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WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW OF CRICKET
WHO ONLY ENGLAND KNOW ?:

CRICKET AND ITS HEROES IN ENGLISH AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

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A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the
Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

JUNE 2007

APRIL 2007

The BBC recently reminded us of the links between cricketing fair play, the British military and imperialistic intrusions into foreign territories.

It reported that Major Andrew Banks of the Royal Military Police, alongside the England and Wales Cricket Board, had provided Iraqi children and schools with kwick cricket equipment.

Noting that Iraq has no history of cricket, the Major said: ‘Something that runs through the sport is fair play [...]. It would be very nice if the concepts of right and wrong were extended beyond the sports field’.

It was also hoped that ‘the scheme might encourage some locals to report any terrorist activity’, the BBC reported.¹



Fig. 1. ‘Fair Play’ in Iraq

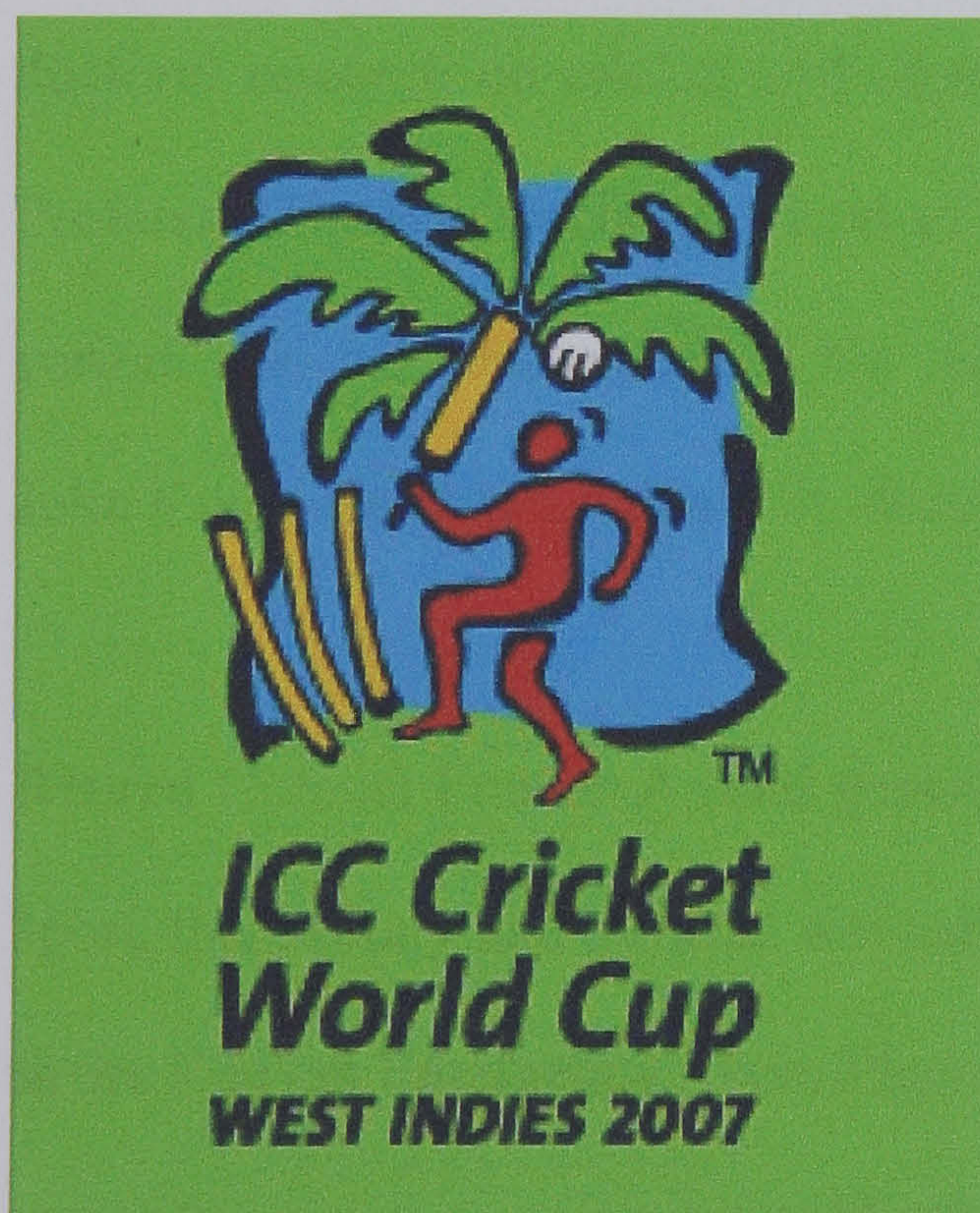


Fig. 2. The ICC World Cup 2007 Logo

At the same time and during the bicentennial year of the abolition of slavery, the Caribbean was hosting the 2007 Cricket World Cup. Despite the West Indies being undisputed World Champions for nearly two decades, roughly between 1975 and 1995, this was the first time the region had hosted the competition, doing so as a collective.

The West Indies failed to make the semi-finals. Disappointment abounded and Lara retired from international cricket. His last match was a defeat to England in which, after a hero’s welcome, he was run out.

¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/sussex/6545841.stm>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As is the nature of research, it would not have been possible to complete this project without the academic and personal support I have been lucky enough to receive along the way. Consequently, there are a number of collective bodies and particular individuals that I would like to acknowledge and thereby thank.

This research was funded by the Arts and Humanities Council. They also offered valuable assistance with conference costs, as did the University of Warwick's School of Graduate Studies and Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies. Lords Library has been a continual source of material and meeting David Rayvern Allen there was as interesting as it was entertaining. I would also like to express my thanks to the Universities of Miami, Northampton, East Anglia and De Montfort for enabling me to present parts of my work at their respective conferences. I would like to thank Dr Anthony Bateman for extending me the intellectual and personal courtesy of sharing his doctoral research on cricket and literature. At Warwick, I am especially indebted to Professor Thomas Docherty, Head of English, who acted as my cover supervisor for a period. He has also extended his support administratively, as has Professor Michael John Kooy, Head of Graduate Students, and my mentor, Professor Jacqueline Labbe.

Retired Colonel Francis Arnold generously shared with me his personal experiences of sport, the military and the post war campaigns he served in, including immediately prior to the Kenyan Emergency. Tom Pigeon, of Stratford Cricket Club, discussed with me at length his views on cricket, world cricket tours and the professional game. Tom sadly died in 2003 while still working as a coach for the Warwick Ladies Cricket Club.

Additionally, I owe many thanks to numerous friends, colleagues and acquaintances who have offered suggestions of all manner of cricket related material along the way. Friends at Warwick and beyond have endured tiresome conversations about cricket, my work, and their mutual progress. I remain grateful for their time, patience and support. Throughout, I have been fortunate enough to have a steadfast and dedicated 'PhD-pal' in Rina Kim. I only hope that I have been able to offer her half the generous support her kind heart has extended to me. She also directed my attention to Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*.

This project owes its greatest intellectual debt to my supervisor Professor Neil Lazarus. It was his immense chapter on 'Cricket, Modernism and National Culture: the case of C. L. R. James' that planted the seed of this research project and his support, mentorship, and optimism have ensured that the piece came to fruition. His intellectual integrity and the personable manner in which he conducts all professional business are inspiring. I can not thank him enough for his time and assistance, particularly toward the end of the project which happened to coincide with his own period of ill health. To him, and his family, I truly wish much health and happiness for the future.

I also wish to thank my family who have continually supported my education and have paid for much of it. To my Mum and Dad (who taught my brother and I to play cricket), I extend my love and respect.

Finally, to Pete, who broke my bat but tried to fix everything else. I can not thank him or repay him for his unending self sacrifice and patience. He has contributed to everything, at every stage and without hesitation or complaint. I owe him this thesis and my love.

DECLARATION

I declare that the research and writing of this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a prior degree at this or any other institution.

In addition, I wish to declare that parts of Chapter Three have been previously published as 'Men in the Yard and on the Street: Cricket and Calypso in *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl and Miguel Street*', *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, Issue 3 (2005).

This article will also be reproduced in Paquet, Saunders, & Stuempfle eds. *Music, Memory, Resistance: Calypso and the Caribbean Literary Imagination* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2007).

ABSTRACT

As the game of England and empire, cricket is a significant colonial and postcolonial cultural practice which has proven as important to anti colonial modes of resistance, opposition and independence as its image of Englishness was to the hegemonizing project of British imperialism. Although the game has an immense literature of its own, little critical attention has been paid to its place in the field of literary studies. Consequently, taking its title and starting point from the interwoven questioning of Rudyard Kipling and C. L. R. James, this thesis explores cricket's repeated presence in English and Caribbean literature as a symbol of interconnected national and imperial identities under constant renegotiation, concentrating specifically on the construction and problematization of the male cricket hero – real and/or fictional – from Tom Brown to Brian Lara. Organized around the territorial metaphor of the crease, Part One, 'English Literature at the Imperial Crease 1850s-1950s', offers two chapters which examine the place of cricket in the creation, imperial contextualization and post war decline of the English cricketing gentleman as a hero of the nation. Part Two, 'Caribbean Heroes at the Literary Crease after 1950', engages with cricket's relation to the masculine quest for independence in Trinidadian literature as well as a range of poetic representations of the Caribbean's substantial investment in cricket heroes. Finally, Part Three, 'The Straight White Line', re-evokes the crease as line and territory to read the trans-gendered British Caribbean cricketing body of Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (1992). The thesis argues that while cricket has been a valuable vehicle for the postcolonial expression of freedom in the Caribbean and elsewhere it has also remained tied to an over investment in individual male heroes which continues to pose substantial problems to projects of collective emancipation.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW OF CRICKET WHO ONLY ENGLAND KNOW?

And what should they know of England who only England know?
Rudyard Kipling, 'The English Flag' (1891).

What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?
C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963).

The Knowing Imperative

Originally published in the *St James Gazette* on 4 April 1891 and later collected in *Barrack Room Ballads and Other Verses* (1892), 'The English Flag' was inspired by a newspaper report of the Cork courthouse being set on fire and the Union Jack burning during the trial of five Irish men facing riot charges. Yet, as Keating highlights, the poem is not concerned with the Irish question or the issue of anti-colonial nationalist politics.¹ On the contrary, Kipling is vicious in his satirical condemnation of the 'poor little street-bred people' who oppose the empire and stand 'yelping at the English Flag!'. Moving away from this Irish impetus, Kipling attacks all little Englanders whose vision and knowledge fail to extend beyond the cliffs of Dover. His assault particularly targets the English working class but also all those, he feels, who should be venturing out to wider imperial shores or paying their respects to those who do. Writing in the year that he would sail around the world and drawing on the naval and militaristic imagery that inspires much of his early poetry, Kipling calls on the 'Winds of the World [to] give answer' to those 'who only England know' and mobilizes each of the winds (North, South, East and West) to hail the imperial glory, courage and triumph of the

¹ Peter Keating, *Kipling the Poet* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994), 86.

British Empire; an empire that has left its flag in every corner of the globe despite hardship, sacrifice and conflict. Turning from biting satire to propagandist encouragement, Kipling attempts to educate and inspire the English nation to 'Go forth', to follow the flag of imperial advancement. This flag, however, is the Union Jack of the British Empire and not 'The English Flag' of the poem's title. Consequently, although Kipling is arguing for England to see itself in relation to its empire he is also reducing the British Empire, and its representative flag, to its ideological centre, England, implying that imperial strength and beauty emanates from the English nation and its people yet simultaneously castigating them for a lack of imperial comprehension and gusto. While bringing England and its empire together he allows England or an idea of Englishness to dominate or stand for the British Empire which is itself seen as a sign of England's superiority. In this fashion, he is offering a literary rendering of the White Ensign, the British naval flag that presents the Union Jack in the top left hand corner of the St George's Cross and thereby displays the British Empire as overlapping with Englishness and existing within a space of Englishness despite it providing England and its navy with a global context.

In an otherwise quite positive review of *Barrack Room Ballads* in the *Academy* of 1892, Lionel Johnson wrote that this poem is 'grievously spoiled by exaggeration of tone' and that Kipling's bombastic enthusiasm for and vocal praise of the flag is over done in contrast to the quiet patriotism of Shakespeare, Milton, or Wordsworth and so is un-English in its 'grandiose' manner.² Bypassing Johnson's conservative call for English understatement and literary tradition as well as his certainty that 'we know that England is great', his comments register Kipling's poetic recourse to overblown platitudes and vigorous sweeping assertions that caused Orwell to describe him as a 'jingo

² Lionel Johnson, 'Three Reviews by Lionel Johnson', in *Kipling: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Roger Lancelyn Green (London: Routledge, 1971), 88-103 (103).

imperialist'.³ Orwell also argues, however, that 'few people who have criticized England from inside have said bitterer things about her'.⁴ This is the seeming paradox of Kipling the imperial laureate of England who bestrides the two centuries of empire and is perpetually negotiating with his own Anglo-Indian identity and educational experiences. Consistently, his patriotism and investment in England are set within their broadest imperial dimensions but emerge from his critical attachment to her. Kipling's life and literary voice convey the tensions but also interconnections between England and empire because he occupies a position that is internal and external to them both. His position should be read through Simon Gikandi's assessment of 'Englishness as a cultural and literary phenomenon produced in the ambivalent space that separated, but also conjoined, metropole and colony' and his view that writers situated within imperial hierarchies 'produced narratives that seemed to exist both inside and outside the central doctrines of Englishness'.⁵ According to Howe, C. L. R. James appreciated Kipling's inside-outside position and believed it was the standpoint occupied by 'all important modern "English" writers'.⁶ In line with Gikandi's spatialization of the colonial dimensions of Englishness, Baucom has claimed that along with authors like Forster and Naipaul, Kipling and James represent Englishness 'as the struggle to preserve, possess, or hybridize a certain sort of place'.⁷ This is the place or space created by imperial contact which collapses inside/England and outside/Empire into a single area of what may be termed 'imperial Englishness' which, as Kipling demonstrates, knows more than 'only England' but may still prioritize her.⁸

³ George Orwell, 'Rudyard Kipling' in *George Orwell: Essays* (London: Penguin, 2000), 204.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁵ Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xii-xiii.

⁶ Stephen Howe, 'C. L. R. James: visions of history, visions of Britain', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 158.

⁷ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 39.

⁸ Gikandi uses 'colonial Englishness' (8) similarly but I have opted for 'imperial' to suggest an affiliation with Baucom.

The manuscript of C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary* was, according to Dhondy, initially entitled '*Who Only Cricket Know* – from Kipling's lines "What do they know of England, who only England know?"'.⁹ Attempting to recollect Kipling through James, however, Dhondy misquotes 'The English Flag' and instead, like Orwell and numerous others, has actually made the common mistake of citing Kipling's mother. In his autobiography, *Something of Myself* (1935), Kipling explains how he had been working on the rough verses of 'The English Flag' in 1890 when his parents were staying with him in Charing Cross. When he asked aloud 'What am I trying to get at?' his mother responded 'You're trying to say: What do they know of England who only England know?'.¹⁰ With this prompt the 'rest of the rhetoric came away easily' and in 'the talks that followed, [Kipling] exposed [his] notion of trying to tell to the English something of the world outside England – not directly but by implication'.¹¹ Having only returned to England in 1889 Kipling had quickly become despondent with what he saw as a lack of interest in and awareness of the British Empire and concerned at England's dearth of healthy young men fit for imperial combat and adventure; something that would become all the more apparent with the Boer War (1899-1902). He wanted to redress this imperial ignorance, to shed light on England's imperial project and celebrate the sacrifices and achievements of the English men at the heart of the British Empire. 'The English Flag' was his first poetic shot in this campaign.¹² In it Kipling altered his mother's phraseology so that her 'What do they know' construction

⁹ Farrukh Dhondy, *C. L. R. James: A Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2001), 129.

¹⁰ Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself: for my friends known and unknown* ed. by Robert Hampson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 86.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹² According to Carrington this poetic campaign was rather successful: 'All that generation of young men who volunteered to fight in the Spanish-American and Anglo-Boer wars derived their notion of colonial warfare and of the soldier's life largely from Kipling, particularly from his cockney verse'. See, Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work* (London: Macmillan, 1955), 331.

became his ‘What should they know’ (re)arrangement and it is this shift that Dhondy, along with many others, misses.¹³

Although James’s seminal autobiographical text on cricket traded *Who Only Cricket Know?* for the permanent title *Beyond a Boundary* James retained the Kipling link by insisting in his Preface that the book ‘poses the question: *What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?*’ (original emphasis). Tim Hector’s notion that ‘cricket is politics carried out by other means’ is another version of James’s provocative opening question.¹⁴ In addition, Agard’s refrain ‘And is cricket is cricket in yuh ricketics/But from far it look like politics’ in ‘Prospero Caliban Cricket’ is the poetic reconstruction of James’s questioning sentiment.¹⁵ Agard also registers James’s view of Caliban, the imperial Other, as the one who ‘must pioneer into regions Caesar [or the imperial Massa] never knew’.¹⁶ In his ‘What do they know’ formulation James is re-inscribing the question of England and empire with a question of cricket because for James and the English speaking Caribbean, cricket is tied to the history, politics, economics and culture of their imperial experience but importantly, through the adoption and adaptation of the game and its colonizing messages, it also provides a sense of identity. In a critical passage, James explains the game’s significance for the region.

What do they know of cricket who only cricket know? West Indians crowding to Tests bring with them the whole past history and future hopes of the islands. English people, for example, have a conception of themselves breathed from birth. Drake and mighty Nelson, Shakespeare, Waterloo, the Charge of the Light Brigade, the few who did so much for so many, the success of parliamentary democracy, those and such as those constitute a national tradition.

¹³ Bragg’s song ‘The Few’ from his *Don’t Try This At Home Album* (1996) carries the same misquotation as its refrain, offering a view of the dark side of only knowing England, of the insularity, bigotry and violence it can breed through a restrictive and de-historicized nationalist discourse; one he sees demonstrated by English football fans – Bragg’s ‘little John Bullshitters’. See, www.billybragg.co.uk.

¹⁴ Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 170.

¹⁵ John Agard, ‘Prospero Caliban Cricket’, in *‘A Breathless Hush’: The MCC anthology of cricket verse* ed. by David Rayvern Allen with Hubert Doggart (London: Methuen, 2004), 232-3.

¹⁶ C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Serpents Tail, 2000), Preface.

Underdeveloped countries have to go back centuries to rebuild one. We of the West Indies have none at all, none that we know of. To such people the three W's, Ram and Val wrecking English batting, help to fill a huge gap in their consciousness and in their needs.¹⁷

The 'huge gap' left by an absence of history – of myths of origin, culture and heritage which Derek Walcott called 'an absence of ruins' – was enforced on the New World by the violent separation of its people from their past, their land, language and self knowledge. Without this sense of a 'national tradition', cricket has become the enactment of a collectivized history and culture for the region. The amalgamation of territories on the cricket field is the source of hope James takes forward. With cricket providing the Caribbean and its people with identities they can build upon and heroes they can worship it carries the weight of regional history and is evidence of the region's potentiality, neither of which James wishes to be liberated from. His sense that England and English history can be or and has been, equalled, even defeated, by the efforts of the West Indies team indicates a postcolonial reversal of the colonial cricketing order, one which does not ignore its past but embodies and redirects it toward victory, self confidence and independence through regional unification.

Beyond a Boundary demonstrates how cricket in the Caribbean contains, maintains and challenges Englishness and British imperial culture. Unpacking his own history of cricket, literature and life in colonial Trinidad, James establishes the interrelation of the notion of Englishness that was exported to the colonies and his own anti-colonial thinking. Schwarz explains that combining 'these communications to anti-colonial politics, to sport and to literature was unusual. But as James himself later indicated, their common inspiration lay in [...] the codes of England in which he had been formed.'¹⁸ James emphasizes his own educational encounter with great British

¹⁷ Ibid., 233.

¹⁸ Bill Schwarz, 'Introduction: crossing the seas', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, 5.

Literature, particularly Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847-8), and the influences of Thomas Arnold, Thomas Hughes and W. G. Grace as he articulates the imperial ideology of cricket that was imposed upon the English speaking Caribbean. Against this background, his intimate study brings light to the internal class and racial dimensions of the game and the manner in which these relations are played out, re-enacted or refracted in the local teams, players and actions of what is an intrinsically social activity. To him, 'the clash of race, caste and class did not retard but stimulated West Indian cricket' as well as Caribbean culture and politics.¹⁹ In addition, he highlights the manner in which cricketing actions, achievements and heroes take on particular political significance within the region because of the representativeness of the players, their unique position as heroes and their proximity to their own community. Further, James contends that 'cricket is an art', that it is a 'dramatic spectacle' containing 'genuinely aesthetic artistic elements', what cricketers term 'style', whereby 'the spectator at cricket extracts the significance of movement and of tactile values'.²⁰ That is, they see, comprehend and appreciate the aesthetic value of cricket as art as it is performed in Mathew Bondman's batting or Arthur Jones's cut shot or the Shannon cricket team.

Throughout James is taking up the codes of cricket and Englishness and talking back to them from a position that is inside and outside of their traditional domain, that is from the periphery of empire and the centre of English intellectual heritage. Like Kipling, it was James's experience of England that crystallized the relationship between England and empire and he writes in his Preface: 'If the ideas [of *Beyond a Boundary*] originated in the West Indies it was only in England and English life and history that I was able to track them down and test them'. Also like Kipling, James embodies, articulates and at the same time disrupts the values with which he was raised. He began to view himself

¹⁹ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 86.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 196-202.

‘strangely’ when faced with the seeming incompatibility of his identity as ‘a colonial born and bred, a Marxist, a declared enemy of British imperialism’ and a defender of the cricketing code of conduct that demanded fair play and meant he could not accommodate the match-fixing scandal he witnessed in American baseball in 1950.²¹ James realized that his criticism of British imperialism came from within it, and principally from within the ethos of cricket. Critics of James have often focused on what they see as a contradiction between his claims to political radicalism and his adherence to sporting conservatism, what Tiffin describes as his ‘divided consciousness’, but it is this very juxtaposition that James consciously probes in order to question the nature of Caribbean identities.²² James states that the ‘most profound loyalty can co-exist with a jealously critical attitude’ and attempts to work through his own embodiment of this dialectic.²³ Derek Walcott claimed that James ‘beats tradition by joining it’.²⁴ Similarly, Lazarus has mobilized Theodor Adorno’s notion of ‘hating tradition properly’ from *Minima Moralia* (1951) to explain James’s position of, within and against an intellectual or ideological tradition.²⁵ It is this stance that is expressed in James’s reformulation of Kipling’s question of imperial knowledge.

In their respective questions given above, Kipling and James are both concerned about other people possessing the knowledge that first hand imperial experience has given them in order to improve their own national cause, whether this is for England’s benefit as in Kipling’s work or the Caribbean’s as in James’s. Both appear to be addressing a ‘they’ that is external to themselves, thereby pointing out a gap in the knowledge of

²¹ Ibid., 45.

