, CHRISTIAN HØGSBJERG, AND ANDREW SMITH

This book is neither cricket reminiscence nor autobiography. It poses the question *What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?* To answer involves ideas as well as facts.
—C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963)

Sexual intercourse began
In nineteen sixty-three
(which was rather late for me)—
Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban
And the Beatles' first LP.
—Philip Larkin, "Annus Mirabilis" (1967)

Beyond a Boundary was published at a pivotal moment in world history, making it, in some ways, a key harbinger of the events that would transform the world in the 1960s. At that point, C. L. R. James was at the vanguard of the struggle for West Indian self-government that was matched by independence movements in Africa and by civil rights in the United States. He had campaigned tirelessly—and successfully—for the appointment of Frank Worrell as captain of the West Indian cricket team at a time when the role had almost always been held by white men and recorded, with joy, the reception accorded Worrell's team in Australia in 1960–61. He was one of the first cultural historians to listen to the voices of the people and recognize the significance of sports as a marker of wider transformative patterns, and he was perhaps the first writer to proffer a sustained case for sports to be appreciated as art.

In other ways, however, there is a danger that the book appears to be little more than a historical relic: self-government was achieved for Trinidad and Tobago and for Jamaica in August 1962 and for Barbados in 1966, while in

the United States, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act in July 1964. At the other extreme, the assassinations of John F. and Bobby Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King signified a shift that, while far from unprecedented (with, for example, Leon Trotsky's assassination coming the year after James had visited him in Mexico in 1939), represented a sinister side of the 1960s. In other ways, the decade of the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, the Black Power and women's liberation movements, free love, and Woodstock seemed far removed from the "security-minded age" (James 2013 [1963]: 216) of men in gray-flannel suits that James describes as the context for the dull cricket that he watched in England after his return from the United States.[1] While James wrote much of *Beyond a Boundary* during the 1950s—an era that tends to be remembered in terms of drab standardization—it is notable that in redrafting the manuscript in 1962, he felt that he "had no need to change a word" about "the rut into which [cricket] had sunk" (213).

In "Annus Mirabilis," Philip Larkin identifies 1963 as the year in which the swinging '60s really began and a moment when, in Britain, the drab austerity of the postwar years was finally cast off. While he did not have cricket in mind, 1963 was also something of an annus mirabilis for the game and the moment in which the transformation from the dull, ensure-the-draw-first mentality to the modern version of the sport began. Unexpectedly, perhaps, one marker of this occurred at Lord's during the Test between England and the West Indies, where Brian Close repeatedly ran down the wicket to Wes Hall and Charlie Griffith in an attempt to score quick runs and win the match. This could have been seen as an isolated incident, and the game is best remembered now for the grainy black-and-white television images of David Allen blocking out the final balls to ensure a draw rather than attempting to secure victory, while Colin Cowdrey looked on from the other end, having heroically returned with his arm in plaster after it was broken by Hall. Nevertheless, the year also witnessed the first staging of the Gillette Cup, initially a sixty-five overs per side competition, designed to save the county game in England from bankruptcy. Of course, the introduction of corporate-sponsored one-day cricket—seen at the time as a second string to the County Championship—revolutionized the game that James had known up to the publication of *Beyond a Boundary* and, ultimately, has also had a pronounced effect on how Test cricket is played. Given the success of its most recent descendants—the Indian Premier League (IPL), the Australian KFC Twenty20 Big Bash League, and other, similar tournaments—it could be ar-

gued that Learie Constantine's prediction (made to James) that "the future of cricket lies along the road of the league" (134) has been realized, albeit ironically, in a format entirely alien to Constantine and James. We discuss these developments later, but they serve to make clear the extent to which cricket might be taken to have strayed far from the hope, expressed by James at the end of *Beyond a Boundary*, that Worrell's batting in Australia in 1960–61 heralded a return to a cherished Golden Age (259).

While *Beyond a Boundary* is most frequently discussed in terms of cricket and postcolonial and transnational studies, it also returns repeatedly to James's other "obsession" (17)—with Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847–48) in particular, and more generally with nineteenth-century English literature and its role in the transformation of English society. James's reading of the centrality of W. G. Grace as a seminal figure in the emergence of "organized sport" at a moment in which "this same public that wanted sports and games so eagerly wanted popular democracy too" (153) is twinned with his appreciation of the place of Charles Dickens in the Victorian imagination. Thus, for example, "In 1854 *Hard Times* showed labour rebellious and despairing against the conditions imposed upon it by the new industrial processes" (161) in a manner that was understood by large numbers of readers and whose significance extended far beyond the realms of "high" culture.

Unsurprisingly, given his fifteen-year residence in the United States and encyclopedic knowledge of American literary culture—as illustrated in *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (1953) and the posthumously published *American Civilization* (1992)—James is also well versed in nineteenth-century American fiction and references it in *Beyond a Boundary*. Thus, among many pertinent allusions to the United States and its culture, James devotes an important passage to Harriet Beecher Stowe's antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), the best-selling work of fiction in the United States in the nineteenth century, and to the immensely popular stage adaptations that continued to pack theaters for the next fifty years. The reference to Stowe is indicative of James's willingness to illustrate his argument with allusions to popular literary-political culture that extend well beyond the Caribbean and British settings and provide the framework for his own book. Moreover, it serves as an exemplary instance of his ability to extrapolate across cultures to bolster his core argument. In this case, rather than limiting his argument to the specifics of the struggle against racism, he suggests that Eliza's pursuers (as she flees across the icy river to freedom) were "shot down to the cheers and tears of thousands [of theatergoers] who in real life would

have nothing whatever to do with such violent disturbances of the established order" in a manner that marked largely white audiences' awareness of their own plight at a time when industrialization brought "furies vague but pursuing" (181). In itself, the moment in *Beyond a Boundary* resonates with James's recent immersion in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) and desire to construct class-based revolutionary narratives that were able to transcend racial boundaries. Of equal importance, however, in terms of his methodology in *Beyond a Boundary* is how James uses his allusion to Stowe elliptically, to help explain what made Grace "one of the greatest of popular heroes" because of "what he signified . . . in the lives [of the English people] that they themselves lived from day to day" (182). Like E. P. Thompson, whose *The Making of the English Working Class* was also published in 1963, James challenges conventional (for the time) writings of history in his pursuit of an understanding of how and why people lived and of what they feared and desired. As the earlier example illustrates, however, James goes further than Thompson in his ability to draw on a broad transatlantic economy of ideas to situate local and national events within transnational patterns.

It is unsurprising that the adult James should have retained his early acquired affection for the Victorian novel, since as a genre it played a preeminent role in the reformist movements of its age and could also serve as a model for the kinds of "popular democracy" that James advocated for West Indian self-government. While there are limits to the extent to which *Beyond a Boundary* can be read straightforwardly as autobiography (which we discuss in more detail later), the Dickensian version of the *bildungsroman* does leave its mark on the structure of *Beyond a Boundary*. Novels such as *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–44) and *David Copperfield* (1850), for example, feature protagonists who, after early demonstrations of talent, manifest a hubristic unwillingness to heed the advice of others and must experience chastening, yet ultimately redemptive, journeys (geographical, internal, or both) before returning home fully formed and able to act as exemplary members of a particular new moral order—in Dickens's case, the English reformist middle class. James's self-representation constructs an almost quintessentially Dickensian hero: as a child, he displays talent and is rewarded with success in the form of the free exhibition to the Queen's Royal College. As he recollects near the start of *Beyond a Boundary*, however, this success was short-lived, and he quickly became a "catastrophe . . . for all . . . who were so interested in me." He continues, "My scholastic career was one long nightmare to me, my teachers and my family. My scholastic short-

comings were accompanied by breaches of discipline which I blush to think of even today" (23). The "temptation," of course, was cricket, to which James "succumbed without a struggle" (24), and he recounts how his "distracted father lectured me, punished me, flogged me," imposed curfews, and ordered him to stop playing. In time, James finds himself "entangled in such a web of lies, forged letters, borrowed clothes and borrowed money that it was no wonder that the family looked on me as a sort of trial from heaven sent to test them as Job was tested" (27–28).

