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Marxism, colonialism and cricket: C.L.R. James' Beyond a boundary. Edited by David Featherstone, Christopher Gair, Christian Hogsbjerg and Andrew Smith; Duke University Press; London and Durham; 2018; ISBN 9781478001478 (paperback); pp.295.

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I first read *Beyond a boundary* in 2007, while compiling the literature review of my PhD thesis. I am not a Jamesian scholar. Indeed, I read the book, largely out of obligation, in that all the contemporary authors I was reading were making reference to it. At the time, I dare say that I neither understood fully what I was reading, nor its reach and significance. Nevertheless, I did read *Beyond a boundary* with fascination; fascination for the way James effortlessly weaved together discussions of 'race', Empire, post/colonialism, politics, Black cultural resistance, philosophy, literature, and art with cricket. I'll confess, it was the cricket I was fundamentally interested in at that time, but James, like so many others, encouraged me to think of cricket, not as sport *per se* – *What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?* - but rather as a phenomena rooted in history, politics and above all, power and inequality.

There is a long and large canon of literature which attempts to unpack James's writing in general and *Beyond a Boundary* specifically. This collection of essays was curated to mark 50 years since the publication of *Beyond a Boundary* and represents a thorough and nuanced interrogation of James's work. It consists of 15 chapters, including a substantial introduction from the editors. It is structured around four parts, variously examining the relationship between cricket, Empire and the Caribbean (Part I), politics of representation (Part II), art, history and culture (Part III), and a final section, entitled 'Reflections', which offers some personal analyses of the importance of *Beyond a Boundary* to contemporary Caribbean life (and cricket). While diverse, each chapter offers up a fairly consistent narrative, which captures well James's journey from 'seeming political and racial innocence ... into full-blown anticolonial cricketing and Marxist maturity' (Westall, p.177), while also reflecting a certain unease about James's politics and identity, as both an anticolonial activist *and* British sympathiser.

There is not space to describe the content of each chapter. Instead, and given that many of the themes herein are fairly well articulated and accepted elsewhere, I have chosen to focus my attention on three chapters I found especially interesting and original. The first, 'The boundaries of publication' by Roy McCree traces the publication journey for *Beyond a Boundary* through personal letters and correspondence between James and various editors/publishers. It is a fascinating chapter, which captures well the deeply transformative journey James was on, and his desperation to get the book published in the face of rejection. Secondly, I commend Anima Adjepong for her chapter, 'Reading the absence/presence of women in *Beyond a Boundary*' for laying bare some of the contradictions in James's politics. Here, Adjepong refers to how James 'does not maintain a consistently progressive position on women' (p.123) revealing 'an ambivalent relationship to the "women question".' (ibid.). She refers to how James uses the collective monika of 'we' throughout the text, thus failing to distinguish between the experiences of men, women or otherwise. Finally, I especially enjoyed 'My journey to James' by Sir Hilary Beckles. I confess to being drawn to Beckles, initially due to his references to playing cricket in Barnsley (my home town), but the main contribution of Beckles' chapter is his call for writers to think 'Beyond James' and to go 'Beyond' *Beyond a Boundary*. Here, Beckles is rightly arguing that *Beyond a Boundary* was from a particular time, and arguably the time is now to assess how it has influenced contemporary cricket, politics and culture. In finishing his chapter, he asks, 'After C.L.R. James, then what? ... There remains much to be said and written' (p.253). Indeed.

I enjoyed this book immensely. I have indulged in reading it cover to cover; revisiting certain chapters and ideas, seeking clarity as my mind became cloudy. The latter point should not be understated because this is a long, intense and challenging read. As much as I would advocate that all students of sport should engage with literature on race, Empire and post/colonialism (the same is also true that students in these other fields should not forget about sport), this is not a book for undergraduate students. It's primary audience, both because of the way it is written and the ideas it seeks to extrapolate and interrogate, is postgraduate researchers and existing academics.

Putting *Beyond a Boundary* at the core, this book epitomises the interdisciplinary application of James to fields as diverse as sport, sociology, cultural studies, history, literature and the arts. This necessarily interdisciplinary approach is both meat and poison in that, though clearly showcasing the numerous applications of *Beyond a Boundary*, presents a significant editorial challenge in pulling together sometimes fairly disparate contributions into a coherent whole. In my view, the editors should be commended for this. Nevertheless, in spite of all the additional accolades bestowed on C.L.R. James and *Beyond a Boundary*, for me, the most inspiring contribution of this book, and indeed, any book which centralises it, is in how sport has been elevated to being worthy of critical study. Indeed, as James himself reflected:

A professor of political science publically bewailed that a man of my known political interests should believe cricket had ethical and social values. I had no wish to answer. I was just sorry for the guy. (James 2005[1963]: 241)

References

James, C.L.R. (2005[1963]). *Beyond a boundary*. London: Yellow Jersey Press.

Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket: C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary Paperback 9 November 2018. by David Featherstone (Editor), Christopher Gair (Editor), Christian HÃ,gsbjerg (Editor), Andrew Smith (Editor) & 1 more. See all formats and editions Hide other formats and editions. Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket is a major literary and intellectual accomplishment. It is a must read, and a timely reminder that the problem of the twentieth century has returned with a vengeance as the problem of the twenty-first century. Putting Beyond a Boundary at the core, this book epitomises the interdisciplinary application of James to fields as diverse as sport, sociology, cultural studies, history, literature and the arts. -- Thomas Fletcher Cultural Sociology. A Small Place book. Read 905 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. Lyrical, sardonic, and forthright, A Small Place magnifies our vision V S Naipaul Penguin Publishing. Caribbean Culture. Caribbean Great, CLR James - Part 1 of 2 - YouTube. Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket : C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary - Walmart.com. Free 2-day shipping. Buy Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket : C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary at Walmart.com. V S Naipaul Jonathan Franzen. Brain Book. Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket book. Read reviews from world's largest community for readers. Widely regarded as one of the most important and influential... Including a previously unseen first draft of Beyond a Boundary's conclusion alongside contributions from James's key collaborator Selma James and from Michael Brearley, former captain of the English Test cricket team, Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket provides a thorough and nuanced examination of James's groundbreaking work and its lasting impact. Contributors. Anima Adjepong, David Austin, Hilary McD. Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket: C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary. David Featherstone. Christopher Gair. Widely regarded as one of the most important and influential sports books of all time, C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary is among other things a pioneering study of popular culture, an analysis of resistance to empire and racism, and a personal reflection on the history of colonialism and its effects in the Caribbean. More than fifty years after the publication of James's classic text, the contributors to Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket investigate Beyond a Boundary's production and reception and its implication for debates about sports, gender, aesthetics, race, popular culture, politics, Marx, Colonialism, and Cricket: C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary by David Featherstone, Christopher Gair, Christian HÃ,gsbjerg and Andrew Smith (eds) reviewed by Sean Ledwith. David Featherstone, Christopher Gair, Christian HÃ,gsbjerg and Andrew Smith (eds) Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket: C L R James's Beyond a Boundary. Duke University Press, Durham NC, 2018. Even without Beyond a Boundary, James would still be recognised today as one of the most creative and fertile minds to have been produced by the Trotskyist tradition. Intriguingly, it was perhaps his encounter with Hegelian dialectics in the 1930s that equipped him to adopt a historicised and nuanced approach to the dynamics of sport that had never occurred to any previous analyst.