²² Smith has made a similar argument regarding James’s ‘blind spot’. See below for further discussion and Andrew Smith, “‘Beyond a Boundary’ (of a Field of Cultural Production)”, *Theory Culture Society*, 23:4 (2006), 95-112, (97).

²³ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 42.

²⁴ Derek Walcott, ‘C.L.R. James’, in *What the Twilight Says: essays* (London: Faber, 1988), 115-120 (118).

²⁵ For a fuller discussion of ‘hating tradition properly’ see Lazarus’s introduction to *National and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (1-15).

these others as they seek to simultaneously attack and fill this void. Although they similarly separate themselves as imperial ‘knowers’ from these ‘non-knowers’ there are notable differences in the purpose and direction of their respective critical investments. In shifting from his mother’s ‘What do they know’ to ‘What should they know’, Kipling moves the anticipated answer from a contemptuous ‘Nothing’ (known) to ‘Much’ (to be known) about the empire providing, as Gilmour writes, ‘an injunction that they *should* be willing to find out’ (emphasis added).²⁶ The lack of public knowledge is recognized in both variations but the transfer to ‘should’ offers an encouraging imperative to ‘know’ rather than a dismissive assessment of the public based on their lack of imperial knowledge (which is felt in much of the poetic content). This shift is matched by the tonal movement of the poem as it turns from bitter attack to motivating cry. The ‘should’ is testament to Kipling’s colonial paternalism and his attempt to provide the English nation with a poetic imperative to discover, know and celebrate its empire.

Instead of using Kipling’s ‘should’ James asks ‘What do they know?’ either as a misquotation or a conscious effort of distinction. Either way, it marks the historical and political transference at work from colonial to postcolonial consciousness. Where Kipling is claiming that the English fail to see their world position, James is adamant that the people of the Anglophone Caribbean cannot help but ‘know’ their world position because they live and perform it in every cricketing action. James spends much of *Beyond a Boundary* charting his own arrival at a political consciousness he later saw as already formed by Learie Constantine and other cricketers in the 1920s and 30s. In fact, the game ‘had plunged [him] into politics long before [he] was aware’.²⁷ Consequently, James’s reformulation functions in two contradictory ways. First, it implies that one cannot know cricket by only knowing cricket, as Kipling does with

²⁶ David Gilmour, *The Long Recessional: the imperial life of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Murray, 2002), 104.

²⁷ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 65.

England. Second, it indicates that knowing only cricket is a way of knowing other socio-cultural processes. The reason for this doubling is that where Kipling's 'should' is directed at the un-imperially educated masses of England, James's question speaks to two related but differing audiences, the two aspects of his own education – one English and the other Caribbean. In this manner, James can address an English audience 'who only cricket know' and refuse to link cricket (or sport more generally) to the politics, economics and cultural history of England or imperialism. They 'only cricket know' and consequently can never know cricket, at least not the cricket of the West Indies or other imperial territories. At the same time, his work defends the knowledge, understanding and aesthetic appreciation of Caribbean cricketers and cricket fans who may 'only cricket know' but see race, class, empire and nation being negotiated through the game. Importantly, he is attempting to bring this imperial cricketing knowledge to England or Britain and, thereafter, back to the Caribbean as a mode of self reflexivity. (First published in England in 1963, James's text was not released in the Caribbean until 1984.) What changes then from Kipling to James is not simply the replacement of 'England' with 'cricket', though cricket comes to stand for England, or the word 'should' with 'do'. What changes is the 'knowing imperative' or 'imperative to know' as Kipling's targeting of the English and their lack of imperial awareness is echoed in James's criticism of their narrow understanding of the game but is also supplemented in James with a vital appreciation of the Caribbean people, of the common crowd as knowers and performers of cricket and through cricket, of political, economic, cultural and national transformation. In this sense, while Kipling and James both possess a knowledge of the imperial dimensions of England and Englishness, of the collapsing of inside and outside into a space of imperial Englishness, Kipling's colonialist paternalism is replaced in James with a postcolonial Marxism that recognizes the aesthetics of sport and the knowledge of the Caribbean masses.

What Should We Know of Cricket Who Only England Know?

This thesis explores cricket's place in English and Caribbean literature and specifically the construction and problematization of the male cricketing hero as a hero of the nation – where the nation is, in some fashion, part of an imperial collective. Entitled 'What Should We Know of Cricket Who Only England Know?', it combines the 'should' and 'England' of Kipling's poem with the 'cricket' and postcolonial sentiment of James's reformulation as its foundational premise. Set against the interrelation of their legacies, it suggests that there is much more to cricket, and cricket's place in literature, than England or English literature may realize and that neither can know cricket by only knowing themselves and must instead look to, gain from and engage comparatively with former colonial regions like the Caribbean. As with Kipling and James, the title is meant to suggest a lack or a knowable and bridgeable gap, but situates this absence at the feet of a 'We' that refers both to the English as a nation caught in a haze of 'postimperial melancholy' and the academic domain of literary studies.²⁸ In this context, and again like Kipling, the 'should' is indicative of a drive to create knowledge, to push toward an imperative to know that crosses restrictive (national and disciplinary) boundaries and includes the imperial 'Other' within the construction of Englishness. What 'should' be known relates to cricket's place in the creation and problematization of Englishness, the British Empire and Britishness, as well as cricket's continuing significance for anti-colonial and postcolonial struggles and the formation of national heroes and identities. This is particularly notable given that England and the Caribbean are not clearly defined national units and that cricket is used to imaginatively separate England from Britain but unite the Caribbean. Following Benedict Anderson's view of sport's role in creating the 'imagined community' of a nation and Clifford Geertz's

²⁸ 'Postimperial Melancholy' is used in the sense outlined by Baucom in *Out of Place*, see 164-189.

assessment of sport as ‘a story [people] tell themselves about themselves’,²⁹ we can say that sport, particularly international sport, offers a highly visible and influential example of the continuing significance of the nation, particularly within postcolonial regions, and its increasingly multifaceted engagement with global economic markets. Further, cricket offers a unique example of the manner in which imperialisms of the past and the markets of the future are being negotiated within and between nations.³⁰

Recent years have witnessed an increasing academic engagement with sport, sport’s history and sport’s sociological significance, especially as pertains to national and gendered identities. Nevertheless, sport has remained largely excluded from literary studies despite literature’s interdisciplinary concerns with culture and cultural theory. The relationship between *Sport and the Literary Imagination* (2006) has very recently been addressed in Jeffrey Hill’s instigatory study of the same name which emerges from a historical rather than literary perspective. In it, he cogently argues for a consideration of sport’s relationship to literature and the appearance of sport in literary texts, suggesting that such creative expressions may also be useful historical tools for considering the place and impact of sport as a cultural form.³¹ Similarly, this discussion acknowledges sport, and specifically cricket, to not only be a popular physical activity but also a significant socio-cultural practice which should be viewed alongside and in conjunction with others, including literary ones. In doing so it aligns itself with Raymond Williams’s notion of culture as ‘ordinary’, as ‘a whole way of life’,³² something that James places in a cricketing context, and positions sport (traditionally

²⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 448.

³⁰ See, for example, Stephen Wagg ed. *Cricket and National Identity in the Postcolonial Age: Following on* (London: Routledge, 2005).

³¹ See, Jeffrey Hill, *Sport and the Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006). His work has also pushed a recent move to consider sport and literature that has been supported by the International Centre for Sport History at De Montfort University with their 2006 conference on ‘Sport and Literature’ and a 2007 conference ‘Representing Sport’.

³² See, Raymond Williams ‘Culture is Ordinary’, in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* ed. by Robin Gable (London: Verso, 1989).

low culture) and literary studies (traditionally high culture/art) as interrelated cultural practices. It seeks to help broaden literary studies by demonstrating an appreciation of other, even physical, cultural activities and the value of their presence in literary works. Consequently, the thesis asks those who study England, Englishness and/or English literature to consider cricketing culture as part of their concerns and for those who are engaged with the British Empire, its postcolonial legacy and literatures to give critical thought to the place cricket, and sport more generally, occupies within these domains.

Despite an overwhelming abundance of English cricket literature such literary expressions have not provoked sustained academic investigation and, as Jack Williams writes, it 'is a surprising fact that so few studies have concentrated on cricket writing' or literature which features cricket.³³ Recent and notable exceptions, however, are those by Midwinter, Alitt and Bateman and, in a Caribbean context, the important writings of Beckles and Rohlehr. Bateman's thesis, 'The Politics of the Aesthetic: Cricket, Literature and Culture 1850-1965' is a historically focused study of literature's role in the acculturation and counter hegemonic re-articulation of cricket. By offering readings of predominantly English poetic representations of cricket, Bateman is able to demonstrate that 'the marriage of cricket and print culture was interpellating the game into a [shared] discourse of English pastoral remembrance' even as it was being imperially exported.³⁴ He offers a unique insight into the contemporaneous developments of English cricket, English literature and thereby Englishness. Allitt's article 'English Cricket and Literature' is less about the historical progression of these interrelated fields and more about their overlap as traced through author based

³³ Jack Williams, *Cricket and England: A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-war Years* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), xviii.

³⁴ Anthony Bateman, 'The Politics of the Aesthetic: Cricket, Literature and Culture 1850-1965' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Salford, 2005), 64.

examples.³⁵ Midwinter's *Quill on Willow* (2001) also explores the interplay of cricket and literature but reviews (though relatively briefly) fictional works mainly of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that feature cricket. He identifies three key ways in which cricket is employed: for characterization; as metaphor or symbol; and/or as the mover, analogue or counter-point of plot development. Aspects which often centre upon the figure of the cricketing hero. In relation to the Caribbean, Beckles offers a useful survey of cricket's appearance in Caribbean literature in the first volume of *The Development of West Indies Cricket* (1998) as he engages with the game's impact on popular cultural art forms.³⁶ Similarly, though at greater length, Rohlehr has engaged with cricket's place in Caribbean literature, including the oral poetry of calypso, in order to chart the overlapping cultural, aesthetic and political resources of 'Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values'.³⁷

Drawing on these instigative works, this study explores cricket and cricketing heroism in English fiction up to the 1950s and Caribbean literature after 1950 before finally bringing these together in a British film setting. It does not seek to provide a definitive account of all episodes of cricket in these areas but does hope to present a diverse range of examples.³⁸ The discussion differs from Midwinter's in its postcolonial orientation and comparative nature. It also differs from Bateman in its focus on English prose rather than poetry, its prioritizing of textual analysis and in the examination of the cricket hero. It will draw upon the excellent academic research of Beckles and Rohlehr but will develop the points of literary reading they initiate and expand and update the

³⁵ Paul Allitt, 'Cricket and English Literature', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 95:2 (1996), 385-435.

³⁶ See Chapter 5 of Hilary McD. Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Volume 1. The Age of Nationalism* (London: Pluto, 1998).

³⁷ See Gordon Rohlehr, 'Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values', in *An Area of Conquest: Popular Democracy and West Indies Cricket* ed. by Hilary McD. Beckles (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994), 55-102.

³⁸ Like Midwinter, this study does not consider cricket writing, fiction or poetry other than where it draws particular light on a point of discussion.

literary examples they provide.³⁹ Although the issues of cricket's relationship to literature, national identity, colonialism and postcolonialism continually inform this work, it addresses three main areas of concern. First, it explores how, where, and to what end cricket is mobilized in English and Caribbean literature by charting some of the key literary and cricketing trends found. Second, it suggests how these cricketing examples consistently hold together local and imperial dimensions of national identities and mobilize cricket as a mode of nation formation. Third, it considers the creation and problematization of the male cricketing hero as a hero of the nation, particularly where young male protagonists are growing up and negotiating with cricketing father figures. The cricket hero is initially seen in England with the important figure of the amateur gentleman, then in the Caribbean with its links to calypso, carnival and the success of the West Indies team, and finally within British Caribbean examples.

In cricket, as in other sports, the position of the hero is crucial in bringing together the individual and their community. Defining sporting heroism would be supremely difficult not to mention lengthy and so perhaps it is enough to note that a defining quality is sporting engagement combined with public admiration or worship. Much of *Beyond a Boundary* is concerned with unique or historic cricketers, men who are seen by James as popular cricketing heroes who represent and aid national and regional independence and equality. He saw the heroics of Constantine as evidence that a 'national hero must have a nation'.⁴⁰ His prioritizing of the link between West Indian cricketing heroism and the region's nationalist project is examined in this thesis. Nandy has claimed that 'coming from so many independent countries, they [the West Indies

³⁹ *The Bowling was Superfine: West Indian Writing and West Indian Cricket* ed. by Stewart Brown and Ian MacDonald (Leeds: Peepal Tree, forthcoming 2008) will provide a valuable addition to this field and hopefully prompt further examinations of cricket's appearance in Caribbean Literature.

⁴⁰ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 108.

cricket team] carry only the burden of race, not nationalism'.⁴¹ If anything, the West Indies cricket team, more than any other, embody the double bind of race and nationalism, especially in their struggle to achieve independence and their as yet unfulfilled potential for national collectivism across the region. In terms of the relationship between cricketing heroism and nationalism in postcolonial India, Nandy believes cricket heroes have become a way to 'correct the nation's feelings of inefficacy and emasculation'.⁴² This study will see similar traits in Caribbean literary depictions of such heroes. Nandy believes that cricketers are 'expected to be ideal citizens',⁴³ but also that a cricketer 'is always a flawed hero who, even after giving a superhuman performance, can exit on a note that reveals his human frailty. The hero in cricket is permanently in limbo, simultaneously more human and more superhuman'.⁴⁴ This too is often reflected in some of the literary examples. He goes on to explain what he sees as a distinction between the masculine heroism of the Victorian English cricketing hero, marked by control and self restraint, and that found in contemporary postcolonial states, which focus on 'raw performance and the superiority of substance over style'.⁴⁵ His reading of difference is useful in a Caribbean context but the difference is less 'raw performance' or a loss of style than it is a different style and a redirection of a cricketing violence that was never entirely absent from Victorian England.

In addressing questions of cricket, heroism and masculinity, this thesis probes a gender issue that is sidelined by James. As Schwarz rightly argues, the 'most striking of all [James's exclusions] is the masculine imperative'.⁴⁶ Despite feminist critics challenging the continuing male bias in sport culture, discussions of sport, including

⁴¹ Ibid., xxi.

⁴² Ibid., xix.

⁴³ Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On games of destiny and the destiny of games* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), xix.

⁴⁴ Ibid., xiii.

⁴⁵ Ibid., xx.

⁴⁶ Schwarz, 'Introduction', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, 20.

cricket, tend to concentrate on or prioritize male participation.⁴⁷ Though this project also focuses on male protagonists, it does attempt to remain sensitive to the place of women in and around cricket.⁴⁸ It also aligns itself with the feminist reassessment of sport by probing the constructions of masculinity and heroism presented where the dominance of the male hero also raises awareness of the continuing male prominence in the nationalist causes in anti-colonial and postcolonial situations. While still mobilizing the thinking of Mangan, Holt, and James in the area of cricketing heroes, this thesis contends that male cricketing heroes, especially those seen to represent the nation, are themselves structured by the dialectic derived from their imperial legacy. This is most visible at the fault lines of Englishness and in the transference of these ideas/ideals to the empire where, for example, in the cricketing heroism of the West Indies team and in the literary examples of similar figures, the burden heroes carry on behalf of the community and the nation is more than they, or anyone, can or should bare.

Cricket's English and Imperial History

Before examining the place of cricket and its heroes in English and Caribbean literature, it is first necessary to take forward an idea of the game's English and imperial history. According to Sir Neville Cardus cricket 'somehow holds a mirror up to English nature'.⁴⁹ The game has indeed become synonymous with England and particular notions of Englishness and its uncertain origins have been reinscribed to constitute a

⁴⁷ Jennifer Hargreaves has strongly attacked sport as a male dominated arena and her study *Sporting Females: critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sport* (London: Routledge, 1994) has been instrumental in presenting the place of women in sport and the sociology of sport – a goal supported by Guttmann's *Women's Sport: A History* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991) as well as works by others in the field.

⁴⁸ Hilary McD. Beckles gives valuable attention to the development of women's cricket in the Caribbean in *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Volume 1. The Age of Nationalism*, reflecting on the game's broad base of cross gender engagement in the region while also recognising the dominating sense of sexism in many responses to women in cricket.

⁴⁹ Neville Cardus, *English Cricket* (London: Prion, 1997), 10.

narrative of Anglo-Saxon originality and development.⁵⁰ Although cricket was played in numerous varying forms beforehand, it was during the late eighteenth century that it was transformed from a provincial game based on the Hambledonian model into an increasingly standardized and nationalized sport. It emerged as a sport of the English and a discursive construction of Englishness alongside Dr. Johnson's standardizing of the English language, the evolution of English studies and the growing transposition of the English abroad. Matches looked and sounded alike with improved communication and travel networks and the increasing standardization of the game's laws and administrative principles.⁵¹ Along with Birley, Midwinter and others, Marqusee highlights the common socio-political causes of cricket's emergence as 'the world's first modern spectator sport'.⁵² Chief among these factors was the mass population shift from the countryside into the towns and cities which, in addition to the enclosure movement, alienated the predominantly rural population from the land and open spaces they were accustomed to living in and playing on. This moment of transference, movement and paradox shaped the very character of cricket leaving it, as Marqusee says, 'the creature of an age of transition, [which] still has a foot in both the past and the present'.⁵³ Importantly, the game was perpetually imagined as part of an always already lost English rural setting captured by the English Romantic or Wordsworthian sensibility but was re-enacted in developing urban spaces and/or by urban dwellers, many of whom may have experienced the loss of rural life. Bateman captures the point succinctly: 'Cricket was thus identified with the past at the very time it was inaugurated

⁵⁰ Historians of the sport have claimed its antecedents lie in various folk games (stoolball, stow-ball, club-ball etc.), and have traced its existence and name though 'cricc', the ancient Saxon word for a shepherd's hook, 'creag', noted in Edward I's accounts of 1299/1300, and 'criquet' the Norman-French word first used to reference a 1478 game in St Omer.

⁵¹ The eighteenth century saw the standardization of the game with the 'Articles of Agreement' (1728), the first full 'Laws of Cricket' (1744), the first LBW law published (1774), the new and full 'Laws of Cricket' (1784) and the formation of the M.C.C. (1787).

⁵² Mike Marqusee, *Anyone But England: Cricket and the National Malaise* (London: Verso, 1994), 33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 48.

as a product of modernity'.⁵⁴ It bridged the old (pastoral/rural) and new (industrial/urban) social orders and, thereby embodied both past and present where the past was typically a rural England and sense of Englishness and the present was a developing urban England attached to an imperial future.

If the eighteenth century was the century of cricket's modern formation, then the nineteenth century propelled cricket to the forefront of England's national consciousness and from there out into the empire. The game's expansion was matched by growing popularity and cross class support cultivated not only through direct participation and/or observation but also, as Raymond Williams has shown, via an expanding and increasingly accessible national press. The press and other literary engagements with the game, most notably Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857), were crucial to the democratization of cricket as the national sport and emblem of England. W. G. Grace became the hero of the people and the physical embodiment of cricket's national status as well as its associated eccentricities and contradictions. The game continued to be perpetuated and supported by two overlapping groups of elites – the landed aristocratic families and the urban and industrial elites, typically of the middle classes, whom Benny Green calls cricket's 'City Gents'.⁵⁵ While the influences of these groups were often mutually inclusive, the rise of the latter (with their social mobilization and economic leverage) at the expense of the former altered the face of cricket during the middle and late nineteenth century. For the rise of the Victorian middle class and the reformation of the public school system had a pronounced and enduring impact on what cricket symbolized to audiences at home and within the empire. Muscular Christianity and the Cult of Athleticism which exerted such considerable social force were nowhere more evident than in the public school system

⁵⁴ Antony Bateman, "More mighty than the bat, the pen": Culture, Hegemony and the Literaturisation of Cricket', *Sport in History*, 23:1 (2003), 27-44 (27).

⁵⁵ Benny Green, *A History of Cricket* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 24.

and their drive to create a suitably imperial sense of manliness had at its core competence at sport and a moral code of conduct that became embedded in the idea of cricket as Englishness. School literature, beginning with Hughes, captures this (re)inscription of cricket as a middle class, moral, manly and imperial pursuit. The consequences of this were felt within the empire and particularly within its educational establishments as was especially the case with schools in India and the Caribbean.⁵⁶ They have also followed cricket into the present day where its association with the stereotypical Southern amateur gentleman has (at the expense of other identities) proven almost inescapable, especially as captured in literature. This, however, did not prevent cricket's rise to cult-like status across the country. The Golden Age, 1890-1914, saw cricket come to fruition as the game of England, as a national discourse, and as a manifestation of Englishness that brought together gentlemanly behaviour and sporting conduct with beliefs in Christianity and English superiority which were played out on a global stage.

'By the late nineteenth century sport lay close to the heart of Britain's imperial culture'⁵⁷ and no sport was more important than cricket because of cricket's own centrality to Englishness. Played throughout the British Empire, cricket really only held its position in what are now the test playing regions of Australasia, the English speaking Caribbean, the Indian Subcontinent and the Southern African enclaves.⁵⁸ Guha

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the influence of its sentiments and British imperialism upon the English speaking Caribbean and its educational system see particularly, Keith A. P. Sandiford, *Cricket Nurseries of Colonial Barbados: the elite schools, 1865-1966* (Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 1998); Clem Seecharan, *Muscular Learning: cricket and education in the making of the British West Indies at the end of the 19th century* (Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2006); and, Aviston D. Downes, 'From Boys to Men: Colonial Education, Cricket and Masculinity in the Caribbean, 1870-c.1920', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 22:1 (2005), 3-21.

⁵⁶ Jeffrey Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 24.

⁵⁷ J. A. Mangan 'Introduction' in *The Cultural Bond: sport, empire and society*, ed. by J. A. Mangan (London: Cass, 1992), 1.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of cricket's global diffusion see, Rowland Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World*, intro. by C. L. R. James (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970).

understands that it was ‘the homesick colonial and the imitative native’ who were the primary vehicles of cricket’s diffusion.⁵⁹ In varying capacities, official and unofficial, British people and the populations they came into contact with, up and down the social scale, influenced sporting diffusion. Traders, military men, emigrants, educators, missionaries, administrators and local communities all played a part in establishing the relationship between Englishness, imperialism and the playing of cricket abroad. In *The Imperial Game* Sandiford and Stoddart sum the situation up: ‘The story of imperial cricket is really about the colonial quest for identity in the face of the coloniser’s search for authority’.⁶⁰ As the practice of Englishmen abroad cricket operated as a reinforcement and re-enactment of Englishness in the face of the imperial ‘Other’. It was about the recreation and protection of English places/spaces abroad and the assertion of nineteenth century notions of Englishness. In this fashion the Englishman abroad was able to assert not only his masculine but also his moral superiority through the practice of cricket. He could, thereby, retain the dominant idea of Englishness, masculinity and sporting conduct despite his location and contact with other lands and peoples, even if he was trying to include them. Notably, this assertion of English superiority was connected with racial supremacy and cricket also acted as a mechanism of imperial unity/solidarity between white, Anglo-Saxon identified countries which is something that continues to be seen in contemporary cricketing relations.