While there is certainly an element of hyperbole to James's witty and self-deprecating reflections, they are important to an understanding of how *Beyond a Boundary* is structured. Toward the end of his narrative, James poses the oft-cited question, "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" (233). While he never says as much, it seems reasonable to suggest that this is a question that he directs in part at his own, youthful self. While the young James evidently, in one way, does know about other things, such as literature, he is unable to relate his knowledge of cricket to other elements of his life. At one level, this is simply a matter of the contrast between behavior on and off the cricket field. On the field, he writes, "We learned to obey the umpire's decision without question. . . . We learned to play with the team, which meant subordinating your personal inclinations, and even interests" and "never cheated" (25–26). In contrast, inside the classroom "we lied and cheated without any sense of shame. . . . We submitted, or did not submit, to moral discipline, according to upbringing and temperament" (25). There is, however, a much more significant structural logic to James's imperative: it is only once he has lived in England and the United States and spent many years both in the contemplation of cricketers such as Grace, Constantine, Worrell, and George Headley and in the study of political philosophy, American culture, and many other disciplines that James is able to draw the analogies that enable him to *know* cricket and to understand, for example—as he does at the book's conclusion—the relationship between his advocacy of West Indian self-government and his campaign to have Worrell made captain of the West Indian team.

It is this appreciation that enables the James who writes *Beyond a Boundary* to cast a retrospective glance on his life and draw patterns that were not apparent to his younger self. James starts his narrative with anecdotes about two local cricketers: Matthew Bondman, a "ne'er-do-well, in fact vicious character" who became "all grace and style" (4) when he had a bat in his hand, and Arthur Jones, a "medium-sized man" who "talked quickly and

even stammered a little" (5), but who could play the square cut in a manner that James only rarely witnessed in Test or county cricket. As James explains, "It is only within very recent years that Matthew Bondman and the cutting of Arthur Jones ceased to be merely isolated memories and fell into place as starting points of a connected pattern. They only appear as starting points. In reality they were the end, the last stones put into place, of a pyramid whose base constantly widened, until it embraced those aspects of social relations, politics and art laid bare when the veil of the temple has been rent in twain as ours has been" (7).

James repeats the point soon after in his account of Cousin Cudjoe, a blacksmith who was "quite black, with a professional chest and shoulders." A wicketkeeper and "hitter," he had been "the only black man in a team of white men" (8) who, according to Cudjoe, took him "everywhere they went" (9). Again, James stresses that "at the time I did not understand the significance of Cudjoe . . . being the only coloured man in a white team," and even the James who reminisces on this childhood memory does not specifically seem to understand "what skill it was, or charm of manner, or both, which gave him that unique position" (9). Nevertheless, the incident offers an ironic reflection on the final chapters of the book in which the campaign to have Worrell appointed captain of the West Indian team to tour Australia depends on his replacing Gerry Alexander, who was often the only white man on the team that he captained.

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In part, then, *Beyond a Boundary* is a book that takes shape around James's own experiences and his subsequent recognition of the ways in which those experiences formed part of a "wider pattern." Part of that pattern, however, is born of James's growing awareness of the injustices of British imperial rule in Trinidad as they manifested themselves while he was playing, watching, and reporting cricket and growing to intellectual maturity as a black colonial subject of the British Empire. "Cricket," James famously noted, "had plunged me into politics long before I was aware of it. When I did turn to politics I did not have much to learn" (65). Given that all sections of Trinidadian society had cricket clubs that regularly played one another, from the "white and often wealthy" Queen's Park to the "totally black and with no social status whatever" plebeian Stingo (49–50), it was easy to compare all the top players at close range. James never failed to be shocked and outraged at continually seeing high-quality black cricketers, such as the Stingo player and

docker Telemaque, who deserved inclusion in the West Indian national side but was left out by openly ignorant and racist white selectors (71). Moreover, the simple fact that "white and wealthy" and "totally black" played cricket regularly against each other cast light on the totality of society. One moment both teams would be on the pitch, "playing with a straight bat," treating the other as equals and offering each other consolation ("bad luck"), only to then return to all the old deference and racism in the pavilion. Given this, together with the colonial state's repression of overtly political activism—particularly after the mass dockworkers strike that shook Port of Spain in late 1919—it is not surprising that some cricket matches took on immensely powerful symbolic significance, not least when the island's best "black" team, that of Shannon (with cricketers such as Constantine and Wilton St. Hill), played Queen's Park.

James himself—as a former student turned schoolmaster at the elite Queen's Royal College, to which he had won a scholarship—played not for Shannon but used to open with Clifford Roach for the more middle-class Maple. He later noted that his decision not to join Shannon delayed his intellectual and political identification with the cause of West Indian nationalism. Yet the fact that the social antagonisms of race, class, and power in this small Caribbean island implicitly played themselves out on the cricket pitch weekly meant that James always naturally felt he had the sense of seeing things whole. He would argue later that a fully comprehensive and undivided vision was something that had been lost in the modern world and was last truly seen in the great English writer William Hazlitt, who wrote wonderfully about games and sports in early nineteenth-century England, before the class conflicts of the industrial age became central to popular consciousness. James felt that early twentieth-century Caribbean society in some ways mirrored English society in the age of Hazlitt—the society that saw the creation of, among other things, the game of cricket (159–60).

In 1932, ostensibly to help his friend and compatriot Learie Constantine (who had voyaged into imperial Britain in the 1920s to play professionally for Nelson in the Lancashire League) write his autobiography *Cricket and I* (1933), James himself made the "voyage in" to the "mother country." Ross McKibbin (1998: 332) notes that "sport was one of the most powerful of England's civil cultures," and James witnessed first-hand cricket's popularity in the working-class cotton textile town of Nelson, where thousands would turn out to watch league games. James's outstandingly detailed knowledge of the game meant he soon secured a post as "the first West Indian, the first man

of colour, to serve as cricket reporter for the [*Manchester*] *Guardian*" and, indeed, possibly the first black professional sports reporter in British history (Buhle 1993: 42). "It was a great feeling," James later recalled in an interview, "to sit beside *The Times* in the Number One seat allowed to the *Manchester Guardian* at Old Trafford," Lancashire's home cricket ground.[2] More crucially, this position also allowed him an opportunity to cast his gaze over a custom and practice that was not only claimed as the "national game" in the imperial metropolis itself but, since its "golden age," had become the game of English-speaking peoples across the empire. A dozen of some of James's finest articles, first for the *Manchester Guardian* (1933–35), working with Neville Cardus, and then for the *Glasgow Herald* (1937–38), have been republished as part of a wider collection of his writing on his beloved game (James 2006).[3]

As has been noted elsewhere, many of James's "central arguments" in *Beyond a Boundary* "are already discernible" in his early cricket writing, not least "his sense of the relationship between cricketing technique and a wider historical zeitgeist . . . and his passionate defense of the sport as art" (Smith 2006b: 95). James's provocative and thought-provoking comparison of the dramatic spectacle of cricket with "high art" was in keeping with the emerging tradition of cricket literature and aligned closely to Cardus's own philosophy. Yet what always also distinguished James's analysis of cricket was "the fact that he understands it to be serious and significant *because of*, and not despite, its status as a popular activity" (Smith 2006a: 49). Here the Marxism that James had embraced during the Great Depression as a result of his witnessing the rising threat of fascism in continental Europe firsthand and his experience of reading Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* amid the struggles of the English working class in Lancashire was arguably critical.

Yet James's writing of *Beyond a Boundary* has to be located as an attempt to make not only an intervention in the field of Marxist cultural theory but also a political intervention within the greater tumult of decolonization. James stressed the wider, implicitly political significance and symbolism of the rise of the great West Indies cricket team of the Three Ws: Worrell, Clyde Walcott, and Everton Weekes. As Stuart Hall (1992: 13–15) reminds us, "James often remarked that the British said that the Empire was won on the playing fields of Eton and would be lost on the playing fields of Lord's cricket ground. Just as the British had trained themselves to create the Empire on the playing fields, so on the playing fields they would symbolically lose the Empire." Moreover, because (as James punned), "It was the new drawing together of the energies of the Caribbean people that created the cricket team

of the 1950s and allowed Worrell to play with grace," *Beyond a Boundary* "had a profound and imaginative anti-imperialist message."

Indeed, the draft manuscript of what became *Beyond a Boundary* was, for a long period, titled *Who Only Cricket Know*, inspired by the question Rudyard Kipling posed in "The English Flag": "What should they know of England who only England know?" (James 1986: 70). Although James tells us in *Beyond a Boundary* how impressed he had been as a schoolboy with Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*, the fact that a veteran anti-colonialist like James could have been inspired by such a figure as Kipling—traditionally regarded as "the high priest" of the "Imperial gospel," as George Padmore (1972: 1964) described him (c.f. Westall 2010)—might seem surprising.[4] Kipling's relationship with empire was always complex, of course, although as James (1969: 23) himself would later note, he represented "the new attitude" in Britain in favor of colonialism at the zenith of British imperial power that "was signalised by the Boer War." In 1902 in "The Islanders," and after observing the mess the British had made fighting the Boers, Kipling railed against "flannelled fools at the wicket and muddied oafs in goal," urging public schools to teach boys not cricket or football but how to ride and shoot so they were better prepared in future for the real "great game" of colonial warfare (Thornton 1959: 91; c.f. Major 2008: 296). However, in the 1950s Kipling's question "What do they know of England?"—itself being leveled by racists at the black migrant workers arriving on British shores from the Caribbean—went to the crux of the matter: the crisis of national identity now posed by decolonization and mass migration. What indeed could be known of England if Britain was now without her overseas colonies? James thought a serious study of those "flannelled fools at the wicket" and the public school code connected with cricket might go some way toward coming up with an answer—and, in the process, demonstrate that black West Indians had a far deeper understanding of "British civilization" than those racists rallying to the banner "Keep Britain White." Moreover, for James, the end of empire meant it was surely time that people turned the tables and started asking questions about imperial figures such as Kipling: "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?"

If in one sense James's work was about "British civilization," *Beyond a Boundary* was also about Caribbean civilization; as David Scott (2004: 145) suggests, "As he seeks to do with the United States in *American Civilization*, so in *Beyond a Boundary* James is sketching an outline of the *civilizational* structure of the Caribbean, the constitutive relations between culture, society and politics."

Yet the question of how to categorize *Beyond a Boundary* remains contentious. Some scholars have preferred to situate the work less as a *civilizational* macro-history than as a personal intervention in life writing. The late, great historian Manning Marable (1985: 38), for example, once suggested that "*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." Although in his preface to *Beyond a Boundary* James himself famously stressed that it "is neither cricket reminiscences nor autobiography," he did note that there was an "autobiographical framework" to the book (xxvii), a fact that we have considered.

In the important essay "'What Do Men Live By?' Autobiography and Intention in C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary*" (1989), published in *Caribbean Quarterly*, Consuelo Lopez Springfield suggested that James's desire to utilize the form of autobiography flowed in part from a vindicationist urge to challenge the racist discourse epitomized by the English biographer of Thomas Carlyle, J. A. Froude, and his famous comment on the West Indies: "There are no people there, with a purpose and character of their own." As Froude (1888: 347) had put it in *The English in the West Indies*, "There has been no saint in the West Indies since Las Casas, no hero unless philonegro enthusiasm can make one out of Toussaint." Just as Toussaint Louverture, leader of the Haitian Revolution, found it necessary to write up his life story in the form of "memoirs" while in captivity to try to justify his work to the new French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (Girard 2014), so James was implicitly challenging racism in itself by utilizing the form of autobiography to write about himself and the lives of other West Indians.

Another possible source of inspiration for James, aside from Toussaint, may well have been Trotsky, who, in exile in Turkey from the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, wrote his masterly *My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography* (1930). Trotsky's concerns in writing *My Life* were first and foremost to defend his political work as a revolutionary Marxist from a growing chorus of slander and denigration of "Trotskyism" as something alien and opposed to "Leninism." This grew to a crescendo in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death as part of what Trotsky (1937) declared "the Stalin school of falsification." Trotsky's *My Life* was also an outstanding demonstration of how Marxist theory and, in particular, the linked theories relating to the law of uneven and combined development and permanent revolution that Trotsky himself had done so much to develop, could illuminate and help make sense of an individual life—in this case, Trotsky's own early life growing up in what is

now the rural Ukraine but then was part of the tsarist Russian empire. (For further discussion, including consideration of James's apparent use of these theories in his own account of his early life in *Beyond a Boundary,* see Høgsbjerg 2014: 76–79.)

Yet with respect to the "autobiographical framework" of *Beyond a Boundary*, James's own Marxism is in general somewhat muted, even consciously downplayed at times. "Thackeray, not Marx, bears the heaviest responsibility for me" (39), James insists early on, which most likely would have come as something of a surprise to most readers of *Beyond a Boundary* who knew the author. In *My Life*, Trotsky details his own political and intellectual evolution toward Marxism and his activism in the Marxist movement in both tsarist Russia and in exile among various émigré communities, with the narrative climaxing as Russia underwent revolution in 1905 and then 1917, giving readers a firsthand account of what it is like to be a revolutionary who plays a critical role in a social revolution. James's approach in *Beyond a Boundary* is somewhat different. Indeed, the moment James's account moves closer to the years in which he actually joins the tiny Trotskyist movement and becomes an organized revolutionary in 1934, the narrative breaks suddenly from the "autobiographical framework" that provides the chronology in parts 1–4, and moves back to the nineteenth century for a historical analysis of W. G. Grace. Indeed, the years of James's life after 1933–34 (during which he became a Marxist and was most active as an organized revolutionary, in and then outside the official Trotskyist movement in Britain and America) are covered in a solitary paragraph:

> Fiction-writing drained out of me and was replaced by politics. I became a Marxist, a Trotskyist. I published large books and small articles on these and kindred subjects. I wrote and spoke. Like many others, I expected war, and during or after war social revolution. In 1938 a lecture tour took me to the United States and I stayed there fifteen years. The war came. It did not bring soviets and proletarian power. Instead the bureaucratic-totalitarian monster grew stronger and spread. As early as 1941 I had begun to question the premises of Trotskyism. It took nearly a decade of incessant labour and collaboration to break with it and reorganise my Marxist ideas to cope with the post-war world. That was a matter of doctrine, of history, or economics and politics. These pursuits I shared with collaborators, rivals, enemies and our public. We covered the ground thoroughly. (151)

James does, of course, allude in *Beyond a Boundary* to aspects and incidents relating to his life and work as a revolutionary socialist from the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s, but it is telling that the "autobiographical framework" re-merges in a fundamental sense with his return to Trinidad in 1958, and his involvement in the transition to independence in the final section of the work, part 7. Yet James's life and work from 1958 to 1962 was a period when, as Frank Rosengarten (2008) puts it, the "national-popular" tended to come before his revolutionary Marxism. Indeed, James explicitly makes the link to his pre-Marxist days in the Trinidad of his youth clear, noting that immediately on his return to the Caribbean, he "was immersed up to the eyes in 'The Case for West Indian Self-Government'" (225), a reference to the title of his earlier pamphlet from 1933.

It is unclear whether James's downplaying of his revolutionary Marxist politics throughout *Beyond a Boundary* was a conscious decision, perhaps related to the parlous state of his finances and the urgent need to find a degree of commercial success with the book. Alternatively, the decision could be understood as unconscious. It may have been dictated by James's sense of the work's form first and foremost as a meditation on cricket rather than an attempt to write an autobiography in the manner of Toussaint and Trotsky. Nonetheless, James's subtle occlusion of his political activism in *Beyond a Boundary* stands as a critical reason why Marable's suggestion that the work is "first and foremost an autobiography" remains problematic; read exclusively in this way, the book would provide us with a distinctly partial vision of James and his politics (c.f. Moore-Gilbert 2009: 19–25).