Almost simultaneously, cricket became a target for imitation, emulation and opposition among those colonized. Whether their actions were taught by soldiers, missionaries, educators or simply acquired through observation and practice, Guha’s ‘imitative native’ stood as the embodiment of imperialism’s cultural influence and established

59 Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport* (Basingstoke & Oxford: Picador, 2002), 3.

60 Brian Stoddart and Keith A. P. Sandiford, *The Imperial Game: cricket, culture and society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 1.

cricket as ‘a zone of occult instability’, to adopt Fanon’s formulation. Emulation, often a reason or consequence of imitation, was repeatedly part of the native’s desire to raise themselves in the eyes of the English/British and against the colonizer’s cultural standards. This saw the adaptation of English disciplinary discourses into racial, class and, in India caste, prejudices that fitted local conditions and peoples. Opposition was often slow and complicated but persistent. Native anti-colonialism and, eventually, nationalism found in cricket a space for dissent and self assertion. The ‘imitative native’ was not simply educated in the ways of Englishness but was able to use cricket to identify with and then turn against the English colonial masters through sporting achievement and success. Victories for local teams were part of the consciousness raising activities of anti-colonial feeling and became crystallized expressions of the contestation of imperialism. Such uses of cricket as a sporting and cultural form of protest were also held alongside colonial affiliation, allegiance and sympathy, especially in Australia. Participation in cricket became the means of simultaneous imperial allegiance and defiance. In these ways cricket became local and differentiated while also being aligned with and against England and empire. For ‘white’ colonies like Australia, New Zealand and South Africa there was a relatively swift entrance into a cricketing and commonwealth collectivity of nations meaning fierce sporting competition was played alongside a political union with but under England. For ‘non-white’ regions like India and the West Indies, however, the struggle for international cricketing acceptance and success was tainted with an obvious and continuing tone of racism.⁶¹ In the Caribbean the entrance of black and/or coloured cricketers, initially as bowlers and later as batsman and captains, was instrumental in the process of anti-colonial self assertion with the rise of West Indies cricket and its dominance on the

⁶¹ See, Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) for a full discussion of the historical relationship between cricket and race/racism.

world stage casting a long and telling imperial shadow over the supposedly English game.⁶²

Consequently, standing as a metaphor for England and Englishness and the game of the British Empire, cricket is the physical and discursive site of a dialectic tension between home and abroad, England and empire, Englishness and imperialism. On one hand, cricket is synonymous with England and Englishness. Traditionally evocative of nostalgic and idyllic pastoral settings, village greens and public school boys, cricket is globally recognized as the sport of England and the English denoting English locality, identity and influence. It has operated and continues to operate as a site of English memory and the memory of England, a marker of English place/space, a locator of English identity, and an arena of character construction. Nothing is more quintessentially English than the ex-public school English gentleman exhibiting a straight bat and stiff upper lip in the middle of luscious Southern English countryside. On the other hand, cricket was and remains the sport of imperialism, transported around the world by the British Empire via what Guttman terms the process of ludic diffusion.⁶³ It was at once a central tenet in the ideological premise for England/Britain's superiority and, thereby, imperial destiny/duty/right, the 'symbol *par excellence* of imperial solidarity',⁶⁴ particularly Anglophone solidarity, and, a vehicle of imperial dissent and opposition increasingly operating as a site of emerging national identities. Consequently, as a sport and a discursive space cricket has at its core the essence of England's (pastoral, moral and racial) purity and the imperial assertion, contamination and undermining of such an imagined ideal. This double identity was

⁶² For a fuller discussion of cricket's historical and cultural relation to the British Empire see particularly; J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1988).

⁶³ Allen Guttman, *Games and Empire: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2.

⁶⁴ Mangan 'Introduction' in *The Cultural Bond*, 2.

formed as part of the nineteenth century middle class drive to make cricket a national game and, thereby, a nationalized institution of English signification which in the late nineteenth century sat alongside an imperialist agenda that strove for imperial expansion but was faced with growing dissent and disruption. This dialectic allowed cricket simultaneously to represent Englishness and to speak back to Englishness without invalidating its own status as the game of England and its empire. Beckles notes that such a dialectic has characterized cricket in the Caribbean as the creolized game has historically constituted a mode of 'colonial oppression and social protest'.⁶⁵ The legacy of this dialectic runs on and into the literature of the Caribbean.⁶⁶

Cricket's Theoretical Field

Given this history, it is imperative to recognize cricket as a space of contestation, a field within which power, authority and identities are continually negotiated and renegotiated and to identify the theoretical tools and practitioners which reflect this and so inform the following discussion. At the conclusion to *Games and Empire* (1995) Guttman rejects cultural imperialism as an explanation for the globalization of modern sport and opts instead for a theory of cultural hegemony based on Gramsci's *Prison notebooks*. Such a view sees sport as a site of power struggle rather than an imposition from either above or below and sits well with cricket's colonial and postcolonial history. This project pays particular attention to the hegemonic and anti-hegemonic discourses which influence the game and are seen in literature. This is not a discursive reduction or disembodiment of the physicality of the game but a recognition that discourse can become embodied practice. James situated his analysis of the game and its participants

⁶⁵ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Volume 1*, xvii.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of West Indies cricket history see, Michael Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, revised edition with Donna Symonds (London: Andrew Deutsch, 2002); and, Roy Goble & Keith A. P. Sandiford, *75 Years of West Indies Cricket: 1928-2003* (London: Hansib, 2004); in addition to the works of Hilary Beckles.

first and foremost at the level of cricketing performance and read the game's aesthetic credentials as emanating from the bodily movements of the players and their reception by the crowd. Reflecting such an interest, this discussion often draws attention to cricketing performances and bodies as it recognizes the link between the physical game and the discourses which imbue it with its particular English, colonial and postcolonial character. Gikandi opens *Maps of Englishness* by reading cricket as 'the mark of the incomplete project of colonialism, as the institution that allow[s] formerly colonized people to hallow new spaces of identity and self-expression and provide the metropolis with the alibi to reinvigorate its cultural tradition' (if it chooses to do so).⁶⁷ Taking up his sense of imperialism's incomplete message of hegemonizing Englishness and the suggestion that its very incompleteness allowed for occupation and redefinition, this discussion also wishes to highlight the interrelation of cricket's disciplinary and performative dimensions which commentators like Appadurai and Baucom have shown to be important aspects of the game's postcolonial identity and reinscription and can be linked to James's argument for the game's aesthetic attributes.

In 'Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Cricket', Appadurai describes the processes which led to the indigenization of cricket in India, its Indianization. Like Nandy's description of cricket as 'a protected domain', Appadurai begins by labelling cricket 'a "hard" cultural form that changes those who are socialized into it *more readily* than it itself changes' (emphasis added).⁶⁸ He believes that cricket's code of conduct and its links with Englishness affect those who enter cricket 'more readily' than the game is affected by their participation. One may reject Appadurai's statement all too

⁶⁷ Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 13.

⁶⁸ Arjun Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Cricket', in *Modernity at Large: cultural dimensions of globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 90. Gikandi opens *Maps of Englishness* with Appadurai's example of the Indianization of cricket to suggest space in which a colonial Englishness, that was never entirely complete or dominate, has been 'redefined' in imperial spaces like India and from there, even altered the way the English game has to be played in order for it to be internationally competitive (2-11).

quickly by claiming that cricket is, like all cultural practices, malleable and context dependent. Yet it is wise to hold on to his 'more readily' comparison between hard and soft cultural forms because 'more readily' does not imply a failure to change but a resistance to change that is perhaps quite obvious within cricket's most conservative establishments. As he goes on to demonstrate, cricket can change or be changed and has, in his analysis, even been Indianized. Where Nandy argues that cricket is Indian because the game's structures relate to the mythic structure of Indian society, Appadurai highlights the significance of the emergence of vernacular radio commentary, initially in English from 1933, then in Hindi, Tamil and Bengali from the 1960s, where the blending of linguistic idioms and sporting vocabulary created 'a body of contact terms' and sporting, or more especially cricketing, 'pidgins'. In this way the radio, media and increasingly television coverage of cricket in India helped 'unyoke' cricket from Englishness or at least resituate it within an Indian cultural and linguistic context.

Appadurai then shows that this linguistic mix, this passing over of the disciplinary discourses of cricket, affects the bodies of those who play the game as they perform the actions they hear described to them. That is, 'the acquisition of cricket terminology in the vernacular reinforces the sense of bodily competence in the sport' where young boys and men begin to adopt the profiles and actions of those they have heard about or imitate the cricketing traditions and styles that are being passed on to them.⁶⁹ In this way discourse becomes embodied performance. It is from this point that the performance of cricket can become 'part of the erotics of nationhood' in India, part of the drive for nationalism and national pride, where the performative can also be disruptive to the disciplinary discourses of cricket and Englishness. Here, for Appadurai, 'cricket links gender, nation, fantasy and bodily excitement [so that] the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 103.

erotic pleasure of watching cricket for Indian male subjects is the pleasure of agency in an imagined community'.⁷⁰ Consequently, though Appadurai has labelled cricket a 'hard' cultural form, he recognizes that it too can be reinscribed in imperial and postimperial contexts, that its disciplinary and pedagogical discourses do not only inscribe themselves on the bodies of Indian males but can be themselves altered to become key instruments in the building of individual, communal and national agency. Thus, he says, 'a set of experiential and pedagogical loops is set up through which the reception of cricket becomes a critical instrument of subjectivity and agency in the process of decolonization'.⁷¹ One can see a strong similarity with cricket's development in the Caribbean, its role in creating self belief and independence and its place in the quest for nationhood at island and regional levels.

The link between cricketing discourse, its disciplinary pedagogy and the performative is also examined by Baucom in *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and Locations of Identity (1999)*; a work that exerts considerable influence on this study. Baucom sees six key cultural sites – the Gothic cathedral, the Victoria Terminus, the Residency at Lucknow, the cricket field, the ruined country house and a riot zone – as having 'housed the disciplinary projects of imperialism and the imperial destabilizations and reformations of English identity'.⁷² According to Baucom, these spaces act in accordance with Pierre Nora's *lieu de mémoire* as 'places where an identity-preserving, identity-enchanting, and identity-transforming aura lingers, or is made to appear' (15). Baucom appreciates that, by establishing English space/places abroad and enabling colonial subjects to engage with such identity forming locations, imperialism itself problematized the significance of place in the formation and/or assertion of Englishness. Indeed, the tension between the loss of place as an identity marker brought about by

⁷⁰ Ibid., 110-11.

⁷¹ Ibid., 105.

⁷² Baucom, *Out of Place*, 6. In the following discussion of Baucom references shall be given in text.

imperialism and imperialism's nostalgia for that lost and exclusively English identity, meant that ironically places/spaces of Englishness, especially those built within imperial domains, actually serve to expose, bring to the fore and, thereby, monumentalize the loss of an imagined, localized (Anglo-Saxon) Englishness (18). Baucom's project is concerned with what he terms 'the imperial dialectic of Englishness'. This emerges from, on one hand, the elastic use of 'British' as a 'co-identity' that includes all subjects of the empire homogeneously and interchangeably, and, on the other, England's position as existing 'both after empire – as a once invaded nation – and before it – as a nation about to conquer the world' (25). A point that is captured by the fact that the English language was created by imperial contact and set forth as the language of the British Empire. According to Baucom, the dialectic structures notions of Englishness and its oscillation between identification with and against Britishness where Britishness, acting as a buffer between Englishness and the empire, has allowed England 'to simultaneously avow and disavow its empire' (6). Consequently, as Baucom explains, 'English space remained unique, local differentiated: a formula which permitted the empire to be that which was simultaneously within the boundaries of Britishness and outside the territory of Englishness' (8). Baucom brings us back to Kipling's unification of England and empire and the flag of the White Ensign where what is English remains visibly superior and unique, separate, distinct and privileged, but is also intrinsically attached to an empire that at once intersects with it and is seen as its context, with Britishness having to negotiate between the two. It is this sense of the 'imperial dialectic of Englishness' that is carried forward in the term 'imperial Englishness' in this thesis.

In relation to cricket, Baucom reads the cricket field as an auratic and identity inscribing locale whose transference to, or recreation within, the empire means that it is a field of

instability for Englishness. Baucom mobilizes Francis Thompson's famous cricket poem 'At Lord's' which recollects a 1878 match at Old Trafford (not Lord's) to demonstrate how the cricket field functions in relation to national memory and imperial transference and displacement. He says;

as spaces of memory England's fields of play are both individual and interchangeable: individual in the particular records of performances they enshrine but interchangeable as essential and generic locations of memory. Metonymic in their relation to one another, Old Trafford and Lord's name both themselves and one another, and all other test, school, county and village grounds scattered about the island, and, so long as the metonymy holds, all other grounds strewn across the empire. Metonyms of one another, not only does each of these itemized sites invoke every other in the series [test, school, county and village], but, by the added logic of synecdoche, each and all of them name England, or more accurately, Englishness – which, in its turn, it tautologically defined as replicable and unchanging seriality, as an essential sameness across history and geography. (148)

All cricket grounds are thus sites of English memory which signify larger codes of Englishness, of unchanging pastoralism, gentlemanly conduct, order and superiority. When they appear outside England, however, they work to both evoke a similar sense of Englishness and denote its imperial displacement and loss, where the hegemonic messages of England are evident but are also faced with their own internalized anti-hegemonic attributes which have often been externalized by their imperial transference.

Baucom presents the nineteenth century history of cricket and its establishment of a hegemonic idea of English masculinity and Englishness where there is an obvious and overriding disciplinary discourse at work but within which a counter hegemonic performance is simultaneously asserting itself. Taking this forward to a reading of James's *Beyond a Boundary*, Baucom shows that James's work not only collapses the boundaries between the disciplinary and the performative but actually places the performative within the pedagogic in Caribbean cricket. Baucom reads James as

someone who attests to the imperial dialectic of Englishness arguing that James is 'beyond' a boundary in the sense that 'he has dispensed with the boundary altogether' (156) because there is no boundary between Englishness and its 'Other'. He insists that Englishness and, in his case, Caribbeanness are interwoven, inseparable and essential parts of the very same hybrid creation caused by imperialism and seen in cricket. In this manner, he rejects Diawara's reading of James that constructs an essentialist opposition between Englishness and Caribbeanness, or Blackness in Diawara's terms, just as Howe rejects Tiffin's criticism of James in terms of divided consciousness. In Baucom's insightful analysis, James transforms the disciplinary discourses of cricket by reworking them from within, by demonstrating that the performances of Englishness and its associated practices can be embodied and performed by cricketers in the Caribbean in ways that not only upset notions of Englishness but suggest that the very idea of Englishness was itself never stable. In fact, Baucom convincingly reveals how *Beyond a Boundary* shows that the performative – local, unique and disruptive – can exist within the pedagogical and thereby re-animate the pedagogical as performative (158). This is most prominently seen in James's discussion of aesthetics where, as Baucom highlights, it is the body and movement of a cricketer that makes cricket art and it is in the movement and actions of this body that the performative can re-create cricket. Citing the famous example of Matthew Bondman which opens *Beyond a Boundary*, Baucom suggests that Bondman's batting and specifically his 'particular stroke that he played by going down on one knee' and which received a 'long, low "Ah"' from all who witnessed it is an 'affective event, an interruption of the new *within* a settled order of practices' (161). It is this interaction between the pedagogic and performative that is repeatedly seen in the representation of cricket and cricketing heroes offered by Caribbean literature.

This sense of the performative within the pedagogic is also pertinent to the debate about the ability of former colonies to decolonize cricket. Lazarus presents this debate as one about cricketing civility as articulated by the opposing views of Orlando Patterson and Mark Kingwell.⁷³ In ‘The Ritual of Cricket’ Patterson claimed that cricket was and remains ‘the Englishman’s game *par excellence*’ and, hence, can not be decolonized, freed from the disciplinary discourses of Englishness, from its own code of civil conduct. In essence, for Patterson, all cricket in the Caribbean, or other regions touched with an imperial legacy, could never be more than mimicry of the old colonial masters, even cricketing acceptance and success is no more than conformity to the old disciplinary code. Yet, as Lazarus points out, Mark Kingwell has argued that the ‘civility’ of cricket in the Caribbean – the adherence to both the laws and ethics of the game – ‘should not be mistaken for ideological conformism’.⁷⁴ Kingwell argues that ‘the most effective response [to the disciplinary code] will be an ironic maintenance of just those values that the ruling classes profess to admire, a maintenance that [...] will ultimately indicate how little in fact they live up to them’.⁷⁵ Here Kingwell aligns himself with James’s belief in the performative existing with the pedagogical disciplinary discourses of cricket. Such a reading supports the view that the performative can be, as Baucom and James contend, contained, maintained and nurtured within cricket’s own discursive tradition and that this can aid the process of decolonization. The game can maintain its traditions, traditions not always adhered to by the centre, while also having them altered in ways it had not anticipated and that reveal its own instability. This is the creolization of cricket and such creolization has made cricket an important part of Caribbean life and culture.

⁷³ Woodville Marshall has articulated a similar debate as being constituted by an opposition between ‘the C.L.R. James School’ and ‘the Brian Stoddart School’ of cricket. Aligning himself with James he argues that ‘whatever the colonial code of conduct that it transmitted, cricket has transformed the region and in turn has been transformed by the region’. See, Woodville Marshall, ‘The Worrell-Sobers Revolution’, in *An Area of Conquest: Popular Democracy and West Indies Cricket Supremacy* ed. by Hilary McD. Beckles (Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1994), 31.

⁷⁴ Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, 164.

⁷⁵ Mark Kingwell, ‘Keeping a Straight Bat: Cricket, Civility and Postcolonialism’ cited in Lazarus, 164.

James's own defence of cricket's civil code has been criticized as an 'ideological blindspot', as the spot at which his personality contradicts his politics, the point at which his anti-colonial attack fails to attack the colonial centre. In a recent article, Andrew Smith has responded to such arguments by comparing James's evocation of 'the spirit of the game' with Bourdieu's formulation of the field of cultural production. He defends James by first illustrating the self reflexivity James shows toward his own position, and second by examining how cricket functions as a cultural field. Smith quite rightly states that as well as a physical field cricket is 'a field in exactly Bourdieu's sense of being a social domain governed by its own distinctive economy of value', with its own laws, logic and positions seen in the '*formal autonomy* of the cricketing field and the acceptance within (or, rather, on) that field, of a specific principle of behaviour, meaning and success'.⁷⁶ Moreover, James's assertion that cricket can contain social reality by continuing to exist as a game can be explained, in Smith's analysis, by Bourdieu's explanation of the autonomy of a cultural field.

When James defends the integrity of the 'spirit' of cricketing play he does so for exactly the same reasons that Bourdieu defends the 'intention of autonomy' of the field of cultural production. That is to say, *not* because he was concerned to protect some solipsistic ideal of cricket as magically removed from the daily world, but precisely because he knew that what was at stake in defending the field's integrity was this ability to make the forces of political and economic power pause at the boundary. To put it another way, what was at stake were cricket's conditions of critical voice, its ability to provide, as it were, a commentary on its historical and social context. Because fundamentally this is what James's discussion is concerned with: a reading of cricket's meaning beyond itself.⁷⁷

While arguing for the autonomy of the field, neither Bourdieu nor James believes that autonomy leads to equality, far from it. Bourdieu understands that 'cultural games [...] are not "fair games"' and that 'those who are able to play cultural games *as* games, thereby adhering to a field's principle of disinterested participation, are likely in the

⁷⁶ Smith, "Beyond a Boundary" (of a Field of Cultural Production)', 107.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 107.

long run to be able to convert the subsequent symbolic rewards into economic form' (original emphasis).⁷⁸ This is James's point, that although there is not a level playing field those who succeed at cricket, on cricket's own terms, do something that can affect everything around them, including the economics governing their performances. Their effect, however, comes not from offering deliberately conscious social acts but from their aesthetic performances within the game. That is, the performances of cricketers are social, and socially significant, in the autonomy of their aesthetics.

Lazarus has argued that James's aesthetic theorization of cricket stands in opposition to the high modernist aesthetic theory of Theodor Adorno. The two differ profoundly in their approaches to Marxism and popular culture and seem to exude oppositional readings of the value of sport. Indeed, in *The Culture Industry* Adorno claims that sport 'is not play but ritual in which the subjected celebrate their subjection' and that 'sportification', by which he means the mass commodification of culture and the domination of economics, 'has played its part in the dissolution of aesthetic semblance'.⁷⁹ Lazarus's argument is comprehensive and convincing, but I wish to posit that one particular aspect of Adorno's aesthetic theory can be used alongside James's reading of cricket's autonomy as a game. Adorno maintains that art is of sociological significance because its autonomous state allows its truth content, expressed primarily through form, to critique social existence. Adorno is adamant that art possesses a dual essence as an 'autonomous entity' and a 'social fact'.⁸⁰ Adorno understands the social dynamic of art through Leibniz's philosophical formation of the 'windowless monad', as the encapsulation of art as at once separated from and yet infiltrated by society. Within this monadological space art dialectically contains all social tensions without

⁷⁸ Bourdieu cited in Smith, *ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁹ Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: selected essays on mass culture* ed. by J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 2001), 89.

⁸⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* trans. by C. Lenhardt, ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 8.

imitating them while being itself in dialectic tension with society. It is Adorno's argument that 'precisely because art works are monads they lead to the universal by virtue of their principle of particularization'.⁸¹ Illustrating this in 'Lyric Poetry and Society', Adorno constructs a thesis on how 'the descent into individuality raises the lyric poem to the realm of the general by virtue of its bringing to light things undistorted, ungrasped, things not yet subsumed'.⁸² The logic of this indicates that the particularity of a piece of art is social by order of its existence and that the further into itself and the individual it tends the more able it is to offer a genuine critique or critical response to the social world. Hence, the particular is able to draw light upon the universal without directly commenting thereon. Consequently, social truth is monadologically in all art and, if cricket is art, as James contends (but Adorno himself would refute), we can understand cricket as monadologically containing its social critique within the autonomy of its aesthetic performances of its participants – principally its bowlers and batsman who stand at the cricketing crease.

'An Englishman's crease is 'is castle'

As well as these theoretical underpinnings, the following discussion will take forward a notion of the crease as an organizing or structural metaphor. As Philips's poem 'An Englishman's Crease' suggests, the cricketing crease is, like a castle, the space in which the batsman is attacked by his enemy, the bowler, but is also a protective domain in which a batsman can defend himself. In cricket parlance the term crease refers both to a line (typically the popping crease) and to a set of lines which form a box or territory at either end of the wicket. For any single delivery, one of these territories belongs to the batsman and is their safe area while the other belongs to the bowler and denotes the line

⁸¹ Ibid., 259.