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In a review of *Beyond a Boundary* published in *Encounter* in 1963, V. S. Naipaul notes that contemporary responses to the book failed to grasp both the full complexity of James's account and the complexity of the relationships he was seeking to understand. "With one or two exceptions," Naipaul (1972: 19) writes, "a journalistic reaction to his material—cricket—has obscured the originality of Mr. James's purpose and method." James's concern, he notes, is precisely to get beyond an understanding of West Indian cricket that situates it within a safely "picturesque" imagining of the islands: all sunshine, Carnival, and calypso. Naipaul must have had in mind reviews such as the brief notice the book received in *The Times*, the condescending conclusion of which is that "[James] manages in *Beyond a Boundary* to give in a rambling way an impression of himself and his background which is at once easy

reading and useful to an understanding of the island way of life."[5] Rather more considered reviews, such as that by the poet Alan Ross in *The Observer*, praised James's "rewardingly close scrutiny of technique" and his concern to understand the game's relationship to "social history," although Ross nevertheless suggested that the book was "marred here and there by a disfiguring militancy."[6] Clearly, *Beyond a Boundary*'s insistent focus on cricket's political expressiveness was unsettling to many of James's initial readers. As George MacDonald Fraser noted in a review for one of James's former papers, the *Glasgow Herald*, "Not many Englishmen could even think of [politics] in the same thought with cover drives. . . . It takes a West Indian to do that, and to relate both to art, sociology, and literature."[7] Fraser's response to the book was extremely positive, but he, too, confesses that "the reader coming fresh to it may wonder how on earth a man could be a Marxist and at the same be imbued with a love amounting to worship for . . . the spirit of cricket . . . with all its reactionary associations." Neville Cardus's review of the book comments equally sardonically on the political lessons that James insists on drawing from the game. Despite his somewhat pointed references to James's intellectual debts ("I have sometimes had the impression that I was 'briefing' Mr. James's forensic performances" [1963: 7]), Cardus is careful to distance himself from James's prediction that cricketing values will find their way into a newly and differently arranged society.

Early reviews of *Beyond a Boundary* thus point toward one persistent and frequently skeptical line of response to the text, the first of a number of critical responses that will be considered here. This is the suggestion that James's love of cricket and his avowed politics are in contradiction. For many of his early reviewers, clearly, it was the politics that were the "disfiguring" aspect of this conjunction, although some more recent readers, such as the former cricketer Ed Smith (2008: chap. 15), have also questioned whether James's commitment to Marxism can be reconciled with his account. For many other readers, however, the problem is contrariwise: it is James's love of cricket that seems politically "disfiguring"—a "mutation," Cedric Robinson (1995: 245) has called it—and is taken to be where his otherwise critical and anti-imperial sensibility lets him down.

According to this criticism, James's defense of the cricketing "code" of conduct in *Beyond a Boundary* fails to acknowledge the ways in which that code served as a form of moral discipline in the context of empire, helping to create pliant colonial subjects (see, e.g., discussions by Alleyne 2006; Hartmann 2003; Tiffin 1995). We might question whether the historical

evidence supports this view of cricket as straightforwardly a weapon of cultural imperialism. It is arguable that in both the Caribbean and other contexts such as India, the spread of the game was at least as much a result of popular appropriation as it was of its introduction to a relatively small number of elite schools (Beckles 1995b; Majumdar 2002; Stoddart 1995). Nevertheless, there is a broader point here with regard to the politics of the sport. In his superb discussion of crowd riots at West Indian grounds in the immediate context of decolonization, Orlando Patterson (1995 [1969]: 144) insisted on a much more ambivalent reading of cricket than James, arguing that the sports symbolized "the English culture we have been forced to love, for it is the only one we have, but the culture we must despise for what it has done to us." Moreover, Patterson argued, the symbolic solidarity that cricket established meant very different things before and after decolonization. In the aftermath of empire, the "we" established by West Indian cricket binds the ordinary spectator to a nationalism from which they do not benefit and against which they periodically rebel. More recently, Robert Gregg has repeated and extended these criticisms, insisting that the universalism that James wants to defend as the redemptive promise of cricket simply fails to reckon with the way in which the game is structured around exclusions. "Cricket claims but it cannot represent universal truths," Gregg (2000: 110) insists. Thus, James's defense of the "proper" boundaries of the game not only reveals a "vestigial imperialism" nestling at the heart of his text; it ties him "to a projection of a new nationalist elite" (Gregg 2000: 110).

These criticisms, which recall in some respects the skeptical response to mass culture associated with thinkers of the Frankfurt School, are reflected on in a number of the contributions that make up this volume. We might offer an initial and qualified defense of James, however, by noting that he is quite explicit in *Beyond a Boundary* that a willingness to defer to the symbolic rules governing practice on the cricket pitch does not, in any necessary sense, inculcate political or social deference. James's account of his own access to the game, won through a sustained rebellion against parental, family, and school discipline, makes this quite clear at an autobiographical level. It was also, of course, cricketing experience that informed Constantine's repudiation of colonial racism, a lesson that he presses on James (112). If James says relatively little in *Beyond a Boundary* about the sport's entailment in the construction of forms of hegemony, this is not because he is oblivious to that possibility, but because his central concern in the text is to consider the counter-hegemonic possibilities that emerge in the same moment. That

counter-hegemonic potential rested on a respect for the symbolic autonomy of the cricket field; it was the rules of practice that governed cricket as a meaningful activity that allowed it to become a distinct kind of social space in and on which forms of rebellion could be enacted that were not easily enacted elsewhere in the everyday life of the colonial Caribbean (see Farred 1996a; Kingwell 2002; Smith 2006b). Having described the highly racialized and classed structure of domestic cricket in Trinidad, we might remember, James insists, against those readers who might presume to read his account as a longing for some form of historical catharsis, "I do not wish to be liberated from that past" (59). He says this, of course, *not* because he thinks nostalgically of the forms of exclusion and inequality that were expressed on the cricket fields of the Caribbean, but because he recognizes that it was—in part, at least—on those very fields that such exclusions could be called into question. Thus it is that he famously finishes his statement: "Above all, I do not wish to be liberated from its future." This is the crucial point: we would do well not to forget the emphatically dialectical approach that James brings to an understanding of the politics of sports. James was certainly guilty of ignoring the exclusions that structured cricket as it was played, especially the heavily gendered nature of the sport, and it is also the case—as is explored in contributions to this volume (see also Diawara 1990)—that his account in *Beyond a Boundary* seems at points oddly inattentive to class (or attentive to class in odd ways). But this does not in itself invalidate James's claim that, read dialectically, sports offer one context in which we might seek out the glimpses of a future that struggles to emerge from within an unequal and antagonistic present.

Kenneth Surin is among a number of the readers of *Beyond a Boundary* who have emphasized the extent to which James's whole interpretative account is oriented futureward, toward that "something yet to come" that may be discerned in the game's symbolic encounters. In two elegant essays, Surin (1995, 1996) also raises a further series of critical questions regarding *Beyond a Boundary* that merit attention. Surin takes issue, in particular, with James's willingness to celebrate, in Hegelian terms, "world historical" figures such as Garry Sobers or W. G. Grace, whose play is read as a consummation of currents of wider social and political history. Such a reading, Surin argues, not only places an impossible symbolic load on the shoulders of these individuals but also (as Gregg also notes) risks complicity with a deeply elitist view of the struggle for independence and its aftermath: "If one assumes that myriad forces and experiences constitute West Indian history, then it is hard

to see how a single individual . . . can 'express' even a fraction of these many impulses and dispositions" (318).

The issue of the "representative figure" in James is also addressed in some of the chapters that follow, but it is worth noting that his claim about the way in which particular players come to have representative status is not one that rests simply on a presumption about those players as individuals and their ability to compress a diverse history within themselves. Rather, James emphasizes the way in which specific players may come to be constituted as representative in and through the acclaim of the popular audience for how they play the game in a given context. "Representativeness" should thus be understood as something profoundly relational and born in part of a popular—rather than elite—search for expressions of togetherness and united purpose. The historical meaningfulness of a given player of the game in this regard is a function of the way in which audiences *find* meaning in their play rather than something that springs from within them: a gift of the crowd as much as of the gifted player.

A third and related criticism, which we touched on earlier, concerns the extent to which James's approach to making sense of the game is called into question by the way in which the sport has evolved in the fifty years since the book was published. The emergence of an increasingly cosmopolitan, professional elite whose sporting lives are played out in growing detachment from the game at any local level has, according to this argument, not only revealed the profound limitations of James's reading of the "representative" figure, but has also cast an unflattering light on a lingering romanticism in his account of the game. Without mentioning James specifically, Paul Gilroy is indicative in arguing that changes in cricketing practice make it an increasingly unlikely vehicle for progressive or popular politics: "Its old imperial logics are lost, and its civilizing codes are increasingly anachronistic and unmoving in a world sharply and permanently divided into the two great camps—a select group of winners and an ever-expanding legion of losers whose plight is more accurately represented by the TV-friendly tempo of baseball than the languor of cricket" (Gilroy 2004: 122; see also Stoddart 2006).

The game, of course, *has* changed in many ways since the publication of *Beyond a Boundary,* but we should note that an account of this kind, which interprets Test cricket as increasingly out of sync with the rhythms of globalization, is itself a profoundly Jamesian reading. A "reading" of the Indian Premier League or the Big Bash that relates those emerging forms of the game—with their compression of time, engineering of batting pyrotechnics,

commodification of talent—to the changes in the wider sociopolitical context of twenty-first-century capitalism would owe a profound debt to James's pioneering efforts to understand the ways in which cricket is shaped by the economic and political structures of the world in which it is played.

In this regard, the details of James's specific reading of cricketing practice in the historical moment before decolonization needs to be separated out from the wider method that he proposes for understanding the political meaningfulness of sports in general. His own consistent reinterpretation of the game at different historical conjunctures makes this amply clear. While James's focus on the interaction between audience and players would seem to imply that some form of symbolically representative relationship is always a likely outcome of spectator sport, his reading of Worrell, for example, as a player invested with the popular hopes for decolonization is clearly a view that belongs to its time. And this is indeed the point for James: all readings of the game need to be *of their time*. This does not mean, of course, that everything about the game may be explicable and discernible in any given moment. As noted earlier, James is clear that he comes to understand the significance of a figure such as Matthew Bondman many years *after* he watched him play. What it does mean is that for James, it is possible to make proper sense of the game only historically, in terms of the social and political relations out of which it emerges, relations that it cannot but refract in its own particular forms.

Where Gilroy and Surin differ markedly from James is in their implication that recent shifts in the game, or in the way in which the game is socially situated, might represent its quashing as a space of symbolic resistance. One hears here echoes of assessments, not only from Theodor Adorno's account of mass culture, but also from a writer such as Pierre Bourdieu, who has described the core trajectory of sports in capitalist society in terms of an increasingly complete commodification and a corresponding and increasingly total displacement of active popular participation into merely passive consumption: "Games produced by the people, return to the people, like 'folk music,' in the form of spectacles produced for the populace" (Bourdieu 1993: 123). James, by contrast, never lost sight of the extent to which the antagonisms of a capitalist society continually made themselves felt and were discernible on the terrain of what he called the "popular arts." His consistent defense of this dialectical reading of the popular is not simply a result of his Marxism. Not all Marxists, after all, have shared even his qualified optimism in this regard. It is a position that is also informed to an important

extent by his awareness of the long history of ways in which popular cultural traditions formed a part of resistance to empire, discussions of which feature in *The Black Jacobins*; in his early survey, *A History of Negro Revolt*; and in his writings on black struggle in America. It is telling, in this respect, that James's critical attentiveness to the politics of popular culture is reflected in the work of many other writers concerned with resistance to colonialism and to racism. W. E. B. Du Bois, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, and Frantz Fanon all come to mind.

James might have despaired at much of what newer, shorter versions of cricket involve or imply for the game. He might well have seen in so-called "T20" cricket, with its repetitive clobbering, a kind of synthetic, lifeless cloning of those moments of transcendence that he looked for in the studied rhythms of a Test match. In its way, the compressed version of the game is no less destructive of cricket's expressive freedom than the dull defensiveness he so hated in English cricket of the 1950s. At the same time, though, James would not have lost sight of how these new forms of the sport still refract the *unresolved* antagonisms of a globalized world. One might "read" the IPL, for example, as the final triumph of capitalism over cricket. But a more Jamesian question would be to ask, How do those mass-mediated performances, in their frenzy *and* in their astonishing skillfulness, speak to the longing for "something yet to come" among popular audiences in India and in diaspora around the world, who face the growing inequalities of unfettered capitalism, on the one hand, and various forms of racism and exclusion, on the other?

We can conclude this brief assessment of the critical responses to James's text by noting that in many ways the nonacademic influence of *Beyond a Boundary* has been more obvious and more thoroughgoing than its academic influence. This, of course, would have been exactly how James would have wished things to be, rejecting as he did the confinements of discipline and specialism and concerned as he always was to engage with a wide public audience. Among lovers of cricket, and of sports more generally, *Beyond a Boundary* is securely established as a classic, helped in no small part by the effusive review by John Arlott (1964: 993), which claimed, succinctly, that it was "the finest book written about the game of cricket," before adding, "There may be a better book about any sport than *Beyond a Boundary:* if so, the present reviewer has not seen it." Since then its position in the canon of sporting literature has been consistently reaffirmed: the inclusion of the text in *Sports Illustrated* magazine's Top One Hundred Sports Books of All Time, and—at number 3—in the *Observer Sports Monthly*'s Top Fifty Sports Books, sug-

gests that Arlott's verdict continues to command agreement across a broad audience. More important, perhaps, the book has been profoundly influential in shaping how cricket, and sports more generally, are written about and understood. When James addressed a debate, hosted by the Cricket Society in 1957, arguing, "Neither Toss, Weather nor Wicket Were Decisive Elements in the Defeat of Australia Last Season," one can sense his own hesitant awareness that the historical materialist interpretation of cricketing performance that he was pursuing might seem outlandish to his audience. "There is a certain point of view I am putting forward," he reiterates in his peroration; "a certain proposition that I am opening up" (James 1986: 86). James won the debate in 1957, and ever since the publication of *Beyond a Boundary* that proposition has continued to win ground. It is discernible in any number of subsequent and popular accounts of the game from different contexts, such as Derek Birley's *A Social History of English Cricket* (1999); Ramachandra Guha's *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport* (2002); and, recently, Peter Oborne's *Wounded Tiger: A History of Cricket in Pakistan* (2014). Oborne's book might be taken as indicative, not simply because of its explicit references to James, but also in that the study itself repeatedly seeks to relate Pakistani cricket to the passions of decolonization and to the crises and frustrated longings of postcolonial nationalism. Even for a cricket writer whose politics are markedly different from James's, the core proposition of *Beyond a Boundary* has clearly opened up a compelling way to make sense of sports.

In academic circles, however, James's reception has been more scattered and partial. Predictably, *Beyond a Boundary* is a pivotal reference point in the burgeoning field of sports studies, especially for those concerned with understanding sports sociologically (e.g., Carrington 2013). James's work has also been influential on those concerned with understanding the politics of culture in the Caribbean (e.g., Edmondson 1994; Kamugisha 2013; Wynter 1992); in postcolonial Britain, especially through his influence on the work of Stuart Hall (1992) and of the *Race Today* Collective (see Bunce and Field 2014); and in the ever expanding field of postcolonial studies. In this last respect, we might recall that James was a significant influence on Edward Said (2000: 373), so it is no surprise that one of the first issues of the flagship postcolonial studies journal *Interventions* would dedicate a series of essays to James or that he would be a central point of reference in recent cultural and literary studies more generally, alongside other critically minded analysts of popular culture such as Raymond Williams, Fredric Jameson, Cornel

West, and bell hooks. It is arguable, though, that these uses have created a rather lopsided James, whose Marxism and wider corpus of writing on the history of anti-imperialism, antiracism, and state capitalism seem to have been subject to a kind of amputation (see Cudjoe 1992b; Larsen 1996). This risks distorting not only the way in which James is remembered, but also our understanding of his writings on cultural practices specifically, which have to be treated as inextricable from his socialist and antiracist politics more generally (Smith 2011b).

There is one further respect in which James, even as he opens a path to a critical reading of culture in colonial and postcolonial contexts, seems very distant from the kinds of analyses that dominate academic cultural and postcolonial studies, and this lies in his writing itself. As Derek Walcott (1995: 36) has noted, James was "not only a polemic person but also . . . someone who believed in elegance." A great deal of contemporary academic criticism seems to be the stylistic equivalent of T20 cricket: technocratic, jargon-heavy, and full of empty pyrotechnics. All of this is in complete contrast to the "grace" of James's writing, as Walcott rightly calls it, which has all the elegance one might expect of the onetime novelist and longtime public speaker. It is not an uncommon experience to read academic expositions of *Beyond a Boundary* whose stylistic extravagances are cast in a deeply unflattering light whenever they come to quote from James's original text, with all of its clarity and poise.