⁸² Theodor Adorno, *The Adorno Reader* ed. by Brian O'Connor (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 213.

they cannot exceed without punishment and the territory within which their efforts are enclosed and judged. Philip's poem captures, with ironic humour, the sentiment of dull, defensive, Boycott-esque batting in his refrain 'An Englishman's crease is 'is castle, I shall stay 'ere as long as I choose'.⁸³ Philip, like James, is critical of this style of play and mocks it as a particularly English mannerism with a metaphor that draws on the militaristic sense of territorial occupation and homestead defense. A batsman, however, can come down the wicket in order to attack the bowler and such behaviour is the height of batting aggression, even impertinence, and presents real dangers for the batsman, his wicket and his team's success. This is one of the reasons why we should imagine or recollect West Indian batsmen like Sobers, Richards and Lara coming down the wicket to English bowlers, as stepping over and out of their crease and toward historical transformation.

We can see that the crease is both a line to be crossed (or not) and a territory to be occupied (or not), protecting the batsman but restricting the bowler. The creases are also opposing spaces that create and protect the cricketing identities of batsman and bowler, which, as identities, are entirely reliant on each other. As overs are bowled from alternate ends of the wicket these two creases can also be seen as interchangeable territories, as spaces which may offer protection then restraint alternately enabling and then punishing transgressions. Just as Baucom reads James as conceiving Englishness and Caribbeanness as existing in a condition of constant oscillation across one another's spaces which are also one space, so the batsman and bowler, standing in seeming opposition, oscillate across one another's spaces, across one another's territories, across the single space of the wicket. In this manner, what appears a binary opposition is an overlapping and interrelated confrontation between two positions that not only rely on

⁸³ Hubert Philip, 'An Englishman's crease is 'is castle' in *Picador Book of Cricket* ed. by Ramachandra Guha (Basingstoke & Oxford: Picador, 2002), 298.

each other in order to exist as identities but which occupy territories whose boundaries are at once definite but transgressible and built through competitive action in a common practice. This means that we must always read the bowler and batsman in relation to one another and that we can read them via their relation to the territories they occupy and lines they may cross.

Outside of cricket, a crease may appear inadvertently in any material as a sign of disarray/disorder or can be deliberately introduced typically by ironing/folding which creates a sense of smartness/order, as in the ironing of creases into the front of cricket whites and other uniforms. A crease caused by a fold creates a line, the crease, but also brings opposing but connected parts of the material together. In doing so it presents a face to the world that relies on the crease or fold to maintain its shape. The pieces of material brought together, however, also have an underside, a hidden area or territory that can only be revealed by the act of unfolding or opening up. In this context, the crease offers a vocabulary similar to that provided by postcolonial studies as it points to the need to read spaces, gaps and silences usually hidden, to read across lines, territories and boundaries. Spivak describes her own book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present* (1999) as one which ‘forages in the crease between global postcoloniality and postcolonial migrancy’.⁸⁴ This thesis investigates the crease/s between the cricketing constructions of Englishness and Caribbeanness and its structure brings two sections, one on English Literature and another on Caribbean Literature, together to face/oppose each other while also provoking a continual dialogue along their lines or creases of intersection which finally meet in the closing discussion.

⁸⁴ Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), 373.

Part One, 'English Literature at the Imperial Crease 1850s-1950s', offers two chapters which examine the place of cricket in the creation, imperial context and problematization of the English gentleman as a cricketer and national hero as well as his postwar decline. Chapter One reads public school literature with the defining *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857) by Thomas Hughes, as well as *Mike* (1907) by P. G. Wodehouse and *Tell England* (1922) by Ernest Raymond, building a hegemonic vision of the English cricketer schoolboy as the future hero of empire. It also identifies areas of instability and conflict within this construction, particularly in terms of masculinity and sexuality, and takes these issues forward in its examination of the genre challenges presented by the cricketer males of Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* (1899) and Alec Waugh's *The Loom of Youth* (1917). Chapter Two examines E. M. Forster's *Maurice* (1917/71) and L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953) as texts which present similar scenes of country house cricket against a backdrop of cross class sexual relations and boyhood awakenings. It identifies the imperial context of the English country house and its cricket and highlights the (f)ailing of the English gentleman and his country house as well as the shift away from amateurism in the 1950s.

Leaving England at this pivotal postwar juncture, Part Two, 'Caribbean Heroes at the Literary Crease after 1950', engages with the place of cricket and cricketer heroes in Caribbean literature as authors and cricketers from the region begin taking guard and playing back to the supposed centre in an increasingly successful fashion. Chapter Three addresses the problem of masculinity and independence in three Trinidadian works and is framed by the historical movement in West Indies cricket from black bowlers, to black and coloured batsmen and thereafter captains, leaders and figures of authority. It also raises the issue of balancing individual heroism and communal/national responsibility under these conditions and identifies their engagement with the

father-son relationships depicted. Following on, Chapter Four is concerned with the poetic struggle between individual achievement and responsibility/leadership as depicted in Brathwaite's 'Rites', MacDonald's 'Massa Day Done' and a consideration of poetry about Brian Lara through the literary framing devices of Eliot's 'Tradition and The Individual Talent' and Brathwaite's 'm/we' formulation. Finally, it briefly moves away from the male batsman-hero to identify examples of the female protagonist at the cricketing crease of Caribbean poetry. One may suggest that Trinidad is (too) strongly represented in these chapters, especially as it is the home of James and Lara, but as one of the larger, more affluent and culturally diverse islands of the Caribbean this is not necessarily a negative point. Nevertheless, the cricketing action, politics and heroes presented certainly relate to the wider dynamics of West Indies cricket and the Caribbean and other Caribbean territories are discussed throughout. It is also worth establishing here a brief note of terminological consistency. The term 'Caribbean Literature' has been chosen instead of the now outdated 'West Indian Literature' and 'West Indies' and 'West Indian' shall be used solely in relation to the inter-island cricket team and its players except during citations. Consequently, the 'English speaking' or 'Anglophone Caribbean' identifies the territories where English is a main language and typically overlaps with the key cricketing areas, though Guyana is attached to mainland South America and hints at the wider regional implication of the game's collectivizing attributes. The 'Caribbean' identifies the larger geographical region of the Caribbean basin.

Criticism could be made of the distinction between Parts One and Two. Tiffin has claimed that James's 'avoids the head-on clash between the morality of *Tom Brown's School Days* (the ethics of empire) and the de-colonization of West Indian reality by dividing *Beyond a Boundary* into two main sections [...] Thus James [...] avoids a

head-on confrontation with the British ideal'.⁸⁵ The same argument could be made against the division of this thesis. Hopefully, this is overcome by a recognition not only of the ongoing dialogue between these two historically united and overlapping spaces, as outlined in this introduction, but also by their being brought together in a final section which addresses their fusion in a British context. By way of conclusion, Part Three, 'The Straight White Line', re-evokes the crease as a line and territory to consider the transgressive positioning of the British Caribbean cricketer by offering a reading of Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (1992). In the context of other textual examples of British Caribbean cricketers crossing boundaries, it addresses issues of race, gender and nation as they slip across the lines of expectation established by the cricketing heroism of the previous chapters.

⁸⁵ Helen Tiffin, 'Cricket, Literature and the Politics of Decolonization: the case of C.L.R. James', in *Liberation Cricket: West Indies cricket culture* ed. by Hilary McD. Beckles and Brian Stoddart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 364.

PART ONE

ENGLISH LITERATURE AT THE IMPERIAL CREASE 1850s-1950s

The hypocrisy [...] is indeed one of the things that makes English cricket *English* – the way it lies about itself to itself. *The Englishness is in the lie*

Mike Marquess, *Anyone But England* (1995), 71.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEWBOLTIAN PARADIGM:

ENGLAND, EMPIRE AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CRICKETING HERO

One hundred and fifty years after the publication of *Tom's Brown's School Days*, this chapter examines key examples of the cricketing schoolboy turned imperial hero in public school literature from Thomas Hughes to World War One. It suggests that within such works the protagonist's journey toward maturity is contextualized by an imperial Englishness that begins at home but will eventually push him, and those like him, toward an external imperial horizon; a horizon where colonization, leadership and death are accepted as his future because of his cricketing past.¹ Studies of public school literature, including those by Quigly, Howarth and Richards employed here, address the schoolboy hero and athleticism but do not concentrate specifically upon the deployment of cricket. This discussion reads *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857) by Thomas Hughes, *Mike* (1909) by P. G. Wodehouse and *Tell England* (1922) by Ernest Raymond as a normative triumvirate marking the emergence, dominance and maturation of the cricketing schoolboy hero, 'the Newbolt man in embryo form'.² Like the genre more generally, these texts are linked by repeated patterns of action, narration and characterization. They also exhibit a two part structure that propels the protagonist into and out of a phase of rebellion until they arrive at institutional obedience and cricketing conformity. In each case the protagonist is an ordinary English boy whose cricketing

¹ Some texts adhere to the politics of imperialism directly. This chapter also supports Kutzer's argument that not only does children's literature colonize children's minds by acculturising them into a particular world view (white, male, hetero-normative, etc.) but that 'some of the most revered British children's texts support the culture of imperialism – not the politics of imperialism, but the ethos that produces imperialism and is engendered by imperialism' (xv). See, M. Daphne Kutzer, *Empire's Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books* (New York: Garland, 2000), xiii-xxi.

² Patrick Howarth, *Play Up and Play the Game: The Heroes of Popular Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1973), 16.

talent sets him apart but despite his journey into gentlemanly maturity he remains something of a boy-man, a perpetual adolescent, a Peter Pan like figure.³ Thereafter, attention is paid to the critical responses to this hero and the excessive value placed upon him, cricket and athleticism offered in Rudyard Kipling's *The Complete Stalky & Co.* (1899) and Alec Waugh's *The Loom of Youth* (1917) to suggest that these genre challenging texts bring to the surface the sometimes violent inconsistencies of England's mobilization of cricket as an 'instrument of colonial purpose'.

Public School Athleticism and the Newboltian Paradigm

In his authoritative body of work, Mangan has established that from the middle of the nineteenth century public schools functioned as training grounds for England's middle class boys, providing Britain with a much needed army of imperialists.⁴ 'The public schoolboy learnt *inter alia* the basic tools of imperial command: courage, endurance, control and self control' and principally did so on the sports field.⁵ Mangan has explained that this system of instilling manliness simultaneously taught dominance and deference, agency and subjection, 'initiative and self-reliance but also loyalty and obedience' making it an ideal 'instrument of colonial purpose'.⁶ After a period of 'emergent athleticism' (1800-60) and an 'age of transition' (1860-80) it was during the

³ Cyril Connolly, in *The Enemies of Promise* (1938), first articulated the 'theory of permanent adolescent'. He argued that 'the experience undergone by boys at the great public schools, their glories and disappointments are so intense as to dominate their lives and arrest their development. From these it results that the greater part of the ruling class remains adolescent, school-minded, self-conscious.' See, Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997), 24.

⁴ See particularly, J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Sussex: Falmer, 1981) and *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1988).

⁵ Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 18.

⁶ Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 18. John Stephens makes a similar point arguing that while manliness demands a certain schema of behaviour being imposed on boys it also insists on their subordination as children, thereby making agency illusory. See, 'Introduction', *Ways of Being Male: representing masculinities in children's literature* ed. by John Stephens (London: Routledge, 2002), x.

1880s that organized games secured a primary place within the public school system.⁷ Thereafter, a Cult of Athleticism flourished that was characterized by prestigious school and inter-school matches, the colours system, sporting masters, House and school loyalty, and the schoolboy sporting hero.⁸ This hero increasingly embodied the nineteenth century move toward Muscular Christianity as espoused most famously by Kingsley and Hughes.⁹ The diffusion of these ideals occurred through a process of ‘circular causality’ with public schools leading Oxbridge only to then receive games orientated Masters back from the universities or for such men to take up posts within the empire.¹⁰ Diffusion, however, was never monolithic or predictable and athleticism was certainly not without its critics.¹¹ Dissenting voices only grew louder and more numerous after World War One.

At the heart of this cultural milieu were the Three C’s – Classics, Christianity and Cricket. From the 1850s on, cricket was becoming the vehicle and measure for all that was ‘good’ and ‘true’, ‘straight’ and ‘fair’, for all that was supposedly English. The game brought together a picture of England as an unchanging rural idyll and a new sense of a disciplined national community whose moral purpose was to assert its will across the globe. Gentlemanly conduct, moral superiority, sportsmanship and fair play

⁷ This periodization is from Timothy J. L. Chandler’s, ‘Games at Oxbridge and the Public Schools, 1830-80: The Diffusion of Innovation’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 8:2 (1991), 171-204. It reflects the general historical periodization of the development of sport in the public schools.

⁸ As Jeffrey Richards explains, ‘The word “cult” is used here advisedly, for athleticism had its gods and heroes, its rituals and its hymns, and it was invested with the kind of religious fervour that Arnold had sought to channel into Christian commitment’. See, Richards, *Happiest Days: the public school in English fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 120.

⁹ The term ‘Muscular Christian’ was first used by the *Saturday Review* of London in February 1857 to poke fun at Kingsley’s writings. He was known to be quite unhappy with the term though Hughes was more accepting. As this chapter concentrates explicitly on the literary examples of cricket it does not seek to review the notion of Muscular Christianity or its adaptations over the last 150 years. For such a discussion see, John J. MacAloon, ‘Muscular Christianity After One Hundred and Fifty Years’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23:5 (2006), 687-700.

¹⁰ For a discussion of ‘circular causality’ see, Chandler, ‘Games at Oxbridge and the Public Schools, 1830-80’.

¹¹ For a discussion of such oppositional educational movements, their strategies and effectiveness see, Clive Dewey “Socratic Teachers”: The Opposition to the Cult of Athletics at Eton, 1870-1914 Part II – The Counter Attack’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 12:3 (1995), 18-47. For some examples of unfavourable literary depictions of public schools see, John R. Reed, ‘The Public Schools in Victorian Literature’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 29:1 (1974), 58-76.

were all said to emanate from cricket and were the qualities that helped raise the game to a national and imperial institution. The phrases ‘a straight bat’ and ‘it’s not cricket’ came to stand for an ideology of fair play on, off and beyond the cricket pitch. This fair play ethic functioned as a disciplinary tool to control schoolboys and from there the nation, meeting, as Mangan records, a practical need for social cohesion. It also ‘quickly became equated with moral “manliness” – the robust manliness of imperialists’.¹² Physical hardiness was uniting with the ‘stiff upper lip’ of forbearance and perseverance. Jack Williams has highlighted that the sportsmanship of cricket as expressed in fair play ‘was seen to produce a distinctly national character’¹³ – where character is a euphemism for a masculinity that is inherently (white) English, athletic and suited to imperial rule. This was the cricketing hero of the public school who was, as an ideal type, represented in, if not created by, public school literature but who was also problematized within its pages. Nothing summed him or his cricketing and literary attributes up more exactly than Newbolt’s ‘play up!’ message. As Holt has neatly articulated: ‘The resolute schoolboy, who plays out a difficult innings in fading light with the same resolve he later takes command of a desperate situation with “the Gatling jammed and the Colonel dead” sums up the heroic ideals of generations of schoolboys brought up on tales of imperial adventure and the thriving genre of schoolboy fiction’.¹⁴

Sir Henry Newbolt’s ‘Vitaï Lampada’ (‘The Torch of Life’) provides a paradigmatic example of the coming together of Englishness and empire in the cricketing hero whose immediate roots lie in public school education and literature and whose future is military or imperial leadership. Its (in)famous poetic refrain ‘Play up! Play up! and play the game!’ became an ideological banner at the height of Britain’s imperial project and

¹² J. A. Mangan, “Muscular, militaristic and manly”: The British Middle-Class Hero as Moral Messenger’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 13:1 (1996), 28-47 (34).

¹³ Williams, *Cricket and England*, 2.

¹⁴ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 205.

has endured as the defining slogan of public school camaraderie, cricketing fair play, gentlemanly conduct and, above all else, English determination, bravery and heroism in battle.¹⁵ Newbolt composed this most famous, if now clichéd, of cricket poems in 1892, the same year Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads* was released, and published it in *Admiral's All and Other Verses* (1897), his first and notably successful collection of poetry. He had been inspired to write after meeting a survivor of Omdurman in the Sudan during a House reunion at Clifton College and so brought together school and empire, England and war, the red desert and the green Close.¹⁶ The poem conveys the public school *esprit de corps* in which courage, leadership and subservience are united and encapsulates the notion that cricket is not only a metaphor for war but also physical and moral preparation for it. The recollection of school, and particularly the memory of cricket, guides the English boys, now men, through the 'dust and smoke' of their imperial world. Like much of Newbolt's poetry, the strong rhyme and heavy song-like rhythm deliver a strong patriotic message of English heroism.

Newbolt became intoxicated with the values of the public school system while at Clifton College (1876-80) and later his writing invested heavily in notions of English chivalry, patriotism and heroism. To Dentith, Newbolt's depictions of national heroism, like those of Kipling, allowed the epic tradition to survive in the socio-literary space of the nineteenth century through an association with empire.¹⁷ Newbolt's patriotism encompassed empire as an extension of England's moral superiority allowing it to be the context and future of his heroes, real and fictional, and providing them with a zone

¹⁵ Newbolt's refrain resembles the chorus of the Harrow School song, 'Forty Years On', written by Bowen and Farmer in 1872 with its repetition of 'Follow up! Follow up! Follow up' which features prominently in *The Hill* (1905) by Vachell. Newbolt's 'play up' version is emblazoned on the external wall of Lord's cricket ground as a physical marker of its cricketing institutionalization. See, Horace Annesley Vachell, *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* (London: John Murray, 1925).

¹⁶ Susan Chitty, *Playing the Game: A Biography of Sir Henry Newbolt* (London: Quartet, 1997), 110.

¹⁷ Simon Dentith, 'Heroic poetry in a novelized age: Epic and empire in nineteenth-century Britain', *Bucknell Review*, 43:2 (2000), 68-83 (68).

of epic (con)quests and adventures. This has led Howarth to conflate Newbolt's multiple heroic portrayals into a single archetypal figure.

From Newbolt's writing and from Newbolt's life, which were exceptionally harmoniously blended, there emerges then a figure who is both an ideal and a reality. He is also the living embodiment of that message which, as much as a facility for rhyming, was the cause of the eminence which Newbolt's contemporaries accorded to him. Imbued with a strong sense of institutional loyalty, upper middle class by background, conformist in belief, dedicated to a concept, not simply of 'my country right or wrong', but of a nation enjoying a natural moral prerogative, accepting ungrudgingly the demands of service and duty, inclined to treat women either as companions or as unmentionable; add this to his natural power of command, some degree of worldly success, a distrust of latter-day politicians and a tendency toward philistinism in artistic taste, and we have the species *homo Newboltiensis* or Newbolt Man.¹⁸

This is the cultural make-up of the hero of the English popular imagination during Newbolt's lifetime (1862-1938).¹⁹ Howarth and Quigly agree that this character mould or stereotype began with Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* and lasted until well after World War One, though Quigly also suggests that it was not until after World War Two that the figure really came into crisis. His existence was tied to the rise and reform of the public schools and the fashion for their literature. For Quigly, such literature constitutes an 'imaginary landscape' with repeated features, characters and storylines: the Masters, the fagging, the cribbing, the fights, the sport, the epidemic or illness, the marginalization of women and, most importantly, English, upper middle class and heroic protagonist.²⁰ Howarth has identified this hero of public school literature as 'the Newbolt man in embryo form' – a boy who will inevitably grow to become a hero of Newboltian proportions but has yet to find his place in the adult

¹⁸ Howarth, 14.

¹⁹ In *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) Paul Fussell identifies General Douglas Haig, a friend of Newbolt's since their time at Clifton, as a perfect example of the Newboltian figure and Scott identifies Haig as the 'general most responsible for the squandering of life [in World War One] because he persisted in relying on the soldier's courage and fortitude'. See, Carole Scott, 'Kipling's Combat Zones: Training Grounds in the Mowgli Stories, *Captains Courageous*, and *Stalky & Co.*', *Children's Literature*, 20 (1992), 52-68.

²⁰ Isabel Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown: The English School Story* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982), 41.

world.²¹ Like the relationship between the public school and empire, the construction of this schoolboy cricketing hero was in reality ‘complicated, yet the ideal was not’.²² It was Newboltian. Yet Newbolt had never really been a cricketer or particularly athletic, he was not a soldier or a man of the empire and his English identity sat alongside his mother’s Jewish heritage. More importantly, the Great War brought about a change in his attitude to conflict which was compounded by the return and breakdown of his brother-in-law. By 1923, during a lecture tour of Canada, Newbolt expressed his distaste for the cult-like obsession that had surrounded ‘Vitaï Lampada’ calling it a ‘Frankenstein’s monster’.²³ It had collapsed in upon itself becoming a cliché, hollow and devoid of meaning. The poem had grown to stand for, and thereby misrepresent, his canon of work while also helping to construct as well as oversimplify the relationship between England, empire and the public school cricketing hero.

The Rise, Dominance and Maturation of the Cricketing Schoolboy

In 1840 Carlyle claimed that ‘worship of a Hero is a transcendent admiration of a Great man’ and that ‘society is founded on Hero-worship’, operating as a ‘Hero-archy’.²⁴ Thereafter in *Past and Present* (1843) he called for the English nation ‘to do our hero worship better’ in order to spur ‘the awakening of the Nation’s soul’, asserting that ‘once all is well at home, how it will radiate outwards, irrepressible [...] doing good only, wheresoever it spreads’.²⁵ *Tom Brown’s School Days* seems to respond directly to Carlyle’s call.²⁶ Hughes intended his text as a moral guide for his son and those like

²¹ Howarth, 16.

²² Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 22.

²³ Chitty, 267.

²⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: Collins’s Pocket Classics, [n.d.]), 20-1.

²⁵ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1893), 30.

²⁶ Hereafter Hughes work shall be abbreviated to *Tom Brown* and all references given as in text page numbers as taken from the Oxford World’s Classics Edition: Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown’s School Days* ed. by Andrew Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

him departing for public school. Akin to Carlyle, he constructs Tom as a hero made through his worshipping of other male heroes (Winburne, East, Old Brooke and especially Arnold) in male dominated spaces.²⁷ Tom's development is a journey mapped out through sport, a primary vehicle for masculinity, where games are pivotal to the plot, structure and message at the initial, critical and climactic textual moments. Almost regardless of Hughes's attempts to refocus attention on the Doctor/Arnold at the close, it is the action on The Close that is the apex of Tom's public school training and it is here, beside the cricketing field of play, that the reader sees the arrival of the Christian gentleman and the future hero of England and empire.