Finally, it should be noted that some of the most pioneering aspects of *Beyond a Boundary* seem simply to have been under-recognized, even where James's account preempts later developments and topics of discussion across various academic fields. We might point, for example, to the fact that James's focus on sports allowed him to broach questions of embodied experience, and of the politics of such experience, long before they became fashionable in the arts and humanities (Appadurai 1996; St. Louis 2007: chap. 5). Or we might note James's emphasis on the constitutive role of the audience in establishing the historical meanings of sport. The significance and originality of this claim remains, likewise, largely underappreciated, even though a concern with audience, readership, and reception has proliferated in cultural and media studies in recent years. Perhaps this is because James's account, while it recognizes the capacity of audiences to shape the meanings of culture, remains rooted in the materiality of a game in which there is no disputing success and failure. In that regard, James insisted that evaluative judgments—judgments about the relative quality of different players—were an unavoidable part of any properly historical materialist understanding of

cricket. He would have had no more time for the "anything goes" interpretive turn that dominates some branches of cultural studies than he did for the "determinist" reading of culture that dominated some forms of Marxism and that made the opposite but corresponding error of presuming that cultural outcomes were simply pre-scripted by class or by economic forces.

In a similar way, James's pivotal defense of cricket as a form of art has been almost completely overlooked by contemporary discussions of aesthetics (although see Todd 2007). As recently as 2005, the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch could mount a defense of "Sport Viewed Aesthetically, and Even as Art?" that is presented as being without precedent. Welsch argues that sports share many of the symbolic qualities of art, emphasizing their characteristic conjunction of rule-governed action and contingent event and considering their ability to provoke a sense of *mea res agitur* on the part of the audience. "Sport is drama without a script," Welsch (2005: 146) argues. "It creates its own drama." All of this looks new because its reference points are limited to the West European—and especially German—philosophical tradition of aesthetics. But it is, of course, not new at all: it is an argument that was preempted in almost all of its central claims nearly five decades earlier by a writer from the Caribbean who knew the German philosophical tradition well enough, but knew other traditions as well.

It is telling, in this respect, that the famous English art critic, novelist, and painter John Berger regarded *Beyond a Boundary*, on first reading, as "a marvellous book. . . . I read every page with discovery or admiration."[8] James had sent Berger (then based in Switzerland) a copy of the work in early 1969, soon after their first meeting. He wrote, "I have sent you *Beyond a Boundary*. Your wife need only read the first three chapters for they tell what Vidia Naipaul found very important—the early life of a West Indian writer. *The* important chapter in that book so far as art is concerned is the chapter called 'What is art?' The rest is cricket and is to be read or rejected, or read and taken to heart, according to one's liking for games or for that particular game: I am an addict."[9] Berger responded to James on 11 February 1969, "You write with an ease and mastery that is exemplary. You wonder whether I am interested in cricket. Not particularly, but equally, intensely. You only have to understand the quality of style in any human activity to appreciate its value in all others. I can appreciate it in the cricket or the long-jumping or the poker that I have witnessed. Although your arguments for cricket as a synthetic art form are entirely convincing which can't be said for the average European theater."[10]

If, as Naipaul said, the first readers of *Beyond a Boundary* failed to grasp the complexity and originality of James's approach, it may be that this complexity and originality is still out of reach of intellectual methodologies bound by discipline and by a still resilient cultural nationalism. *Beyond a Boundary*, in its reaching across historical and social contexts, in its bringing together of popular and high culture, and in its profoundly political concern for the wholeness of human experience, is the enduring and still provocative expression of what Caryl Phillips (2001: 171) describes as James's "discursive, restless, curious and ultimately annealing intellect."

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The contributions to this book engage with *Beyond a Boundary* through approaches that seek to gain the measure of this restless, curious intellect. The chapters assess both the historical and contemporary relevance of this text in diverse ways and from a range of contrasting positions.

The first, substantive part of the book, "Cricket, Empire, and the Caribbean," opens with Selwyn R. Cudjoe's essay "C. L. R. James: Plumbing His Caribbean Roots." Cudjoe insists on the importance of locating James within the context of the vibrant intellectual, political, and literary traditions of Trinidad and Tobago. Thus, he argues that we can "better understand James's *Beyond a Boundary*, if we locate him in a tradition that made him who he was." He positions the text in relation to the important migrations of Africans from Barbados to the Tacarigua, Tunapuna, and Arouca areas of Trinidad, especially the sugar estates that characterized the area. The chapter stresses that these Barbadians brought with them "particularly strong forms of Anglican tradition" and argues that "James's Barbadian origins, his Anglicanism, and his knowledge of the Bible were important in shaping his literary and intellectual life." Despite drawing attention to this placed character of his formation, however, Cudjoe positions *Beyond a Boundary* as a diasporic text, arguing that it was a work that James "needed to write to reconcile what and who he was when he left the island in 1932 with the man he had become as a result of his long sojourn abroad." This dynamic reading of the text in relation to James's trajectories makes a significant contribution to Cudjoe's broader project to locate James within the contours and context of significant Trinidadian radical political intellectual cultures (Cudjoe 2003: 304–6).

Christian Høgsbjerg's chapter, "C. L. R. James's 'British Civilization'? Exploring the 'Dark Unfathomed Caves' of *Beyond a Boundary*," offers a differ-

ent emphasis on the influence of the intellectual political and literary culture of Trinidad on James. Høgsbjerg engages with what Bill Schwarz (2003b: 12) has called the "unusually deep penetration of the institutions of Victorian civic life in the cultural organisation of the colonial Caribbean." Paradoxically, however, this position allowed figures such as James to have significant insights into the nature of "British civilization." In this regard, Høgsbjerg argues that "a fundamental aim of *Beyond a Boundary* was to historically situate the rise of English cricket alongside the Industrial Revolution for the first time in order to say something new about 'English civilization.'" Noting how James positions cricket as a game decisively shaped by the agency of artisans, the chapter probes the terms on which the text addresses the connections among sports, games, and struggles for popular democracy. While the chapter signals the importance of James's framing of these relations, it also unsettles the manner in which he engages with these, focusing particularly on his characterization of the reform movements of the nineteenth century. Høgsbjerg develops some insightful critical discussion of the influence of T. S. Eliot and Raymond Williams on James. This influence, Høgsbjerg argues, is particularly discernible in James's articulation of the concept of national cultures. The chapter draws attention, simultaneously, to some of the limits of such a conception. In this regard, Høgsbjerg closes with an important reminder of the importance of situating *Beyond a Boundary* in relation to the "cultural concerns of the 'first New Left' in Britain, born in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution and 'Suez Crisis' of 1956."

In chapter 3, "The Boundaries of Publication: The Making of *Beyond a Boundary*," Roy McCree makes a distinctive contribution to the scholarship on *Beyond a Boundary* by providing a detailed reading of correspondence among James, publishers, and the Barbadian novelist George Lamming. McCree draws attention to the struggles that James had, not only to secure a publisher, but also over the timing and naming of the book. He also notes that James's original title was *Who Only Cricket Know*, which was later changed to the enigmatic *W. G., A West Indian Grace* and *West Indian Progeny of W. G.* In January and February 1960, James published the drafts of what would become chapters 13 ("Prolegomena to W. G.") and 14 ("W. G.") of *Beyond a Boundary* in the newspaper that he edited, *The Nation*, in the form of three linked articles.[11] Their publication, across three issues of the paper in January and February 1960, was timed to coincide with the English tour of the West Indies. James closed the series in the last of these issues by noting,

there I had intended to end these three articles. . . . However, their reception has been most encouraging. Dr. Williams said on reading the second: "Oh, boy! Oh, boy!"; Mr. Manley calls the articles a "tour de force," such I say has been the reception that I have been encouraged to bring the analysis up to date by showing what has happened to cricket since Grace's career came to an end. That, however, will wait until the [Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)] return. This series was conceived in honour of them, and recent events have made the articles all the more timely.[12]

The "recent events" mentioned by James were the controversies over the captaincy of the West Indies team and his campaign to ensure that Worrell replaced Alexander in this capacity. Indeed, that issue of *The Nation* had carried the famous headline and article "Alexander Must Go: Make Worrell Captain." In a subsequent letter written later that year to Eric Williams and eventually republished in *Party Politics in the West Indies* (1962: 69), James had given his former student a summary of his past and future plans: "My wife and I are members of a political organization. This organization has been at work for 19 years preparing a revaluation of the theory and practice of Marxism. We have worked at philosophy, political economy, the arts, and practical activity. In 1957 with the Hungarian Revolution we felt we were ready and planned a series of books *intended now for the general public*, which should embody our ideas in terms easily grasped."

The future book projects James outlined included a reference to his *Nation* article "The Revaluation of Dr. W. G. Grace in English History," which he called "a small part of a whole volume which sees cricket and popular games in terms of a philosophy of art which abolishes the division between the fine arts and the games loved by the populace" (James 1962: 69; see also Strauther 1963).

In McCree's chapter, which explores James's attempts to publish what would emerge as *Beyond a Boundary* from 1960 onward, Lamming emerges as a key intermediary in getting Hutchinson, which had published *In the Castle of My Skin*, to accept the work. Further, he demonstrates that Lamming played a key role in the naming of the text, titling it "Beyond" because the word "implies that there were social and historical issues which went further than the game of cricket." This stress on James's links with Lamming situates the work in relation to the "political trans-national field force" of the black Atlantic which "was peculiarly over-determined, each site of political

struggle interconnecting with the next, each disparate struggle taking on the complexions of something larger" (Schwarz 2007: 13).

The ways in which such a political context shaped struggles to form a West Indian federation in the postindependence era are shown to be central to *Beyond a Boundary* in Minkah Makalani's chapter, "'West Indian Through and Through, and Very British': C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary*, Coloniality, and Theorizing Caribbean Independence." We see James traveling through the Caribbean attempting to shore up "the support of local political leaders for a strong federal government that worked in the interests of the Caribbean masses." Makalani suggests the importance of James's role in struggles to "shape a new national life through the Federation, lest the Caribbean 'have the flag and . . . the national anthem' but 'remain essentially colonial.'" It is notable, in this regard, that Learie Constantine wrote to Eric Williams in 1963—the year in which the book was published, of course—reporting on James's "very precarious" position, politically and financially, in the United Kingdom. Constantine adds, tellingly, "Several meetings he has held since I last wrote you and his theme is mainly that Colonialism continues in Trinidad under a different guise."[13] It is against this backdrop that Makalani perceptively locates *Beyond a Boundary* as both part of the imaginative processes of decoloniality and a neglected contribution in relation to debates on postcolonial state formation, especially through problematizing postcolonial "modes of governance." For Makalani, these concerns become figured in *Beyond a Boundary* through the discussion of Matthew Bondman, since the "appeal of his artistry stemmed from his social position." Bondman serves "not primarily [as] a bridge between the colonial black elite and the poor" but, rather, as "a marker of a key constitutive element of democracy."

Chapter 5, "Looking Beyond the Boundary, or Bondman without the Bat: Modernism and Culture in the Worldview of C. L. R. James," by David Austin, pushes an engagement with the tensions in James's depiction of Bondman further. Austin engages with the "imbalanced contrapuntalism" that structures James's oeuvre, noting "the hegemony of Euro-Western modernity . . . and its embedded assumptions in James's work," particularly through his assessment of Matthew Bondman. He observes the paradox that despite James's "preoccupation with the creative capacities of 'ordinary people,'" he actually "wrote very little about the social history of the Caribbean's underclass." In particular, Austin uses a critical discussion of James's depiction of Bondman to probe some of the ambivalence in relation to the articulation of subalternity in the text. Thus, Austin notes not just

the troubling representation of Bondman, particularly in reference to his dirtiness and his curled-back lips, but also the silence of previous critics on these elements. Further, he observes that the characterization of Bondman is shorn of context and "denies us the curiosity and sense of history that we have come to expect from James." Austin, however, relates Bondman to broader contexts, drawing on Sylvia Wynter's comparison of Bondman with Rastafari: "Like the Bondmans of the Caribbean, Rastafarians represented the outcasted and the dispossessed." He concludes by drawing on Richard Iton's assessment of the possibilities of an "aesthetic-political narrative" of the black fantastic, which includes the creative capacities of Bondman even without—or especially without—the bat.

While Austin's chapter engages critically with the ways in which forms of masculinity uncritically structure the text, in chapter 6, "'Periodically I Pondered over It': Reading the Absence/Presence of Women in *Beyond a Boundary*," Anima Adjepong develops a "decolonial feminist reading" that explores the contested absence/presence of women in *Beyond a Boundary*. Locating her chapter—the first in part II, "The Politics of Representation in *Beyond a Boundary*"—in a broader critique of the ways in which "ideologies of masculinity" organized James's politics, Adjepong demonstrates the importance of challenging James's occlusion of the "gendered implications of centering cricket as a site where 'social and political passions [could express] themselves so fiercely.'" To unsettle the gendered politics of *Beyond a Boundary*, Adjepong skillfully draws out the dynamics of the absence and presence of women in the text. She uses a particular focus on James's representation of Aunt Judith, arguing that while he does not necessarily acknowledge it, her "emotional and physical support of cricket" can be foregrounded through a subtle reading of *Beyond a Boundary*. For Adjepong, this has important political implications. Thus, she notes that "when Judith's labor in the domestic sphere is rightly recognized as supporting anticolonial efforts and invested in the politics played out within the boundary, she can be acknowledged as a martyr for the cause." She demonstrates how a "decolonial feminist reading of this text" can contribute in significant ways "to reorienting how we think about black women's historical engagement in antiracist and other political struggles."

The dynamics of representation are further problematized in Neil Washbourne's chapter, "C. L. R. James, W. G. Grace and the Representative Claim." For Washbourne, James adopts a "creolized and culturalized model of [the concept of] general will," and he notes that Rousseau's framing of this

concept is an important, if unacknowledged, influence on *Beyond a Boundary*. He argues, however, that James's account of how representative claims are made and understood is marred by a lack of engagement with practices of mediation. The implications of this are developed through a critical interrogation of James's reading of Grace's role. Washbourne argues that James's uncritical acceptance of Grace's public acclaim as a representative hero in 1895 is "a very significant misreading of Grace and contains the core of a misleading account." Further, he argues that James misses the way that "Grace used his power to *reinforce, intensify*, and *extend* the divide" between amateurs and professionals.

Clem Seecharan's contribution, "Shannonism: Learie Constantine and the Origins of C. L. R. James's Worrell Captaincy Campaign of 1959–60: A Preliminary Assessment," explores in depth James's positioning in relation to the *different* cricketing clubs of Trinidad, constituted as they were, on the basis of "race, color, or class." He notes, in particular, the significance of James's decision to join Maple rather than Shannon—the club of the "black lower middle class, of the Constantines . . . , [and of] Wilton St. Hill." For Seecharan, this decision was a profound rupture that "severely undermined [James's] relationship with many lower-middle-class black Trinidadians, particularly Learie Constantine." Seecharan sees this choice as an ongoing fault line in James's relationship with Constantine, but he nonetheless signals the importance of this relationship, built in Nelson, Lancashire. Thus, Seecharan argues that James's brief campaign to make Worrell the first captain of the West Indian team in 1960 ("to have a black man, selected on merit, captain the West Indies team") was a culmination of what Constantine had expressed in *Cricket and I* in 1933, ghostwritten by James. He argues that this campaign represented James's "exorcising of the gnawing guilt of going fair or light" and notes the significance of James's view that Worrell's belated elevation to the captaincy was "an exemplification of Shannonism."