Although *Tom Brown* was not the first public school novel or the first to depict a Tom Brown, it did lead and hegemonize the genre.²⁸ It also offered the defining example of the cricketing schoolboy hero and the moment of cricket's literary institutionalization. Immensely popular, the novel exerted a genuinely global influence as a text, if not *the* text, to shape the future men of empire and James, Sandiford and Seecharan have all recorded how its sentiments were felt in the Caribbean. Like *Mike* and *Tell England*, *Tom Brown* is of more importance than its literary merits indicate. Richards states, 'it is a mirror of the changing nature and structure of Victorian values, a vital point of intersection between the ideas that had been dominant and the ideas that were to become

²⁷ For a discussion of Carlyle's use of hero worship and all male communities see, Daniela Garofalo 'Communities in mourning: Making capital out of the loss in Carlyle's *Past and Present* and *Heroes*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 45:3 (2003), 293-314.

²⁸ The first school story depicting a Tom Brown is probably M. Pelham's (Dorothy Kilner's) *First Going to School; or the Story of Tom Brown, and his Sisters* (1804) which tells of a notably different type of Tom Brown, one more akin to Hughes's George Arthur, who may go to school and even play cricket and trap-ball but plans to bring this fun back to his sisters at home. Also, at the time of Hughes's writing T(homas) E(dward) Brown (1830-97), poet and educationalist, was working as a Vice-Principal of King William's College on the Isle of Man. In 1863 he became second master at Clifton College where he stayed for the next thirty years. He was at Clifton while Henry Newbolt was studying. Clark argues that *Tom Brown* 'helped mark the transition from what has been called the Age of Didacticism to the Golden Age of children's literature in English' (10). Also, that before Hughes school stories were often cross-gendered, male authors described girls and female authors described boys but that after Hughes the genre became divided along gender lines with stories about boys by men dominating. See, Beverly Lyon Clark, *Regendering the School Story: Sassy Sissies and Tattling Tomboys* (London: Routledge, 2001).

so'.²⁹ As he outlines, it functions at three ideological levels – the past, the present and the future – supporting Carlyle's insistence that 'the present holds in it both the whole past and the whole future'.³⁰ From the past Hughes relies heavily upon his memory of Rugby under the headship of Thomas Arnold between 1834 and Arnold's death in 1842 and connects this with a longer vision of English history, chivalry and ruralism that is embedded within an Anglo-Saxon heritage. In the present, the book's emergence in 1857 coincides with the Indian Mutiny which pointed to the brutalities, instabilities and unrest of an imperial project about to dramatically expand.³¹ Hughes added to this his personal interests in educational reform, Christian socialism, working men's clubs and notably a growing English nationalism that comfortably incorporated imperialism. By signing the text as 'An Old Boy', he also registered the network of ex-public school boys that was consolidating in the 1850s and, in cricketing terms, was represented by I Zingari (founded by ex-Harroviahs in 1845). As in Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* (1988), emphasis must be placed on the 1850s as a significant decade for England's imperial prospects.³² It was also, as Newsome records, a decade of transition for public schools and the nature of English manliness in their shift from a Regency past to a Muscular Christian future. Hughes's work fuelled this shift by moving away from Arnold's policy of 'Godliness and Good Learning'.³³ Hughes believed in the Arnoldian prioritization of first religious and moral principles, second gentlemanly conduct, and third intellectual ability, yet his protégé embodies a reorganization of these values as his

²⁹ Richards, *Happiest Days*, 24.

³⁰ Carlyle, *Past and Present*, 33.

³¹ It is beyond the remit of this discussion to address the repeated appearance of the Indian Mutiny in Public School literature but for a discussion of the event's place in the British Imagination see, Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

³² Brantlinger explains that 'emphasis on the 1850s is not accidental. The Australian gold rush, the search for the Nile's sources, the Crimean War, and the Mutiny made that decade a turning point for imperialist ideology, long before the New Imperialism manifested itself in the Scramble for Africa and all the other parts of the world that still remained to be overrun by European bearers of light and of Maxim guns'. See, Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 14.

³³ See, David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: four studies on a Victorian ideal* (London: John Murray, 1961).

desire to become 'A1 at cricket and football, and all other games' supersedes everything else (255). This is the reorganization that, combined with an emerging notion of Social Darwinism in the 1850s, mutates into the Cult of Athleticism.³⁴ Hughes's misrepresentation of Arnold and Arnoldianism eventually betrayed both men as they were swept up in this subsequent fashion for athleticism. Muscular Christians were the men Hughes was aiming for, and which he promotes in *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861), but instead sporting boys, particularly cricketing boys, became the Newboltian men of the future.³⁵ Notably, these ideological planes – past, present and future – can be mapped onto the three Thomas's of the text; Arnold/past, Hughes/present and Brown/future. Yet while Tom Brown is indicative of the future, he is also representative of the residual, dominant and emergent types of mid-century English manliness and his development is a journey through these positions as conveyed through sport.³⁶

Like Mike Jackson and other schoolboy heroes, Tom is a 'middling' boy whose representative status is conveyed by his name, the 'commonest', most English and middle class Hughes could find.³⁷ His ability to become heroic initially derives from his status as a Brown and later from his education, both of which are couched in a sense of imperial Englishness. From the outset, Hughes establishes his narrative voice as a

³⁴ See, J. A. Mangan, 'Social Darwinism and upper-class education in late Victorian and Edwardian England' in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* ed. by J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 135-159.

³⁵ Hughes was writing against this mutation when he articulated the difference between 'Musclemen', who seem to 'have no belief whatever as to the purpose for which his body has been given him', and 'Muscular Christians', who hold that 'a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth'. Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1861), 122-3.

³⁶ Residual, dominant and emergent are used as the categories defined in Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

³⁷ In his preface to *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861), Hughes responds to critics who have accused him of basing Tom Brown on himself and seeing evidence of this in the name Thomas. Hughes explains: 'I chose the name "Brown", because it stood first in the trio of "Brown, Jones, and Robinson", which has become a sort of synonym for the middle classes of Great Britain [...] As to the Christian name of "Tom", having chosen Brown, I could hardly help taking it as the prefix. The two names have gone together in England for two hundred years [...] and I own, that the fact that it happened to be my own, never occurred to me as an objection, till the mischief was done, past recall' (ii).

worshipper of the fighting ‘clan’ to whom Britain owes much of her ‘greatness’ (1). On one hand this ‘great army of Browns’ is ‘scattered over the whole empire’ and ‘their general diffusion [he] takes to be the chief cause of the empire’s stability’ (5). On the other hand, Tom’s branch of Browns is settled in the Vale of the White Horse, Berkshire, that ‘sacred ground for Englishmen from Alfred onward’ (10), and ‘didn’t go out of the country once in five years’ (17). Consequently, the Browns are simultaneously at home and abroad, the essence of England’s green locality and Anglo-Saxon past and the foundations of imperial conquest from America to India. Hughes’s approval of the Browns is racial and derives from their Anglo-Saxon locality, where the beauty and history of the Vale identify it as an auratic place that anchors their Englishness.³⁸ Adding to this, Richards perceives ‘a direct link between the green hills of Berkshire and the far off shores that constitute Britain’s overseas empire’. He states:

This English countryside, alive with the associations and lore of the past, represents stability, tradition, inspiration, family home, history, the place from which to start forth in the divinely ordained British mission to govern the world and spread the virtues and values of Englishness and to return thence when the burden was laid down. So the two aspects of ruralism and imperialism, far from being antithetical, are mutually supportive and complementary. Hughes is the perfect exemplar of this. For him there is no distinction between nation and empire, between rural England and Great Britain.³⁹

This sense of England’s link to an imperial mission is the backdrop to Tom’s entrance and highlights the empire’s role as the context of his heroism. Bradford contends that imperialism frames Hughes’s text not only because Rugby was a training ground for imperial adventure ‘but also because the conceptual world in which the boys are located comprises two parts: home and abroad, centre and margins’.⁴⁰ Moreover, home/abroad

³⁸ In Ernest Raymond’s *Tell England* (London: Cassell, 1969) the Vale of the White Horse is remembered by Doe as one of the England’s key locations, i.e. a key location of Englishness, 265.

³⁹ Richards, *Happiest Days*, 49-50.

⁴⁰ Bradford cited in Richards, *Happiest Days*, 50.

and England/empire are presented as bound to one another, as two parts of the self same thing brought together by Tom, just as with Mike and Ray subsequently.

Tom's manly development is mapped out through different sporting encounters, first in the Vale and then at Rugby. In the Vale his early experiences of country sports only come after he has escaped the female/feminizing domestic sphere. Tosh believes that between 1850 and 1870, before the new wave of imperialism took off, there was an increasing separation of manliness from domesticity. Nelson adds that this separation of gendered spaces and roles was reflected at the time in literature for boys.⁴¹ For Tom home is substituted by an external world of Regency masculinity which he accesses through the mentoring of Noah, Benjy, the village boys and Squire Brown – 'a true blue Tory' (52).⁴² His attendance at the annual 'country veast' is an initiation into the heady world of traditional games with backwording providing the heroes of the hour. Alongside backwording is wrestling and Tom quickly 'wrestled his way up to the leaders' (58) among the local boys until he meets Harry Winburn whose 'special throw' (58) defeats Tom, but later comes to his rescue at Rugby. Such country training stays with Tom throughout his education as Hughes wishes to retain and build upon such experiences. He wrote to this effect: 'Don't let reformers of any sort think that they are going to really lay hold of the working boys and young men of England by any educational grapnel whatever, which hasn't some *bone fide* equivalent for the games of the old country 'veast' in it' (41). As *Tom Brown* develops, the equivalent, the replacement, becomes cricket, not the village game enjoyed by young Tom at home but

⁴¹ See, Rutherford, 19.

⁴² Huggins has highlighted that where we associate women as mothers and carers with domesticity and social gate-keeping we do not yet have a clear picture of their relationship to the very early socialization of boys into games and sports that may take place there. Instead, we believe that fathers and men teach boys how to use their bodies for sport as happens in *Tom Brown*. Huggins is right to suggest that more attention needs to be paid to the place of sport in the home and specifically the role of women. Indeed, we know that W. G. Grace's mother played an important role in his early introduction to cricket. See, Mike Huggins, 'Second Class Citizens?: English Middle-Class Culture and Sport, 1850-1910', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 17:4 (2000), 111-22.

a new institutionalized version which trained middle class boys into being young men with the sporting strength and spirit of the Regency tradition, but also the discipline and morality of a new Christian spirit fit for the imperial mission ahead as it 'provided a meeting ground for the moral outlook of the dissenting middle classes and the athletic instincts of the aristocracy'.⁴³

Hughes charts the transition from Regency masculinity to Christian gentlemanliness via Tom's school sporting journey at Rugby from football through boxing to cricketing leadership. Arriving simultaneously to 'Rugby and Football' Tom's entrance into public school is an entrance into a new sporting space and his first panoramic view makes sport, the Chapel and then Arnold – in that order – his points of reference; an order repeated in the closing cricket scene. Initiated into Rugby football by East, his immediate friend and guide, Tom's first sporting act is to give himself up for the House, instantly equating his physical courage with his moral worth. In this contest the small professional force of the House side is able to overturn their more numerous but disorganized School opponents, evocative of Britain's small but professional army. Indeed, 'a battle would look much the same' (105), especially as the schoolboy heroes of today will be the heroes of imperial war tomorrow. Subsequently, Tom and East defeat the 'tyranny of Flashman' (169), the bully, who, as part of the fifth form 'sporting and drinking set' (167), is a flat stereotype of the vulgar Regency traditions the public saw as linking the excesses of the aristocracy with the depravity of the working class. By overturning Flashman, they replace drinking, gambling and 'shame' displays with youthful courage and ethical conduct. The conflict with Flashman, however, is not a head-to-head fight but a collectivized effort of will. Tom's first and only real fight is against Slogger Williams. Controversially, Hughes praises fighting as

⁴³ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 166.

a valiant last resort from which English boys should not shy away. It is not about brute strength but a courageous struggle in a worthy cause (especially on behalf of another) that is resolved in a respectful gentlemanly handshake.⁴⁴ This time Harry Winburne's wrestling throw does not secure victory as it did over Flashman. The change is indicative of Tom's rural roots, roots that secure his personality and nationality, being refashioned. Hughes is offering a 'bridge between manliness past and present',⁴⁵ but after the fight Tom is understood to have moved away from the past and is ready for a different, gentlemanly future.

As the new 'Nestor of the school' (361), Tom supersedes the Brookes (Old and Young) as cricket captain to lead Rugby against M.C.C. and this last match is the 'last stage' in his educational career.⁴⁶ It is hoped that Tom is 'as much wiser as he is bigger' (351). His physical maturity harps back to a Regency pride in size and strength, suggesting continuity, but also stands as evidence of Tom's athleticism as the physical benefit of the Muscular Christianity which, we are led to understand, also caused his character growth as he now balances popularity, leadership and communal responsibility. He faces his cricketing work 'bravely', steadies the team, prevents overthrows, bowls, advocates the use of a 'straight bat' and opens the batting to score 'twenty-five in beautiful style' (285). Where Hughes describes Tom's 'strapping figure [...] ruddy tanned face and strong brown hands' (351), the illustration of this cricketing scene by Arthur Hughes (no relation) in the 1869 reissue of *Tom Brown* replaces such 'ruddy' features with a soft expression and figure that is common to the Young Master and Arthur. This picture stands in contrast to W. H. Hunt's painting *The Cricketer* c.1850 which portrays a country youth flaying his bat (see Appendix One) and is on the cover

⁴⁴ This fits with Hughes's personal experiences of volunteering in young men's working clubs and helping young boys learn to box. The pattern of this fight is repeated in many school stories.

⁴⁵ Mangan, "'Muscular, militaristic and manly': The British Middle-Class Hero as Moral Messenger", 1.

⁴⁶ The match is based on the actual game in which Hughes captained Rugby against the real Mr Aislabie's M.C.C. side on 17th June 1841.

of the Oxford World's Classics edition. The change marks the more general move from the 1850s rural tradition of cricket to cricket's Muscular Christian re-inscription which gained pace in the following decades in no small part because of Hughes's text.

Tom is ready to be tested by the men of M.C.C. having defeated Wellesburn, the rival school. At first the Rugby team are in awe of the 'illustrious strangers', but with no obvious stars and only stock figures like the old cunning bowler of 'slow twisters' described M.C.C. serve as an abstract example of cricketing Englishness for the boys to admire and emulate. By playing within the school grounds and not, as was hoped, at Lord's, Tom remains safe within the closed community he has come to command. Moreover, the school pitch becomes, as in Baucom's reading, an auratic space/place interchangeable with all such other grounds as a site of memory and nostalgia that will allow the boys, as 'old boys', to identify with a scene of (schoolboy) Englishness whenever and wherever they see another cricket field. In this semi-pastoral setting country festivities – eating, singing and dancing – are enjoyed before and after the match as a reminder of the rural heritage cricket and Tom supposedly share. The ability of M.C.C. to travel to the game on the train and the later reference to cricket in the press both point to cricket's increasing nationalization. However, the game has not yet secured the institutional acceptance that Hughes famously announces.⁴⁷

Having left his rebellion with the Masters behind, Tom converses with a Young Master about the significance of cricket while Arthur sits at their feet in a posture of admiration for the two halves that constitute his own character; Greek/religion in the Master and athleticism/cricket in Tom. This scene reopens the educational debate between

⁴⁷ By 1825 there were regular interschool matches between the top public schools and 1827 saw the first inter-university fixture. By 1835 the 'Laws of Cricket' were relatively settled but the debate about over-arm bowling was still rumbling on and the game remained in transition; equipment was developing, teams were travelling and the county circuit was forming.

Classics/Intellectualism and Cricket/Athleticism that has run throughout the book and which continues throughout the genre. Nevertheless, as if to reinforce the popularity and potential dominance of sport the discussion takes place against the backdrop of the cricket pitch with Tom repeatedly punctuating the conversation with words of support and praise for his team. The sentiments expressed in the exchange have now become English and cricketing clichés yet critical attention has rarely, if at all, unpacked these expressions. As the scene provides the defining picture of cricket in the English public school genre, perhaps even the literary imagination, and exerted such a fundamental influence on cricket's socio-cultural position, it is worth citing in its entirety and considering in some detail.

“What a noble game it is, too!” [The Young Master says]

“Isn't it? But it's more than a game. It's an institution,” said Tom.

“Yes” said Arthur, “the birthright of British boys old and young, as habeas corpus and trial by jury are of British men.”

“The discipline and reliance on one another which it teaches is so valuable, I think,” went on the master, “it ought to be such an unselfish game. It merges the individual in the eleven; he doesn't play that he may win, but that his side may.”

“That's very true”, said Tom, “and that's why football and cricket, now one comes to think of it, are such much better games than fives' or hare-and-hounds, or any others where the object is to come in first or to win for oneself, and not that one's side may win.”

“And then the Captain of the eleven!” said the master, “what a post is his in our School-world! Almost as hard as the Doctor's; requiring skill and gentleness and firmness, and I know not what other rare qualities.”

“Which don't he wish he may get!” said Tom, laughing; “at any rate he hasn't got them yet, or he wouldn't have been such a flat to-night as to let Jack Raggles go in out of his turn.”

“Ah, the Doctor would never have done that”, said Arthur, demurely. “Tom, you've a great deal to learn yet in the art of ruling.”

“Well, I wish you'd tell the Doctor so then, and get him to let me stop till I'm twenty. I don't want to leave, I'm sure.”

“What a sight it is”, broke in the master, “the Doctor as a ruler! Perhaps ours is the only little corner of the British Empire which is thoroughly, wisely and strongly ruled just now. I'm more and more thankful every day of my life that I came here to be under him.”

“So am I, I'm sure,” said Tom; “and more and more sorry that I've got to leave.”

(354-6)

The Young Master's appreciation of cricket's nobility and disciplinary qualities cuts to the heart of cricket's value as a sporting practice which teaches obedience, conformity, responsibility and the importance of the team over the individual while individualism is associated with sports where only a single person may win, as in hare-and-hounds, which Tom has outgrown. Here collective dominance or team success emerges alongside individual manly subservience as in Mangan's reading of athleticism. The message for a youthful army of Christian disciples is that achievement and advancement resides within a collective activity that induces and expects gentlemanly conduct. Birley has asserted that 'a ball game, no matter how elaborate, is ethically neutral; any moral qualities it exhibits are those brought to it by the players'.⁴⁸ Hughes, however, is insistent that these two things, the game and player conduct, are relational, that cricket endows its players with moral worth and that as Christian gentlemen players are worthy cricketers. These are the values that make cricket 'more than a game'. When Tom announces that cricket is 'an institution' he is pre-empting cricket's future as an official and systematized realm that would mould English character and represent English national and imperial interests, qualities and freedoms. As an institution cricket is worthy of respect, admiration and deference. Submitting oneself to the values of this institution is shorthand for loyalty to one's House, school, country and empire. Arthur's comparison between cricket for boys and habeas corpus and trial by jury for men is suggestive of cricket's role as preparation for manhood. It also establishes a link between cricket and English law, between the individual boy who participates in a collective sporting body and the state's protection of individual and communal rights where the individual is subservient to but also respected and protected by the state which he helps function. Cricket is for boys as trial by jury is for men as both are concerned with peer expectations and judgement of conduct though they also represent

⁴⁸ Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (London: Aurum Press, 1999), 96.

the historically endowed right of freedom. Habeas corpus protects the freedom of an individual and their body from unlawful detainment but in Arthur's assertion it also requires a duty of respect to be paid to the state thereby making the rights of the individual obeisant to the state which establishes and protects these rights. In addition, Arthur's conflation positions cricket as a measure of Englishness that sits at the heart of Britain and thereby the British Empire. In this move cricket leads to Englishness which in turn leads to British law and order so that discursively the exchange moves from cricket through England to its empire, from the inside out, or from empire through England to cricket from the outside in, though both England and empire are also simultaneously held within the space of cricket. Importantly, this pattern is reflected by the novel as a whole and the public school genre.

The Young Master presented is a fictionalized rendering of G. E. L. Cotton (1813-66), a pupil of Arnold's who worked as an assistant at Rugby between 1837 and 1852. In 1852 he was appointed Headmaster of Marlborough and in 1858 he became Bishop of Calcutta. Both of these roles were about imposing order where there had seemingly been recent chaos. Cotton arrived at Marlborough after the so-called last Great Rebellion of 1851.⁴⁹ Though he was an intellectual of Arnold's circle, he took inspiration from Vaughan at Harrow and deployed organized games to rein the school in after a past of 'poaching, trespassing and general lawlessness'.⁵⁰ Thus, his cricketing conversion in *Tom Brown* is a prelude to the historic rise of organized sport and specifically cricket within the public schools. It also denotes the change which occurred around the 1860s from boys taking the lead in games to games being organized by

⁴⁹ In October 1851 there were demonstrations involving stone throwing against the school porter. The Headmaster, Wilkinson, punished the whole upper school and as a result there were demonstrations against him and his staff, including the breaking up of desks and setting off of fire works. However, Honey has suggested that the names and myths surrounding the event have undoubtedly exaggerated the picture of disorder. See, JR De S. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (London: Millington, 1977), 41.

⁵⁰ Mangan, *Athleticism*, 22.

masters as disciplinary mechanisms.⁵¹ J. E. C. Welldon, Master of Harrow (1885-98), clearly expressed the continuity between the attitudes of ‘Tom Brown’s Last Match’ and the subsequent educational emphasis on sports when, in *The Imperial Prospects of Education 1894-5*, he almost directly repeated the content of the cricketing exchange in order to establish how ‘[i]n the history of the British Empire it is written that England owed her sovereignty to her sports’ in a statement that also moves from empire, through England to sport.⁵² These views and the dominance of the figure of Tom were also captured by Edward Bowen (1836-1901) in his poem entitled ‘Tom’.⁵³

While the sporting emphasis is certainly distant from Arnold’s educational system he too played an important role in the connection between school, country and empire perceiving school to be a communal unit and believing that changes made there would benefit the boys and the country at large. In 1831 he combined the role of headmaster with chaplain for the first time and used his sermons to reach out to the boys. He emphasized religion and educational intellect but understood that good, moral conduct could improve the behaviour of all boys, including those outside these domains. His time at Rugby was one of reform as he attempted to renew the prefect system and eradicate the violence, exploitation and fagging that went with it by instilling the boys with gentlemanly morals and treating them, as Tom says, ‘as if one were working with him’ (330). He was a key part of the educational and general rise of the English middle class as Baucom records:

⁵¹ Particularly Vaughan at Harrow, Thring at Uppingham, Almond at Loretto and Welldon at Dulwich, who made games a compulsory part of public school life.

⁵² Welldon stated: ‘The pluck, the energy, the perseverance, the good temper, the self-control, the discipline, the co-operation, the esprit de corps, which merit success in cricket or football, are the very qualities which win the day in peace or war. The men who possessed these qualities, not sedate and faultless citizens, but men of will, spirit, chivalry, are the men who conquered at Plassey and Quebec. In the history of the British Empire it is written that England owed her sovereignty to her sports’. Welldon cited in Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 36. Welldon (1854 – 1937), Master of Dulwich, 1883-5 where he wrote the school song Wodehouse would learn. Like Cotton, he too became Bishop of Calcutta.