Chapter 9, "C. L. R. James and the Arts of *Beyond a Boundary*: Literary Lessons, Cricketing Aesthetics, and World-Historical Heroes," by Claire Westall—the first in part III, "Art, History and Culture"—critically engages with constructions of heroism in *Beyond a Boundary*. Drawing on David Scott, Westall notes that James "was preoccupied by hero-worship" that was shaped in part by his intellectual journeys "through the traditions of German Romanticism (that stood behind Marxism) as reframed by Britain's imperial literary culture." She traces how James's "aesthetics of heroic endeavor" and his "commitment to masculine heroics" shape his engagement

with cricket. While she draws on critical interrogations of the politics that emerge from such a focus on male world-historical figures by theorists such as Hazel Carby, Westall nuances such critiques with a sense of some of the ambiguities of James's work. She notes, for example, that it is difficult "to determine whether the revolutionary weight of a world-historical figure is to be desired, admired, or passed by on the way to a new world order." Developing a productive comparison between Fanonian and Jamesian discussions of heroics, she notes how James, in contrast to Fanon, "positions the people as being the 'uplift' that brings life to, and is expressed in, exceptional action, cricketing and revolutionary."

Westall provides an illuminating set of reflections on James's articulations of universality, arguing that he "blows apart colonial claims to universality without abandoning universal ambition itself." In chapter 10, "The Very Stuff of Human Life: C. L. R. James on Cricket, History, and Human Nature," Andrew Smith provides a different lens through which to assess James's account of universality. He engages with the relations between specificity and broader claims in James's text. Smith draws attention to the ways in which this articulation of universality shapes James's distinctive theorization of art, culture, and sports. In particular, Smith is alive to the ways in which James's account of cricket is sensitive to different forms of agency in shaping the game. In this regard, he argues, James proposes an idea of "universality as becoming" rather than as given. The attention to the creative potential of human action and practices locates James's work in relation to a broader transnational terrain of humanist Marxism in the postwar period. This links James's intellectual project to figures such as Agnes Heller and Henri Lefebvre, as well as to Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee, who were James's close political comrades in the United States and who sought to "make the question of 'concrete' human struggles central to their account of *why* political struggle occurs."

Paget Henry's chapter, "C. L. R. James: Beyond the Boundaries of Culture," resonates with Smith's approach to *Beyond a Boundary* by articulating a "comprehensive account of . . . James's theory of culture." Henry positions James's work at the intersection of "civilizational sociology" and a "Caribbean ontology of creative realism." He uses this approach to locate *Beyond a Boundary* as part of a broader attempt to link creative expression and the formation of collective identities in James's work. Thus, he argues that the narrative strategy that James adopts in *Beyond a Boundary*, as in his novel *Minty Alley*, is "one that takes an open-ended, incomplete, and implicit approach to the expressive structures of human subjectivity." Through a

dialogue with Tim Hector's writings on cricket, Henry explores how James's civilizational sociology has been extended by other writers on West Indian cricket, in particular those who have engaged with its decline as well as its ascent, and with the subsequent destabilization of cricket as a "centre-piece of Caribbean civilization." Finally, Henry explores how James's "poetic socio-historicism" went "beyond the binary contradictions of analytic thinking to include crossing disciplinary boundaries, multiplying the centers of revolutionary discourse to embrace race, gender, culture, and sports." In particular, he notes Sylvia Wynter's argument that James adopted a "pluri-conceptual framework" in which "such factors as gender, color, class and education are non-dogmatically integrated" (Wynter 1992: 63).

Part IV, "Reflections," brings together three figures central to cricket, to the Caribbean, and to political struggles who offer different, personal reflections on the importance of *Beyond a Boundary*. Chapter 12, "Socrates and C. L. R. James," by Michael Brearley, erstwhile captain of Cambridge University, Middlesex, and England, emphasizes the extent to which the book had an impact on players of cricket, as well as on political activists and academic commentators. Brearley focuses on what it is to "know cricket," and he engages with the different forms of knowledge of players, captains, and coaches. His chapter reflects on his own experiences as the captain of Middlesex and explores how he would draw on the different contributions and understandings of the game provided by different players. As his important role in supporting antiapartheid struggles attests, he has long been keenly aware of the broader social context of sports. Brearley, for example, seconded David Sheppard's motion of no confidence in the MCC during the "D'Oliveira affair," part of the pressure that led to the cancellation of the tour of South Africa in 1968.[14] In this regard, his chapter draws inspiration from James's critique of the ways in which "most accounts of social history ignore sports and its place in people's lives."

Hilary McD. Beckles, currently vice-chancellor of the University of the West Indies and one of the leading social historians of the contemporary Caribbean, offers moving personal reflections on James, Caribbean identity, and cricket in chapter 13, "My Journey to James: Cricket, Caribbean Identity, and Cricket Writing." Central to the chapter is his account of attending Worrell's funeral with his grandmother. He recalls standing with her "beyond the boundary" of the official space of the funeral gathering: "on the outside, scattered among the bushes, [we] buried our fears and shed no tears." He follows this memory with a powerful discussion of his own grandmother's

funeral, noting how he spoke "from the pulpit of her love of cricket and her awareness of the politics of social justice and moral outrage it had spawned across the Caribbean." Beckles recalls asking, "How was it that a barely literate, barefooted peasant woman could read so complex a cultural practice with precision and stand up for the principles that produced cricketers who represented the game's finest values?" He ends with some thoughtful reflections on the state of West Indian cricket in "post-nationalist" times. In particular, he speculates that James would have theorized Chris Gayle's clash with the West Indian Cricket Board as "indicative of the general youth revolt against the oppressiveness of post-nationalist Caribbean society."

Beckles observes that James's "campaign for Frank Worrell as captain was a metaphor for the rise of democracy in a dying colonialism." This political project of *Beyond a Boundary* is central to Selma James's closing contribution to the volume, "Confronting Imperial Boundaries." In line with her internationally acclaimed role as a political activist who has been at the forefront of attempts to analyze race, class, and gender inequality, she insists on the importance of locating *Beyond a Boundary* within the context of C. L. R. James's political trajectories. In particular, she notes how the text is animated by the "interconnection between cricket and divisions of race and class." She also signals the importance of James's return to Trinidad near the completion of the manuscript and the way he used his role as editor of *The Nation* to spearhead the struggle to make Worrell captain. In this regard, Selma James positions the book as part of a broader constellation of forces that politicized sports in radical ways in the 1960s and 1970s, noting the antiapartheid boycott and the Black Power salute of Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics. She speaks, moreover, to ongoing struggles over discrimination in sports. As she concluded, in a recent reflection on *Beyond a Boundary*: "Everywhere we are confined by boundaries, but we struggle to break out."[15]

Notes

Epigraphs: James 2013 [1963]: n.p.; Larkin 1988: 167.

1. Hereafter, page numbers in parentheses refer to this edition of *Beyond a Boundary*.
2. Alex Hamilton, "Profile: An Interview with C. L. R. James," *The Guardian*, 25 June 1980.
3. This collection was first published in 1986 by Allison and Busby and was entitled, simply, *Cricket*. On James's early cricket writings, see Høgsbjerg 2016 and Smith 2006a.

4. For further discussion of the naming of the text, see chapter 3 in this volume.
5. "Quick Guide to New Reading," *The Times*, 23 May 1963.
6. "A Broad View of Cricket," *The Observer*, 2 June 1963.
7. George MacDonald Fraser, "Straight-Batting Marxist," *Glasgow Herald*, 20 June 1963.
8. John Berger to C. L. R. James, 27 February 1969, C. L. R. James Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library Collections, Columbia University, New York (hereafter, James Papers), box 2, folder 1.
9. C. L. R. James to John Berger, 7 February 1969, James Papers, box 2, folder 1.
10. John Berger to C. L. R. James, 11 February 1969, James Papers, box 2, folder 1.
11. C. L. R. James, "Homage to English Cricket (In Honour of MCC): W. G. Grace and His Place in English History; A Revaluation," *The Nation*, 15 January, 22 January, 5 February 1960.
12. James, "Homage to English Cricket," 5 February 1960.
13. Learie Constantine to Eric Williams, 7 March 1963, letter, in Constantine Collection, Special Collections, National Library of Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain.
14. The D'Oliveira affair followed the attempt by English cricket's governing body to exclude Basil D'Oliveira from selection in the English touring party bound for South Africa in 1968. D'Oliveira, who had been born and raised in South Africa, was designated "coloured" by the apartheid regime, and his omission from the touring party was widely seen as an attempt to conciliate the regime on the part of the MCC (see Oborne 2004).
15. Selma James, "How *Beyond a Boundary* Broke Down the Barriers of Race, Class and Empire," *The Guardian*, 2 April 2013, 32.