⁵³ See, Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 47.

His tenure as headmaster marks what one might call an event in the discourse of Englishness. It signalled, as Raymond Williams argues in *The Long Revolution*, the arrival of a middle-class dominance in the control of public schools and precipitated the rapid and massive expansion of those schools and their ability to discipline a hegemonic representation of English cultural identity.⁵⁴

This 'English cultural identity' was already linked to empire and Arnold himself used to refer to Rugby as 'a little commonwealth' reflecting its position as a building block of the nation and empire. Echoing this sentiment, Arthur describes the school as a 'corner of the British Empire', and perhaps the only one that 'is thoroughly, wisely and strongly ruled just now'. His statement carries numerous connotations suggestively referring to the Marlborough Rebellion of 1851, the disorder of Indian Mutiny and the battle with Flashman which Tom amusingly greeted with 'I'm all for Revolution and hurrah for Law and Order!' (171). In each case revolt is followed by a new sense of order that reflects Arnold's position at Rugby. It highlights the stability and endurance not only of Arnold's influence on the boys but also his influence on the idea of ruling, specifically in relation to the empire, as his hold on the school is strong and just, the model that should be replicated across the globe.

Arnold's image has become dominated by Hughes's depiction of him as 'the Doctor'. Arthur's exclamation 'the Doctor as a ruler!' ironically registers the Headmaster's status within the school and, at the same time, his distance from seeming to domineer and rule by force. As 'the Doctor' Arnold's strength in the text comes from his position as a continual absent-presence. Seemingly omnipresent, he knows about all the boys and their activities but stays away long enough for them to find their own way, or think they have, as with Tom. When he is present his persona is forceful and exacting, exerting a power and immediate impact on Tom even though Tom is outside of his elite circle. On the occasions when he comes into direct contact with Tom and his friends, the Doctor's

⁵⁴ Baucom, *Out of Place*, 138.

tone becomes that of a surrogate father, caring for and moulding the boys as he goes. As Tom discovers from the Young Master, this caring interference shaped his relationship with his two best friends, East and Arthur. The Doctor deliberately split Tom and East when he had become concerned at their rebellious tendencies and decided to give Tom the care of the quiet, fatherless, George Arthur; a decision that resulted in great changes for the masculine maturity of all three boys.

East, Tom's social mentor and partner in schoolboy crime, eventually leaves Rugby for the East as an army officer.⁵⁵ Before leaving, however, he becomes concerned that he has not been confirmed and the Doctor kindly arranges for the rescue of his Soul with a communion over the vacation. This moment of religious confirmation is East's final schoolboy act and prompts his deliverance into the Christian community which, in the book, has the Doctor/Arnold at its head. Afterward he is ready for his worldly future, and Tom and the Young Master discuss his army career after the cricket match. According to Tom, East will be a hit in the army because 'no fellow could handle boys better, and I suppose soldiers are very like boys. And he'll never tell them to go where he won't go himself' (362).⁵⁶ The words already strike a Newboltian tone and link East's Rugby experiences, mostly those outside of the classroom, with a natural but also nurtured heroism and sense of leadership. The Young Master hopes that East gets a 'good colonel' (362) because it took him so long 'to learn the lesson of obeying'

⁵⁵ Harry 'Scud' East, was based on Hughes's real life school companion William Patrick Adam who eventually became Governor of Madras. Hughes's own schoolboy friend was Major William Hodson, of Hodson's Horse, who died in India in 1858 and was remembered by Hughes as one of 'the Heroes of India', young East's destination. See, Richards, *Happiest Days*, 28.

⁵⁶ Writing about young officers from public school going to war, Ian Hay wrote in 1922: 'They were pathetically young; but they possessed two principal qualifications: they knew their job, and they played the game. They never asked men to go where they would not go themselves. So, children though they were, their men followed them everywhere. There are not many of them left now'. Hay cited in Quigly, 239. His sentiment suggests how the qualities that East was seen to possess would push him and others to their death in World War One.

(362).⁵⁷ East did, however, eventually learn obedience and this was the feature that allowed him to move beyond school and into the empire as a soldier and potential leader. Consequently, East moves from England out to India in order to continue the lessons of obedience and morality taught at Rugby but maintaining his own streak of independence and adventure. By remembering him in the context of the cricket match, Tom and the Master draw cricket ever outward and the empire ever inward.

In contrast to East, George Arthur is the soft, religious, effeminate youth Tom defends in his fight with Slogger Williams. Arthur is the Soul to Tom's body, the religious conscience to Tom's physical masculinity. When Arthur falls ill, the post-fight deathbed scene between the friends offers a space for the open expression of their genuine affection and perhaps, through Arthur's mother, his female equivalent, Tom's displaced attraction. In addition, it allows Arthur a sacred platform from which to preach soul-saving Arnoldian principles to Tom. Yet Arthur's survival allows him to be saved and transformed by Tom and his sporting manliness. This is played out on the cricket pitch where Tom's development into manhood and Arthur's escape from effeminacy are apparently achieved out of the Doctor's sight. Baucom argues the case:

If Arthur, however, represents the Doctor's triumph over Tom and functions, in some respects, as the stylus with which Arnold writes his signature onto Tom's character, then Tom's rescue of the painfully shy Arthur from the school's bullies represents the triumph of cricket and athleticism over Arnold's system. For it is by fighting for Arthur and, eventually, by placing him on the varsity team (which Tom Captains) that Tom removes the mark of effeminacy which has attached itself to Arthur's name, and incorporates him into the society of the school's elect. Without Tom and the cricketing skills Tom teaches him, Arthur would have been damned by his fellows as surely as Tom, without Arthur, would have been damned, so Hughes suggests, by God.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ A colonel does appear indirectly in the text in the side character of Crab Jones who was based on Edmund 'Crab' Smyth who became a colonel in the Indian army. See, Richards, *Happiest Days*, 28.

⁵⁸ Baucom, *Out of Place*, 146.

Baucom identifies how Arthur's cricketing maturation is the victory of sport over religion/intellectualism which begins the erasure of religion from the sporting tradition until being a cricketing gentleman becomes a religion in and of itself. There is another important aspect to Arthur's presence on the cricket pitch. That is, if he is not worthy of his place on merit and exists almost as a closeted figure of effeminacy then he disrupts the very notion of the Christian cricketing gentleman being built. In this manner Arthur's blurred homosocial/homosexual identification destabilizes the very idea of English, imperial and Christian manliness with which Hughes has inadvertently defeated Arnold. A similar type of homosocial/homosexual slippage is repeated in *Tell England*, as discussed below. In both cases, cricket establishes the male identity and even masculinity of boys who otherwise appear as effeminate. Such writing over the feminine is repeated throughout the genre and stands alongside the ongoing concerns with same-sex encounters that haunt such texts and repeatedly appear in historical accounts of public schools, most famously the memoirs of John Addington Symonds.⁵⁹

Supposedly comparable with the Doctor's headship, Tom's captaincy contains obvious faults and errors of judgement which, as Richards highlights, sees Tom put M.C.C. in to bat, permit comic songs at luncheon and allows Arthur to play though he's 'not quite sure he ought to be in the team for his play' (292). Tom also decides to bat Arthur and Jack Raggles out of turn and withdraws from the post-match festivities he should be hosting. These blunders led the cricket-mad Wodehouse to claim that Hughes could not have written this or the preachy latter half of the novel.⁶⁰ Such mistakes, however, are

⁵⁹ Chris Kent's *The Real Tom Brown's School Days: An English School Boy Parody* (San Francisco: GLB, 2002) has taken up the embedded issues of homoeroticism and homosocial/homosexual slippage present within Hughes's classic text and written a rather explicit version of the classic schoolboy tale which portrays repeated same sex sexual encounters between boys and groups of boys.

⁶⁰ The shift in tone between the first part of the novel and the second are substantial though if you consider the book as being about Tom's journey into Christian maturity it works as a 'coherent and consistent whole', as Scott observes. See Richards, *Happiest Days*, 25. Theories that Hughes became softer, more religious after the death of his daughter, which occurred as he was writing, seem to ignore the emphasis Hughes himself placed on his desire to preach to boys. Responding to criticism about 'too

relative to Tom's position as 'a Newbolt man in embryo form', as someone who, as Arthur notes, has 'a great deal to learn about the art of ruling'. What is certain though is Tom's destiny to rule. His future seems to be one in which the cricketing leadership he has risen to will continue to characterize his life. Indeed, Mr Aislabie, the M.C.C. captain, reminds the reader and Tom that Lord's and M.C.C. are part of his future as an English gentleman: 'I hope we shall have you for a member if you come up to town' (293). Such institutional acceptance puts Tom on the brink of English and imperial authority. Even as he leaves for school in preparation for Oxford, the typical route for English gents, his immediate journey is 'away for London' (300) suggesting that he will join the town men of M.C.C. and become 'a young traveller' of imperial prospects; the horizon already open to/by East and the Brown clan.

Finally, having discovered all that the Doctor has done for him and his friends, Tom returns to the school house to rejoin his cricketing comrades, as their hero but also as a newborn worshipper of the Doctor, 'a hero-worshipper, who would have satisfied the soul of Thomas Carlyle himself' (367). As something of a postscript, Hughes tells how Tom discovers the news of the Doctor's death over the summer and returns to Rugby to see the Doctor's tomb. At last his feeling for the Doctor are resolved shifting from admiration to love and so he returns to the chapel and expresses the very sentiments that characterized Arnold's educational influence. The text ends as it began, with hero worship only this time Hughes's hierarchy, like that of Carlyle, moves through the hero and hero-worshipping of men, in this case Arnold, to God. Hughes writes that 'such stages have to be gone through, I believe, by all young and brave souls who must win their way through hero-worship, to the worship of Him who is the King and Lord of Heroes' (376). The narrative voice attempts to draw the reader's attention to the

much preaching', in the Preface to the Sixth edition he states, 'my whole object in writing at all, was to get the chance of preaching!' See, Hughes, *Tom Brown*, xxxix.

fictional and real grave of the Doctor/Arnold, the monument of loss that perpetuates his disciplinary absent-presence, and through Arnold to the Christian investment in God. Nevertheless, the hero who stands alone on the page and has dominated throughout is Tom Brown the hero who brought together the home and abroad dimensions of the Brown clan into a single, cricketing, figure as a national and potentially imperial hero. It is with this schoolboy hero who has been made through hero worship and cricketing gentlemanliness that Hughes leaves the reading public and the English nation. To Quigly's mind, from this point on, 'the hero of popular fiction descends in an unbroken line from Tom Brown'.⁶¹

In the fifty years between the cricketing schoolboy's rise in *Tom Brown* and his dominance in Wodehouse's *Mike* (1909) cricket underwent dramatic changes and by the 1880s had entered its Golden Age, the era of W. G. Grace (1848-1915), the (other) Doctor who 'incorporated [cricket] into the life of the nation'.⁶² The period also saw the proliferation of fiction for boys and particularly Boys Weeklies which Howarth claims were almost dependent upon the schoolboy sporting hero with contributors like Baines Reed, Barrie, Baden-Powell and even Grace all adding to the schoolboy's glorification. During his early career Wodehouse contributed to this genre, first with *The Pothunters* in *The Public School Magazine* in 1902 and then regularly in *The Captain* until 1908 publishing six public school works before the serialized arrival of *Junior Jackson* in April 1907 and then its sequel, *The Lost Lambs*, the following year.⁶³ These two came together to form *Mike* in 1909, Wodehouse's last and most substantial contribution to a genre almost entirely dedicated to athleticism. Growing up under this reign of athleticism at Dulwich (1894-1900) Wodehouse became 'a fine cricketer, a noted fast

⁶¹ Quigly, 57.

⁶² James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 170. Space does not permit any fuller acknowledgement of Grace's cricketing presence or legacy other than to say that for James, Arnold and Grace met in the space provided by Hughes and his schoolboy creation, Tom Brown.

⁶³ Robert McCrum, *Wodehouse: A Life* (London: Viking, 2004), 85.

bowler, a good footballer and a keen boxer'; something of a 'blood'.⁶⁴ According to McCrum, sport was 'where he found uninhibited self-expression [...]. In a childhood starved of love, sport became his version of intimacy, sport was one love; Dulwich College was another'.⁶⁵ In 1900, after his father had denied him a university place for financial reasons, Wodehouse began bank work in London only to depart two years later to become a journalist with *The Globe* and an independent writer. Something of a perpetual adolescent who knew little outside school and regularly went back to watch cricket at Dulwich, Wodehouse's earliest writing mobilized his experiences of school and his knowledge of the schoolboy genre but sought to move away from the excessive sentiment of predecessors like Farrar and Baines Reed.⁶⁶ In his stories, with his knowledge of the genre and his love of sport, 'the triumph of athleticism is perfectly expressed'.⁶⁷

In *Mike*, however, it is not athleticism generally that is worshipped but cricket and specifically the schoolboy batsman as hero. Ordinary except for his prodigious batting, Mike enters the text, like Tom, through his family, the Jackson cricketing clan. His elder brothers, Joe, Reggie and Frank, are already amateur gents playing first-class cricket while Bob stands ahead of Mike at Wrykyn and is on the verge of his colours. Heir to this cricketing dynasty but of superior potential, Mike is earmarked as a future England player, a future cricketing hero of the nation and thereby a potential imperial traveller.⁶⁸ Mike also has two younger sisters, the eldest of whom, Maggie, has a special eye on his talent and although Wodehouse grants the Jackson females some cricketing expertise Maggie is satirized for her enactment of the excessive emotion

⁶⁴ Richards, *Happiest Days*, 124.

⁶⁵ McCrum, 29.

⁶⁶ In his biography of Wodehouse McCrum cites Wodehouse as having acknowledged that he was 'a bad case of arrested mental development' and hadn't progressed past the age of eighteen (29). He also writes that Wodehouse, like other young writers, wrote about school because he knew little else (52).

⁶⁷ Richards, *Happiest Days*, 124.

⁶⁸ P. G. Wodehouse, *Mike: A Public School Story* (Pennsylvania: Wildside Press, 2006), 7-9. Hereafter, all references to *Mike* shall be given in text as taken from this edition.

found in previous school stories and condemned with 'girls oughtn't to meddle' (109).⁶⁹ Cricket is a source of familial pride and tradition to the Jacksons which makes Mike's entrance into public school smoother but also means that as the youngest and most talented cricketer he must supersede his familial predecessors.⁷⁰

At Wrykyn Mike finds his own East in James Wyatt who, like East, acts as the gatekeeper to school society and sport only this time it is cricket which opens the scene. Also like East, Wyatt stands as a leader of boys and a future man of imperial adventure. When he orchestrates a 'picnic revolt' in which the entire lower school goes on the half holiday to protest against the Headmaster, Wodehouse describes how 'leaders of men are rare. Leaders of boys are almost unknown. It requires a genius to sway the school' (51) and Wyatt is such a genius, such a leader. When he is eventually removed from Wrykyn his departure is to a depressing banking position in London until he is rescued by the imperial connections of the Jacksons.⁷¹ Although Mike was 'profoundly ignorant as to the details by which his father's money had been, or was being made' (130), Mr Jackson owned a large sheep farming estate in 'the Argentine' where Joe, the eldest son, had been born.⁷² That is, Mr Jackson's wealth is made abroad through imperial farming to support the English public school education and amateur cricketing careers of his sons. Consequently, like the Browns, the Jacksons bring together home and abroad, England and imperial adventure, linking distant financial exploits with domestic cricketing amateurism. Further, the global dimension of their family is supported by

⁶⁹ The Jacksons appear to be based on the Forster family of Malvern whose seven brothers all played for Worcestershire and three sisters practiced or played. There also appears to be some allusion to the Grace's, of which W. G., like Mike, was the fourth brother.

⁷⁰ Mike Jackson is another common name used to capture the ordinary Englishness of the character. It is also the name of the General Chief of Staff of the British Army (2003-6) Sir General Mike Jackson and the connection, though only coincidental, serves as another reminder of the links between such public schoolboys and British military.

⁷¹ Wodehouse also gives Mike and Psmith the same fate at the start of the sequel *Psmith in the City* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1910) but they too escape, this time heading for America.

⁷² The information that only Joe was born in the Argentine also implies that in order to raise his family Mr Jackson returned to England.

Mike's Uncle John who had been an army surgeon serving in Afghanistan until he inherited enough to support a life of perpetual travel and visits Mike to enjoy memories of schoolboy cricket.⁷³ When Wyatt is employed on Mr Jackson's estate the skills he learnt outside of the curriculum (riding and shooting) are much appreciated. In his letters he describes how he gets a bullet in the shoulder but still manages to shoot a poacher in the leg. His adventures appear to be in line with the 'stalky' tradition of Kipling and commentators have noted Wodehouse's interest in and occasional similarity to Kipling's *Stalky*. Where *Stalky* is the focus of Kipling's work and its rejection of the sporting ideology, however, Wyatt is rather a sidelined character who continues to engage with stories of school cricket regularly by conversing with other Old Wrykemists overseas. In distinct opposition to *Stalky*, Wyatt functions, as East does, to cloak the rest of the cricketing action in a colonial hue that presents a glorified imperial horizon to those still at home playing cricket but one which longs to retain its school connections and receives less admiration than Mike's cricketing heroism.

Almost immediately at Wrykyn, Mike finds himself playing against M.C.C. but instead of being faced with 'illustrious strangers' as in *Tom Brown* he and Bob are encountering the familial faces of their brother Joe and Saunders, the old professional who had been employed by Mr Jackson for the benefit of his sons during their school vacations. Cricket, including the epitome of its English institutionalization, has become a central and well known part of their domesticity. It is Saunders, a surrogate cricketing father, who paves the way for Mike's successful entrance into public school cricket by bowling him a half volley for his first ball and providing him with his first wicket-taking catch. Mike's batting, like that of his brothers and innumerable others, has been nurtured and

⁷³ Mike's uncle is similar to the character of Uncle John Verney in the first chapter of Vachell's *The Hill* who is an explorer, a world traveller and conqueror of great fame whose name is remembered and hallowed at Harrow and who raises his fatherless nephew and namesake, the young John Verney. Like the Browns the Verneys are connected to England and the New Forest but also to the imperial world beyond meaning that young John enters Harrow from an imperially English context.

honed by Saunders. Wodehouse gives Saunders a quaint affability and immense cricketering knowledge but adheres to the class-based distinction between batsman, as amateur gentleman (despite his young age), and bowler as employed professional in his depiction of the working cricketer.⁷⁴ A similar gap occurs when Mike chooses to play for the Lower Borlock village team while hiding his talents from Sedleigh and enjoys raising his average to over fifty as the sole gentleman of the team. By playing well against M.C.C. Mike gains a first team place at Bob's expense only to sacrifice it for Bob by faking a wrist injury. On discovering the truth from Maggie's letter Bob offers to repay the favour for the Ripton Match but Mike declines. Neither brother could do 'the self-sacrificing young hero business' (112) of the other novels that Wodehouse mocks as part of an ongoing intertextual debate in which he acknowledges *Tom Brown*, *Eric* and other texts of the genre but seeks to separate his hero from theirs. Yet, quite neatly both brothers are finally able to play because of Wyatt's departure and Mike heroically wins the game for Wrykyn. Although Wodehouse attempts to distance his work from other school stories with a more realistic antagonism between Masters and boys and a schoolboy idiom, by presenting Mike's ascension into batting heroism he too is also dealing in the same business of schoolboy heroes and placing the cricketering schoolboy above everyone else.

As Quigly noted, Wodehouse claimed that his school stories were the work of an 'amateur' but we can see in the young amateur writer a future genius.⁷⁵ It is the English adoration of the public schoolboy as future amateur gentleman that is reflected in *Mike* but most specifically the amateur gentleman as a batsman hero. Where Wodehouse's title *The Gold Bat* (1904) refers to a pin given to the captain of the winning house team, in *Mike* the phrase may also be applied to the golden quality of Mike's batting and the

⁷⁴ For a literary portrayal of the tragic life and difficult living encountered by the professional cricketer see, Bruce Hamilton's *Pro: An English Tragedy* (London, Cresset, 1946).

⁷⁵ Quigly, 164.

colour of the success it brings him and his family.⁷⁶ It is batting that has been passed down through each of the Jackson brothers and the eldest three all play county cricket as gentleman amateurs. Moreover, with the employment of Saunders it is batting specifically that is sponsored by their father's imperial finances. Where captaincy is the height of Tom Brown's success, it is the half way point bypassed by Wodehouse as he moves Mike from Wrykyn and focuses on his batting heroism and a lesson in loyalty. Instead of captaincy and despite being a strong fielder and all round sportsman it is Mike's aesthetic batting that marks him out as heroically English. Even the master responsible for his worst school report was 'pro Mike' and felt 'thrills of pure aesthetic joy' watching some of his shots (151). This reflects Holt's assessment of the batsman-hero during the period. He writes: 'Batting acquired public school prestige. The English heroic ideal in cricket, despite regional variations [...] came to require a man to display grace, quiet authority, unruffled calm under attack, elegance, modesty and integrity'.⁷⁷ These are the qualities that Mike possesses by the end of the novel.

When, after two short years Mike is set to become Wrykyn captain his father receives a report claiming that 'an abnormal proficiency at games has apparently destroyed all desire in him to realise the more serious issues of life' (151). In response, Mr Jackson sends Mike to Sedleigh which becomes Mike's nemesis and he refuses to engage with House or school spirit and denies them his cricketing talents. He finds a new best friend in a japing, monocled, comrade from Eton calling himself Psmith (the P being amusingly silent when spoken). It is widely recognized that the entrance of Psmith marks the arrival of the fully matured Wodehousian style pre-empting the irony, humour and voice of his most famous of characters, Bertie Wooster.⁷⁸ Together Mike

⁷⁶ See, P. G. Wodehouse, *The Gold Bat* (London: Souvenir Press, 1974), 19-20.

⁷⁷ Richard Holt, 'Cricket and Englishness: The Batsman as Hero', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 13:1 (1996), 48-70 (49).

⁷⁸ Evelyn Waugh made this point. See Richards, *Happiest Days*, 133.

and Psmith join the Archaeological Society to escape cricket and the School Fire Brigade as they resent the 'healthy boy' ideology of Mr Downing. Again, in the episodes surrounding Downing and the Brigade similarities with Kipling have been noted but where Kipling rejects both the stance of Downing and the sporting tradition, Wodehouse invests in athleticism and cricket as a means of schoolboy self expression and a loyalty that stands above the jingoism of masters. Raging against the detention placed upon him by Mr Downing, Mike emerges from his stupor, like 'Achilles leav[ing] his tent' (180), to play in a house match against Downing's in which he destroys Mr Downing's bowling, scores 277 and prevents Downing's side from even batting. The insult to the master is degrading and although humorous it stands as the ultimate example of Mike's ego getting in the way of gentlemanly cricketing behaviour and school solidarity. The victory provokes a war with Adair, the school captain, as Mike refuses to use his talents to play for Sedleigh. They eventually square off and box frantically until Adair stays down and they are then reconciled in a scene that consciously evokes *Tom Brown*. This fight prepares Mike for future change, as it did with Tom, and it even pushes Psmith to support Adair's attempts to raise Sedleigh.

Throughout *Mike* Wodehouse explores the public school spirit by testing Mike's allegiances. Like many boys, he has a difficulty in obeying and a sizable confidence in his own worth. At Wrykyn he decides to miss early-morning fielding practice for the house team in order to stay in bed feeling assured that he is in the First Eleven and resentful of Firby-Smith's smug dictatorialism. It is Wyatt who offers him a lesson on loyalty and good conduct:

"When you're a white-haired old man like me, young Jackson, you'll see that there are two sorts of discipline at school. One you can break if you feel like taking the risks; the other you mustn't ever break. I don't know why, but it isn't done. Until you learn that, you can never hope to become the Perfect

Wrykynian like,” he concluded modestly, “me.” [Mike] saw and approved of Wyatt’s point of view, which was the more impressive to him from his knowledge of his friend’s contempt for, or, rather, cheerful disregard of, most forms of law and order. If Wyatt, reckless though he was as regards written school rules, held so rigid a respect for those that were unwritten, these last must be things which could not be treated lightly. That night, for the first time in his life, Mike went to sleep with a clear idea of what the public school spirit, of which so much is talked and written, really meant. (100)

The deference to authority, to the cricket captain, to one’s place in the collective is noted throughout this episode and though he despises Firby-Smith Mike knows he was in the wrong. A sense of England’s unwritten constitution, a code of conduct, of honour and the unwritten gentlemanly ‘spirit of the game’ that binds the schoolboys together as Englishmen are embedded in Wyatt’s speech but Mike only understands it in relation to Wrykyn. Consequently, though he becomes a ‘Perfect Wrykynian’, his move to Sedleigh presents the new challenge of having to learn collective loyalty to the public school code that stretches across schools to encompass the future gentlemen of England. In transferring school Mike initially upholds a sulky nostalgia for his old Wrykyn instead of embracing the new Sedleigh just as Psmith is wallowing after his removal from the Eton eleven (269). Repeating Wyatt’s lesson it is, rather unexpectedly, Psmith who persuades Mike to stand by Adair and their new school when he states:

“I’m not much on the ‘Play up for the old school, Jones,’ game, but every one to his taste. I shouldn’t have thought anybody would get overwhelmingly attached to this abode of wrath, but Comrade Adair seems to have done it. He’s all for giving Sedleigh a much-needed boost-up. It’s not a bad idea in its way. I don’t see why one shouldn’t humour him. Apparently he’s been sweating since early childhood to buck the school up. And as he’s leaving at the end of the term, it mightn’t be a scaly scheme to give him a bit of a send-off, if possible, by making the cricket season a bit of a banger. As a start, why not drop him a line to say that you’ll play against the M.C.C. to-morrow?” (268).

In a uniquely ironic, patronizing but affectionate tone, this is Psmith expressing his public school and cricketing conformity. Even when mocking the ‘play up’ sentiment he is advocating adherence to its values and this is typical of the text with its repeated

plays on slogans like ‘stiff upper lip’, ‘straight bat’ and ‘play up’. Howarth claims in Wodehouse’s work ‘no moral lessons are pressed’.⁷⁹ Although they may not be forcibly pressed, they are certainly present at the level of athletic assumption where cricket and the cricketing hero are understood as loyal, chivalrous and patriotic. In the code of cricketing conduct there is no alternative but to be loyal to the cause and its captain. After the game against M.C.C. is rained off, preventing Mike from returning to his own family ties with cricket, he and Psmith lead Sedleigh to victory over Wrykyn with Mike scoring a decisive 50 in the second innings. Mike announces that the schools are in ‘it’ together – where the ‘it’ is the game and the building of a code that creates a collectivity of English cricketing schoolboys set to become gentlemen. By reconciling his position at Sedleigh with his old position at Wrykyn through his batting Mike is able to represent the unifying standards of cricketing public school heroes, particularly as amateur batsman, and through them the qualities of the Newboltian Man. These are the very qualities that Raymond’s *Tell England* takes from the public school out into the battle grounds of World War One.

Divided equally between experiences of public school and war, Ernest Raymond’s *Tell England: A Study of a Generation* (1922) brings the schoolboy cricketing hero out to the combative front for which he had been trained in a ‘school story at war’.⁸⁰ Reflecting upon its success, Richards makes a distinction between high culture that was generally becoming hostile to public schools, as seen in Kipling and Waugh below, and popular culture that remained broadly supportive, as in Raymond’s example of post-war nostalgia.⁸¹ His text’s old fashioned naivety and optimistic tone reveal few of the horrors of the Great War despite its author having served as a priest in Gallipoli and

⁷⁹ Howarth, 214.

⁸⁰ Quigly, 239.

⁸¹ See, Jeffrey Richards, “‘Passing the love of women’: manly love and Victorian society”, in *Manliness and Morality*, 92-122 (117).

elsewhere. Notwithstanding its rejection by seven publishers, it is obvious to Quigly why it appealed to post-war readers:

It tells of the war in what seems a pre-war spirit [and] is full of old decencies, the old innocence (sexual as well as otherwise), the lost atmosphere of pre-1914 middle class life. [It] could still express the idea [...] that the dead men's families could cling to – that of aesthetic and moral perfection in a very young man's death.⁸²

In this spirit *Tell England* charts the development of Rupert Ray, Edgar Gray Doe and the slightly older Albert Pennybet (or Doe, Ray and me, as Pennybet suggests) first at Kensingstowe School and then in the army until all three die in World War One. The principal narrative voice belongs to Ray whose adoration of, and friendship with, Doe lies at the heart of the novel as they rise to become the best bowler and batsman of Kensingstowe, respectively. Their deaths are the heroic sacrifices of the cricketing public schoolboy who has, at last, found his way into the adult world of imperial conflict.⁸³

In the school setting of the first half of the novel cricketing participation is seen in three main episodes: the first when Ray and Doe play against the Prep School or 'Nursery team' and lose; the second when Ray and Pennybet organize a farcical sequel in which Pennybet tyrannizes the younger children in his position as umpire; and finally, the last game of Ray and Edgar's school career against the Masters. Where the first example brings them into the text as potential public school cricketing heroes, the episode of Pennybet's tyranny as an umpire is an example of his dark, sharp and ruthless self-gratification (like Scaife in *The Hill*) in a moment of rebellion from the public school

⁸² The book was out of print from 1945 until 2005 reflecting its unfashionable response to the war and the crisis that came to its heroic image of the schoolboy after the Second World War. See, Quigly, 243-5.

⁸³ Where first names were used to address Tom and Mike (rather than Brown and Jackson) here the surnames of the characters are used (Ray and Doe) as they are predominant in the narrative in the same way that Tom and Mike are in the other works. Also, hereafter all references shall be given in text as taken from Ernest Raymond, *Tell England* (London: Cassell, 1969).

system of cricketing values. Where Ray matures into this fair play ethos and Doe adopts it through mimicry, Pennybet remains a controlling, teasing, self-indulgent figure who dominates the boys until he is killed. This cricket incident also registers cricket's uncanny transformation into a disciplinary terror which young boys cannot escape and which may take on ugly authoritarian forms when implemented by those who have grown up under it. In the other two episodes, however, cricket is seen to reveal and shape the potential of this generation of boys. The 'flannelled figures of [these] players, with their wide little chests, neat waists, and round hips, promised fine things for the manhood of England ten years on' (54).

At Kensingstowe Ray emerges as a bowler and all round sportsman and Doe is seemingly the batsman poet with the gap between them as bowler and batsman suggesting their class difference which, though relatively small, becomes attached to their sporting roles. (A similar gap is portrayed by the two sprinters in the 1981 film adaptation of Raymond's novel, entitled *Gallipoli* and starring Mel Gibson.) Although Doe comes from a cricketing family with an uncle who had been 'a once famous surrey bowler', he is shown to be a 'cricketer made not born' (53). He has style, poise and grace, the essential ingredients of a batsman hero, but these are all cultivated, self-conscious actions that point to his attempt to perform a heroic role rather than actually occupying one. He plays with 'a straight bat' but is seen by Radley, the sporting Master, as an 'actor' (53). He is constantly concerned with how he appears and how his actions may be interpreted, worried that a gesture of 'mock heroics' (41) may lessen him in Radley's eyes. At school he slips away from cricket into intellectual pursuits and, above all, poetry, only to discover that, along with his other sinful mistakes, he was wrong to believe he could be 'superior to cricket' (120). Consequently, turning from temptation, he returns to the game and Ray in time for the final school match against the

masters and so (re)adopts the disciplinary code of cricket and the heroic aesthetics of batsmanship. Though Doe helps gain a win over the masters, it is Ray whose glory is secured in this game. Failing to 'catch' Radley out, Ray clean bowls his idol for victory, the height of schoolboy pleasure. During the game, however, Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated and Radley's wicket falling appears as an indicator that his athletic and public school beliefs will crumble under the weight of the impending war and it is notable that once Ray has said his farewell to Radley he turns back to see the master 'staring out of the window over the empty cricket field' (163). This visual premonition flashes forward to the mass exodus of youth and cricket's eventual halt during the war, but most importantly, it foresees 1914 being the end of the Golden Age; a point emphasized by the death of Grace in 1915. As the novel states: 'War blotted everything out' (142).

These schoolboy cricketing exchanges are couched in the 'manly love' of Ray and Doe. Just as in *The Hill* John Verny claims to love his friend Caesar as 'David loved Jonathon', Ray 'loved Doe as Orestes loved Pylade [and] wanted to believe that [his] friendship for Doe was on the classical models' (110). Quigly asserts that Raymond's work is one of naive innocence but the bond between the boys is fraught with jealousy, competition, sexual tension, homoerotic imagery and the blurring of gender boundaries. These difficulties arise from Doe's feminine appearance, a cause of constant teasing by Pennybet. However, before Ray finds Doe (imagined as a girl) dangerously attractive he is rescued by the memory of his immense cricketing talent: 'But as Doe's prowess at cricket asserted itself upon my mind, his gender became conclusively established' (42). Cricket ensures Doe's gender, his manliness, and works to override the danger of Ray's sexual attachment to him. Nevertheless, this does not prevent their mutual adoration of Radley's masculinity and sporting prowess, the sadomasochistic enjoyment of his

'whackings', the recognition of the 'ineffable longings' of manhood, and Doe's entanglement with Freedman's 'Life of Sensation' (119) leading to all kinds of anonymous sins which seem explicitly homoerotic. All of this alludes to a homosocial/homosexual slippage that Ray has to avoid in his idolization of Doe but which is ultimately erased by Doe's self sacrificing death. The issue of homosexuality is taken up directly by Alec Waugh, as seen below, but for Raymond the relationship between Ray and Doe is negotiated through or side stepped by their relation to cricket and their entrance into war.

Throughout their schoolboy experiences Ray and Doe are young fatherless hero-worshippers who become attached to surrogate father figures. For Ray, this figure is initially his grandfather Colonel Rupert Ray who shares his name with Ray's father and Ray himself identifying them as a family of English military heroes ready to sacrifice themselves, as in his father's case, for their country. Colonel Ray tells his grandson a chivalrous tale of a young boy's heroic adventures (modeling the boy on his grandson). When the Colonel dies Ray's mother fills her son with stories of the Colonel in order that 'one soldierly figure should loom heroic in his childish memory' (12). Later, another Colonel, and friend of his grandfather, interviews Ray for entrance into the army and enables Doe and he to join up together. Then, during the journey to Gallipoli, Major Hardy links the ethics of school sports and classical education to the forthcoming battle at Gallipoli and Ray and Doe readily buy into the continuation of their education. Major Hardy declares that 'no army in the world is officered by such a lot of fresh sportsman as ours' (193). In each instance, a surrogate father links patriotism and war as their expected fate. As Ray and Doe pass through school and then the army, their chief attachments to surrogate father figures shifts from Radley to Padre Monty.

At Kensingstowe they idolize Radley, the assistant house master and a former amateur cricketer, in fact, 'the finest bat in the Middlesex team' (26). Ray aims to be 'as tall a man as Radley' (26) and persists in measuring himself against him throughout his school career as a measure of his own manliness while Doe competes with him to reign supreme in Radley's affections. Their experiences under Radley teach them the valuable lesson of obedience and loyalty, and in Ray's case, modesty, leadership and order. When Ray manages to stop cribbing but fails to prevent himself from lying Radley explains his progress with the cricketing metaphor of 'playing back to a straight ball' that will only result in the eventual loss of your wicket (100). Later, when Ray is believed to have been unfairly disqualified from the swimming competition by 'carpet-slippers', the master who hates him, the school rebels and Ray has to either lead the rebellion or attempt to quell it. After talking to Radley, the headmaster makes Ray a prefect and with this small amount of power he goes out to deal with the rebellion of his class mates, insisting, in true cricketing fashion, they respect the umpire's word as final. In contrast to East and Wyatt, Ray subdues rebellion rather than orchestrating it.

When Ray and Doe join the army, Radley is replaced by Padre Monty whose religious leadership guides them through the war. The Padre wants to send the boys 'into the fight – white' (213) and in his attempts to persuade the boys to come to Mass he echoes Hughes, saying:

"You boys are born hero-worshippers [...]. And there's nothing that warm young blood likes better than to do homage to its hero, and mould itself on its hero lines. In the Mass you simply bow the knee to your Hero, and say: 'I swear fealty. I'm going to mould myself on you.'" (205)

The progression from cricketing hero to religious minister is the movement from schoolboy heroism to religious awakening, but it is also from youthful potential and

cricketing preparation to impending imperial conflict and glorious death. Eventually Doe's confession to Padre Monty makes him clean before his heroic sacrifice – just as East's confirmation cleanses him before departure for India. Moreover, it is only when the Padre has helped Ray accept the 'beauty' of Doe's heroic death that he too is cleansed and ready for his subsequent ascension.

By the First World War the obsession with adolescent boys had reached its height and this novel identifies itself with such an interest in 'sovereign youth' (21) and is about 'lovers of youth' (96). Chappy, the boys' enthusiastic doctor and cricket watcher, makes the point: 'I tell you, this is England's best generation. Dammit [...] there are three things Old England has learnt to make: ships, poetry and boys' (128). These are the ingredients of the narrative as the boys are molded by school – specifically through cricket and poetry – to be shipped out to fight in a war that was caused, in no small part, by Britain's imperial status and naval supremacy. The 'shadow of manhood' and 'the shadow of the Great War' (113) are united as the future of the boys. Their glory was captured forever in death so that Ray's first person narrative ends with: 'life is good and youth is good, I have had twenty glorious years' (320). The expression of life being equated with youth and both culminating in heroic, patriotic death echoes Quigly's point that 'if in adult life the blood could never achieve the glory he had known at school, then death was the perfect solution: heroic, absolute, it combined artistic and emotional rightness'.⁸⁴ Ray articulates this very sense himself when describing his notion of 'ideal patriotism', of the perfection of finding death while 'standing [...] at the front of your nation' (319).

⁸⁴ Quigly, 240.

In 'Duty unto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of the New Imperialism', Mangan describes how 'in the second half of the nineteenth century war came to be seen as a moral mandate' as the military was transformed from being vicious in 1800 to virtuous in 1900.⁸⁵ He goes on to assert: 'What Thomas Carlyle had insisted, many came to believe. The national hero is now a warrior and a patriotic death in battle was the finest masculine moral virtue [...], the military now became an instrument of imperial moral design [and] Empire was where the young Briton fulfilled his destiny as schoolboy master of the world'.⁸⁶ In the novel, subtitled a 'Study of a Generation', Mrs Pennybet reiterates this point by stating that 'these restless boys are here to inherit the world' (20). This sense of the significance of these boys to the world, particularly to Britain's world empire, is encapsulated by their army recruiting Colonel:

"had you been eighteen a generation earlier, the British Empire could have treated you as very insignificant fry, whereas to-day she is obliged to come to you boys and say 'You take top place in my aristocracy. You're on top because I must place the whole weight of everything I have upon your shoulders. You're on top because you are the Capitalists, possessing an enormous capital of youth and strength and boldness and endurance. You must give it all to me – to gamble with – for my life. I've nothing to give you except suffering and...'" (169).

As youthful royalty the boys go out to fight for England and her empire. On their last night in an English harbour 'there was elation in the air at the sight of Britain embarking for the Dardanelles to teach the Turk what the Empire meant' (192) for the 'Turk, by occupying Constantinople, has blocked the old Royal Road to India and the East' (179). The war had become a 'New Crusade' (180), almost a new imperial crusade for which they had trained through their cricketing heroics. Now they would prove themselves and their nation's 'greatness', even if it killed them all.

⁸⁵ Mangan, 'Duty unto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of the New Imperialism' in *Tribal Identities: Nationalism, Europe, Sport* ed. by J. A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 10-38 (13).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

Toward the close of the novel there are two related cricketing aspects to this war. The first is the grave stone of White which gives the book its title and the second is Doe's heroic act of bravery that is relayed in a cricketing metaphor to suggest that although through school he had been 'playing a fine hero' (88) at war he became one. The book's name may have been inspired by the famous epitaph to King Leonidas and his men erected at Thermopylae which reads: 'Go, tell the Spartans, stranger passing by/That here, obedient to their laws, we lie'. In the narrative, however, 'Tell England' is taken from the gravestone of White, a fallen Kensingtonian and ex-cricket captain, which reads; 'Tell England, ye who pass this monument/We died for her and here we rest content' (271). The school cricketing leader has sacrificed himself for his country and wishes to tell her such. There is no resentment toward England only pride and loyalty expressed with warmth and respect. It directly references Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier* (1914) with its famous 'If I should die, think only this of me;/That there is some corner of a foreign field/That is forever England'.⁸⁷ Rutherford employs *Forever England* as the title to his 'Reflections on Masculinity and Empire' in which he argues that Brooke became the mythic figure of youthful English patriotism during the war but also of the internal contradictions, sexual confusion and mother/female-related anxiety that similarly characterize Ray. Brooke (1887-1915) had died on St George's Day, 23rd April, 1915 from a septic mosquito bite two days before the Gallipoli land invasion began.⁸⁸ After his death his poetry came to stand for patriotic youth and brave innocent death despite the reality of his demise. In *Tell England* his image is replicated in a second 'Rupert' (Ray) but also in Doe.

⁸⁷ It was perhaps the lasting sentiments of Brooke's *The Soldier* that Mustafa Kemal, the military leader who thwarted the invasion and became the first President of Turkey, was talking back to when in 1934 he said: 'Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives [...] you are now living in a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace.'

⁸⁸ As First Lord of Admiralty it was Churchill's failed plan to capture the Dardanelles. His continued political presence from this world war to the next helps understand the continuity of values and men at issue.

When the peninsula is to be evacuated to save the troops, a mass distraction is required so that the opposing Turkish forces do not discover the retreat. At this critical moment it is Doe who rushes forward, leading his men, running over the top in order to bomb the gunner. When he is shot he goes down but Ray has faith that his friend will go on; he 'felt assured that [Doe] would never stay in the crater like a diffident batsman in his block. He would reach the opposite crease or be run out' (287). The cricketing metaphor recaptures their schoolboy days and hints at the heroic creation built through schoolboy games. It brings to the fore their belief in the Three C's and the 'Play up' sentiment that brought them out to fight. Doe (re)emerges to run the last few metres and explode the grenade that enables the successful evacuation. He later dies because of his injuries but he has died a cricketing hero, a war hero, and English hero defending Britain's Empire. Shattered by his friend's death, Ray dies later on the Western Front. Raymond dedicates his book: 'To the Memory of Reginald Vincent Cambell Corbet who fell, while a boy, in the East and George Frederick Francis Corbet who passed, whole a boy, in the West. The deaths (re)establish the link between West and East, home and abroad, and are depicted as the beautiful, patriotic sacrifice of the cricketing youth of the nation. Rutherford sees these heroic deaths as providing the solution to the problem of homosexuality, or at least homoeroticism, which follows the young men. Their fall also reawakens the sorrows of war and the sacrifice of their generation and the reader stands reminded of the cost this generation bore because of its adherence to the 'Play up' sentiment of the Newboltian hero which had been cultivated from a young age in the figure of the imperially destined cricketing schoolboy hero. Even before the Great War, however, the Newboltian paradigm had been challenged from within public school literature.

Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* and Alec Waugh's *The Loom of Youth* are two texts which challenged the public school genre and specifically its investment in the 'Play Up' ethic with Kipling offering an early alternative vision of the schoolboy hero. His *Stalky & Co.* was first published in 1899 as a collection of nine short stories and was re-released in 1929 as *The Complete Stalky & Co.* with five additional pieces. The work received much criticism as a disgusting and violent portrayal of school life and was condemned by one critic as 'an unpleasant book about unpleasant boys in an unpleasant school'.⁸⁹ The reaction was in part due to the book's substantial difference from the school story genre as seen in the type of school it described, the type of boys it made heroes of, its rejection of athleticism and its darkly humorous, often sadomasochistic, tone. Sutcliff writes that 'the good folk who were shocked by *Stalky*, forgave *Tom Brown* its brutalities' and it is the cricketing codes of *Tom Brown* that Kipling is clearly writing against.⁹⁰ It is also notable that where the schoolboy hero is generally a perpetual adolescent, Kipling's protagonist is a perpetual adult ready for the world at large. Quigly marks Kipling's work out for the sheer quality of his prose but also notes that its main point of distinction is Kipling's insistence on school life providing practical preparation for the empire, making *Stalky* the only school story in which the imperial front is the immediate purpose of school training. In contrast, David Gilmour claims that 'there are no imperial lessons' only moral ambivalence and subversiveness in *Stalky*.⁹¹ Additionally, Gilbert reads Kipling's use of colonialism as a 'private metaphor for self discovery and self fulfillment' rather than practical instruction.⁹² Where Gilbert offers an interesting perspective on Kipling's personalization of imperial

⁸⁹ Quigly, 110.

⁹⁰ Rosemary Sutcliff, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: The Bodley Head, 1960), 41.

⁹¹ Gilmour, *The Long Recessional*, 139.

⁹² Eliot L. Gilbert, *The Good Kipling: Studies in the short story* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1970), 127.

contact, Gilmour suggests that the imperial front is much further away from Kipling's text than actually appears to be the case, particularly as the subversiveness of *Stalky* is directed at imperial preparation and survival. As Scott has said, the text provides 'a combat zone' in which Kipling employs the popular metaphor of war as a game which Newbolt uses to 'exalt the harshest side of the manly code' rather than the Newboltian paradigm of gentlemanly conduct in order to demonstrate Stalky's suitability for the imperial front.⁹³ In short, Kipling opposed and refashioned the code of the schoolboy cricketing hero to create a cunning hero of imperial hardiness and adventure.

The stories themselves do not provide a single narrative or plot and there is no real sense of a moral journey or of character development, as with other schoolboy tales. Instead, the pieces are united by the sense of preparation for the empire as they follow the amusing activities of three central characters: Arthur Lionel Corkran based upon Lionel Dunsterville (later Major-General), who earns the nickname 'Stalky' in the first self entitled story; M'Turk, the real life G. C. Beresford; and Beetle (no surname) who is Kipling himself. 'Stalky's gang holds in contempt all the traditionally upper-class values that structure the public school — the honour of the house, athleticism, honesty and fair play, the prefectural system'.⁹⁴ In *Something of Myself*, Kipling explains that his didactic purpose in writing had been to provide 'some tracts or parables on the education of the young'.⁹⁵ This was to be an education that made boys ready for the defence of the empire in a way that compulsory games and cricketing fair play did not. It was set to combat the type of imperial ignorance and disasters seen in the Boer War and which he poetically protested against in 'The English Flag' and 'The Islanders'.

⁹³ Scott, 'Kipling's Combat Zones: Training Grounds in the Mowgli Stories, *Captains Courageous*, and *Stalky & Co.*', (54).

⁹⁴ John Kucich, 'Sadomasochism and the Magical Group: Kipling's Middle Class Imperialism', *Victorian Studies*, 46:1 (2003), 33-69 (45).

⁹⁵ P. W. Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter: The Life and Death of the School Story* (London: Routledge, 1985), 171.

Musgrave identifies the two areas of attention in Kipling's educational 'parables' as being his concerns with the hierarchy of the school and 'the expression of initiative', where understanding hierarchies then manipulating them through initiative and cunning (without destroying them) allows *Stalky* to flourish.⁹⁶ This is Kipling's 'Stalky' education where "'Stalky" in the school vocabulary, meant clever, well-considered, wily, as applied to plans for action'.⁹⁷ *Stalky* himself is something of a bully who eventually becomes a hero of imperial war. He 'exemplifies the imperialist's need to have followers and admirers of his godlike authority'.⁹⁸ Throughout, he is 'a Great Man' or 'Uncle Stalky', the father, leader and master of M'Turk, Beetle and those who come into their circle. He insists on his own importance and his successful escapades support his superior position. *Stalky* shares a number of qualities with Hornung's *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*, also first published in 1899, as both underline the fundamental problematic between England's cultivation of honourable gentlemanly behaviour and the skills necessary to survive. *Stalky* offers a strong attack on what Kipling views as the hollow and self-righteous public school ideology of athleticism by presenting his utter rejection of its value as the building block of British manhood and empire. Newbolt found Kipling's position entirely disagreeable.⁹⁹ According to Mangan, Almond, the athletic head of Loretto, was incensed by 'The Islanders' with its 'flannelled fools' and 'muddied oafs'.¹⁰⁰

'The Coll.' of *Stalky* is based upon the United Services College (USC) at Westwood Ho!, Devon, which Kipling attended between 1878 and 1882. It was a brand new school, a cheaper offshoot of Haileybury, catering for boys, eighty per cent of whom

⁹⁶ P. W. Musgrave, 'Stalky and Co. re-read: a taste of things to come?', *Children's Literature in Education*, 10:4 (1979), 186-193.

⁹⁷ Rudyard Kipling, *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13. Hereafter the title shall be abbreviated to *Stalky* and all references shall be given in text as taken from this edition.

⁹⁸ Kucich, 41.

⁹⁹ Chitty, 142.

¹⁰⁰ Mangan, *Games Ethic*, 27.

were born overseas, destined for the army or colonial service and who would return to the empire from which they came. It lacked the traditions of established public schools and so Kipling's narratives lack many of their generic trappings.¹⁰¹ He had ended up at USC principally because the Headmaster, Cromwell Price, was, as 'Uncle Crom', a family friend. Being the only boy in school to wear glasses, earning him the nickname 'Gigger' from Gig-Lamps, Kipling was physically distinct from and unsuitable for the imperial future that awaited his classmates. Consequently, despite his tone of buoyant, japing excitement and his apparent status within the school, there is something marginal about his presence at USC and lurking within *Stalky*.¹⁰² At the Coll. one of the few hangovers from the public school ethos has been the infiltration of compulsory games which provide the only sphere in which senior boys can expect respect (107). Although both Beresford and Cockran played for the Rugby First XI at USC, games are entirely rejected by Stalky, M'Turk and Beetle as Kipling aligns his school friends with his own athletic exclusion. The main thrust of his athletic attack is directed at cricket, reflecting the game's centrality to athleticism and the public school code. Ironically, the Oxford World's Classic's edition of *Stalky & Co.* carries a cover illustration of *Three Young Cricketers* (c.1883) by George Elgar Hicks (see Appendix Two). This picture of three innocent and demure schoolboys bears no relation to Kipling's work in which the three lead characters despise cricket and only use its equipment to commit a serious assault.

In their battle with the masters, King and Prout, it is through cricket that their opposition is most fully presented. When in 'The Ambush' Stalky and his companions allow Prout and King to follow them into Colonel Dabney's land to make the Masters appear as poachers King is wearing 'his flannels' (44). He cuts a fine figure of a

¹⁰¹ Gilmour describes the main differences between USC and typical public schools as including 'no uniforms, no cadet corps and not school chapel'. See, *The Long Recessional*, 11.

¹⁰² Gilmour also writes that contemporaries of Kipling's at school testified that he was 'so brilliant and cynical that he was most cordially hated by his fellow students', *ibid.*, 13.

school-masterly fool in whites running through bushes and open land onto private property to catch schoolboys out of bounds. Later, when the boys wish to extract the full value of their triumph they wait until the House cricket match:

They were careful, as only boys can be when there's hurt to be inflicted. They waited through one suffocating week till Prout and King were their royal selves again; waited until there was a House-Match – their own House, too – in which Prout was taking part; waited, further, till he had buckled on his pads in the pavilion and stood ready to go forth. King was scoring at the window, and the three sat on a bench without [...] M'Turk yawned [...] I think these House-matches are all rot. Let's go over to Colonel Dabney's an' see if he's collared any more poachers. (53)

Cricket provides the Masters with a space to perform, to be 'their royal selves' again, to enact their position above the boys while presenting the manners and behaviours they want such boys to emulate but which Stalky and his clan only mock. The Masters can do nothing to combat the humiliation of the young adversaries they are unable to comprehend or control. Indeed, where Mr Prout only 'understood [boys who] attended House-matches [...] he had heard M'Turk opening deride cricket – even House-matches' (37). On finding them inside not watching their House cricket match he berets them for their 'taking so little interest'. Beetle asserts his non-participatory right by explaining that he can't see the ball and had his 'gig lamps smashed at the Net till [he] got excused' (73). But this isn't enough for Prout who has himself been battered with the stick of athleticism by the others Masters;

“Why can't you three take any interest in the honour of your House?”

They had heard that phrase till they were wearied. The “honour of the House” was Prout's weak point, and they knew well how to flick him on the raw.

“If you order us to go down, sir, of course we'll go” said Stalky with maddening politeness. But Prout knew better than that. He had tried the experiment once at a big match, when the three, self-isolated, stood to attention for half an hour in full view of all the visitors, to whom fags, subsidised for that end, pointed to them as victims of Prout's tyranny. And Prout was a sensitive man.

In the infinitely petty confederacies of the Common-room, King and Macrea, fellow House-masters, had borne it in upon him that by games, and games alone,

was salvation wrought. Boys neglected were boys lost. They must be disciplined. Left to himself, Prout would have made a sympathetic Housemaster; but he never was so left, and, with the devilish insight of youth, the boys knew to whom they were indebted for this zeal.

“Must we go down, sir?” said M’Turk.

“I don’t want to order you to do what a right-thinking boy should do gladly.”
(73)

Here Kipling shows the irony or incompatibility of compulsory games and individual choice. Prout speaks the language of athleticism, of honour, collective will, self discipline and team work but does so to a group who have not chosen it for themselves and who therefore fall outside of its gentlemanly code. Compulsion would undermine the very values of games that he is trying to draw out of them or have games instil in them and so they escape its domain. The opposition to Hughes’s assessment of cricket is more than audible.

As Robin Gilmour has clearly argued, the rejection of games, and particularly the targeting of cricket, is part of the rejection of ‘fair play’ that has been built around cricket in the public school code. In *Stalky* Kipling ‘had the final damning word on Hughes’s optimistic mid-Victorian ethic’ and transformed the fair play of ‘Tom Brown’s last match’ into a ‘lesson in unfairness’.¹⁰³ *Stalky* even says; ‘You’ve been here six years, and you expect fairness. Well, you *are* a dithering idiot’ (original emphasis, 75). Throughout, the praise of the Headmaster is not so much for his fairness as it is his ability to see through them to the truth of the matter, to punish them because he knows he is right not because it is seen to be fair. Before he beats them he even acknowledges that he is ‘going to perpetrate a flagrant howling injustice’ (52). More broadly, the argument against cricket and its code is also an argument about its impracticality for creating leaders and defenders of empire. It strikes out at the type cricketing patriotism offered by Newbolt. In ‘The Flag of Their Country’, Mr Raymond

¹⁰³ Robin Gilmour, ‘*Stalky & Co.: Revising the Code*’, in *Kipling Considered* ed. by Philip Mallett (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989), 19-32 (27-29).

Martin M.P. foolishly believes that the boys he sees drilling in the Cadet Corps would rather be out playing cricket despite it being the dead of winter. During his speech, a cliché ridden call to patriotism, he reveals the Union Jack only to meet the 'silence' of the school for whom such displays were 'a matter shut up, sacred and apart' (219). One may find similarities between 'The Flag of Their Country' and Kipling's 'The English Flag' but Kipling identifies the first as hollow and the second as imperial necessity. The boys condemn Martin as a 'Jelly-Bellied Flag-flapper' (220) and call an end to the Cadet Corps as they resent the blasphemous articulation of a patriotic sentiment they hold silently in their hearts and has nothing to do with sporting showmanship.

The other cricketing episode of *Stalky* occurs in the infamous and ironically entitled story 'The Moral Reformer'. Stalky, M'Turk and Beetle are encouraged by Reverend John to 'dissuade' Campbell and Sefton from bullying the younger and vulnerable Clewer. Campbell and Sefton are 'crammers pups' sent to the school as a last resort to pull them up in time to pass into Sandhurst. At seventeen and eighteen they are men in size, strength and whiskers. Set on their mission, the 'reformers' bully the bullies into compliance in a scene of continued beatings and tortuous assaults. It is Stalky who devises the plan to entrap them by pretending that he and M'Turk are beating Beetle. As another example of 'the normalization of reciprocal beating,'¹⁰⁴ Beetle is 'trussed up for cockfighting' with a cricket stump between his legs and rope tied around to lure the two bullies out of hiding. Only then, after being hit, does he escape and Campbell and Sefton become the new cock-like victims. 'Swiftly and scientifically the stumps were thrust through the natural crooks, and the wrists tied' (128). They are then dealt the same tortuous methods of assault that they are forced to confess they inflicted on Clewer. Having explored numerous mysterious methods of punishment including

¹⁰⁴ Kucich, 40.

Head-Knuckles, Brush-drill, the Key, Corkscrews and Rocking, it is Beetle who takes up a cricket stump as his weapon of attack.

In his excitement Beetle used the stump unreflectingly, and Sefton was now shouting for mercy.

“Can’t you see, you blind beast?” Sefton fell over sideways, tear-tracks furrowing then dried lather. Crack came the cricket-stump on the curved end of him.

“Blind, am I,” said Beetle, “and a beast? Shut up, Stalky. I’m goin’ to jape a bit with our firned, a la ‘Molly’ Fairburn. I think I can see. Can’t I see, Sefton?”

“The point is well taken,” said M’Turk, watching the stump at work. “You’d better say that he sees, Seffy.”

“You do – you can! I swear you do!” yelled Sefton, for the strong arguments were coercing him.

“Aren’t my eyes lovely?” The stump rose and fell steadily throughout this catechism’

A similar incident is described in Vachell’s *The Hill* when Scaife tells the newly arrived John Verney how he dealt with a ‘big lout’ who shut him up in his collapsible bed: ‘I waited for him the next day with a cricket stump. There was an awful row, because I let him have it a bit too hard; but I’ve not been shut up since’.¹⁰⁵ In Vachell’s story Scaife is the character of devilish temptation. He is the character Vachell is cautious of and warns against. In Kipling’s case, however, the character delivering the blows is himself in fictionalized form. Cricket becomes associated with Beetle’s physical distinction, his inability to see, but here he is able to take cricket bat into his own hand to punish the athletically strong. There is a hypnotizing rhythm to the ‘cricketing’ strokes. Perhaps the long heavy wooden stump is as suitable as any weapon but in light of Kipling’s refusal of games and sporting attributes as preparation for imperial adventures, it is a significant choice of weapon. It is notable that it is not Stalky who conducts the assault with the stump but Kipling as Beetle. Perhaps it is an episode in which the Kipling’s pen, through the stump, is violently and repeatedly seeking retribution for the emasculating bullying he endured. His taunting of Sefton and his biting sarcasm are his

¹⁰⁵ Vachell, *The Hill*, 12.

way of reclaiming control over the types of men he could never emulate or join and the burning of their moustaches is their final and emasculating punishment. There is also an undertone of sadomasochistic violence that runs throughout the scene from descriptions of the stumps intruding into their bodily space, to Beetle's sheer 'excitement', the striking of Sefton's 'curved end', the 'lovely eyes' and the steady rise and fall of the stump. Stalky and his friends have finally found something 'useful' to do with cricketing equipment and are seemingly extracting a violent mode of justice with it. Their actions suggest a swift move from cricket to brutality, from a message of gentlemanly conduct and team work to a team violently asserting itself over its enemy, where the enemy is constructed as morally inferior and unjust and thereby deserving of their severe punishment. There is an implied sense of cricket, moral worth and brutality being combined in a darker version of imperial preparation and justice. As a central tenet in claims for the pursuit of English imperialism the connection of cricket with violence is indicative of the types of physical violence inflicted upon those people who suffer the forms of cultural imperialism and English assertion of which cricket was a key part. Kucich's explains how as a collection Stalky 'clearly articulates the sadomasochistic logic underlying Kipling's work, while promoting an education in that logic as the best preparation for middle-class colonial leaders.'¹⁰⁶ He goes on to show that '*Stalky & Co.* thus exposes the sadomasochistic logic beneath those British codes of masculinity that mandated displays of one's indifference to suffering.'¹⁰⁷

The last story, 'Slaves of The Lamp II', sees the return of some of the Old Boys and tells of their imperial adulthood. Some have died and others been promoted, it is the same of Stalky that dominate their imagination and talk. While M'Turk and Beetle (with Kipling adopting the first person position of 'I' at last) have returned in person,

¹⁰⁶ Kucich, 35.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

Stalky is too busy to be physically present but tales of his adventures – his leadership, his cunning, his advancements and his ongoing difficulties with authority – magnify his absence into a Godlike or mythic presence. While they are talking at school, he is acting on the imperial front in a manner that replays his schoolboy ‘stalkiness’ on the world stage. However, the problem of how to balance initiative and agency with deference and subservience to authority remains. Stalky is loyal to the imperial project, to defending and expanding the empire but struggles to follow orders or accept confinement. His brief letter to ‘Dick, or Teritus’ brings his sharp, precise, commanding tone back into the text as a final example of his forceful personality. He has made it out into the world by doing exactly what he did at school, which was exactly what school, cricket and athleticism did not teach him.

Where Kipling offers Stalky as an alternative schoolboy hero, Alec’s Waugh’s *The Loom of Youth* (1917) offers a critique of the hero who exists and seemingly cannot be evaded. It is a counterpoint to *Tell England* in that where Raymond brings the pre-war spirit of athleticism and heroism into and back from World War One, Waugh is already critical of this Newboltian paradigm, anticipating much of the post-war feeling to come, but cannot yet escape the imaginative bonds of athleticism. This first and largely autobiographical novel was composed in two months at Sandhurst after Waugh’s enforced departure from Sherborne under the shadow of a past homosexual scandal. Published after five refusals in 1917 before Waugh went to Flanders, its attack on the shallow, mediocre, athletic hypocrisy of the public school system resulted in it being banned at Sherborne and Alec and his father being struck off the role of Old Shibernians.¹⁰⁸ Waugh’s critique, however, was born of a clash between his love for school and resentment at his removal. Hence his novel is ‘a love letter from a rebel’.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Richards, *Happiest Days*, 241.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 230.

Where Thomas Seccombe believes the text is about 'The Tyranny of the Bloods', Quigly argues that 'it is rather more about their triumph. For, the hero ends as very much a blood himself and Waugh, though critical of detail, clearly failed to find much wrong with the system that put the bloods where they were'.¹¹⁰ Waugh, however, does seem to be critical of the system, the over reliance on athleticism and the worshipping of the athletic hero. Nevertheless, he cannot anticipate what will replace athleticism and so is caught within a value system he sees as worthless, but which has still made him a schoolboy cricketing hero alongside previous public school generations.

Waugh's protagonist Gordon Caruthers attends Fenhurst, a fictionalized Sherborne that has shifted location from Dorset (Sherborne) to Derbyshire (Fenhurst) in a retreat from England's coastline to its geographical centre. This retreat from a point of potential contact with what is external, alien and dangerous puts the public school at the heart of England with athleticism at the centre of such schooling as games dominate Fenhurst entirely. Having discovered that 'to the athlete all things are given' (14) Caruthers immediately wants to become House Captain and the novel follows his rather standard schoolboy trajectory toward such a goal. Waugh departs from accepted form, however, by offering a sustained debate over the value of compulsory games that ends in their rejection. As Caruthers ascends the ladder of social advancement the House and the school are increasingly impoverished in his eyes and his own ascension is in part caused by the vacuum created by the departures for war of his elders. Horribly unsuccessful at first, Gordon becomes the victorious leader of his schoolboy dreams only to discover that those dreams were built upon the false image of an English manhood that hides or denies its own nature and punishes its own creations for adhering to the patterns of behaviour it has taught them. The text proclaims that this system is

¹¹⁰ Quigly, 202.

predicated upon a homoerotic space of athletic hero worship that cultivates homosexual encounters only to then expel boys caught out by the authorities while the behaviour of the 'Bloods' is worse than anyone's but typically goes unchecked. This hypocrisy is the main point of Waugh's very personal attack and when in the text Jeffries is sacked for his dalliances he decries: 'Who made me what I am but Fernhurst?'.¹¹¹ As Caruthers moves through school he too journeys from sexual innocence to sexual discovery, from an adoration of Meredith to a passing relationship with Jackson on a final 'Romance' with Morcombe but escapes Waugh's real life fate and passes through his last schoolboy days without censure.

Throughout the novel the boys debate the value of athleticism. In an early exchange between Ferguson and Clarke, Clarke explains his concern at England's inability to compete in a global market because it raises its young men on sporting amateurism saying, 'late cuts are precious little use in commerce. This athleticism is ruining the country' (54). When Betteridge makes the same point about the effect of games on the public schools and concluding that 'it is the worship of athletics that is so wrong' (147), a young Caruthers disagrees;

"Oh, you are talking rot [...] the English race is the finest in the whole world and has been bred on footer and cricket. I own the public school system is rotten to the core; but not because of games. It stamps out personality, tries to make types of us all, refuses to allow us to think for ourselves [...]. But games are all right'. (147)

Convinced of England's superiority, particularly their racial supremacy, Caruthers at this point is arguing that games are separate from the hegemonizing system of the public school, that it is school rather than its athleticism that stops them from thinking, being individuals and articulating their own personalities. Yet as his school and

¹¹¹ Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth* (London: Mayflower, c.1960), 45. Hereafter all references to *The Loom of Youth* shall be given in text as taken from this edition.

sporting career develops he begins to realize that athleticism is at the core of this hegemonizing mission, this need to control, dominate and discipline the personalities and lives of England's young men.

Caruthers 'loved cricket', 'it was only in the cricket field that he really woke up' (50). As a cricketer in a 'footer school' he stands at a remove from the sports mad boys of the school House. His status as a cricketer appears to offer an intellectual, even aesthetic dimension to his sporting engagement but it also demonstrates his divergence from the ethos of fair play and team work that defines cricket's code of gentlemanly conduct. Not only is he a part of the disparagement of other Houses and the winning at all costs attitude of the School House but he consistently concentrates on his own performances and achievements regardless of his House's poor team performances or the school's need for improved results. His individualism stands directly against the sentiments of cricketing collectivity and co-operation that were espoused by Hughes and are part of his failure to align himself with The Bull, the sporting master who stands for the fading sentiments of a Newboltian belief in sport as preparation for war and life. Caruthers enjoys a period of utter 'recklessness' with the bat which initially works in his favour as he consistently scores runs even though his team keep losing but when he plays for the school the runs dry up and his work rate does not improve. The Bull is unimpressed by his attitude and at half time during a disastrous footer game he kicks Caruthers shouting 'don't make your footer like your cricket, the slackest things in the whole of Fernhurst' (137). Caruthers becomes the target of The Bull's dissatisfaction with boys who refuse to practice and thereby contribute toward the reputation of the school and their own heroic manhood. His belief that the boys should train 'so as to become strong, clean living Englishmen who love their bodies and have some respect for their minds' is refuted by the conduct of School House boys who only play to win, train only enough to

beat their House opponents and will go to any lengths to secure such a victory, including deliberate violence on the field. In a reversal of traditional sporting values the boys ironically appeal to their 'amateur status' to deride The Bull's plan for perpetual training to improve the school's sporting record (25). When he is told of the practice of 'bribes to lay out athletes' he is disgusted, describing it as 'revolting [...], unsportsmanlike, unworthy of English traditions' (180). He can not understand their rejection of the code he has lived by. Waugh writes: 'Although [The Bull] did not know it, the things he had given his life to were falling in ruins about his head. The war, initially a cause of excitement fit to awaken England from her one hundred year 'slumber', began to take the life out of the old order. The school was 'growing tired of the domination of games' (233).

By his last cricket match Caruthers has given up the hope of winning and instead enjoys a recklessly fun game of cricket. Watching Bray's daring batting he declares 'that's the sort of cricket I like [...] a splendid contempt for all laws and regulations' (271). His own innings of 85 provides the perfect climax and closure to his schoolboy experiences but by this point he has come to see athleticism as a false and shallow God that undermines his athletic achievements.

Once games had been the pervading influence in his life; during the last year, it is true, poetry and art had claimed much of his allegiance, but for all that his belief in games had not been shaken. And now he found it hard to stimulate any interest in them, except where the House was concerned; and he realised that then it was the House that he cared for, not the game itself. As he lay back in his arm-chair in the evenings it all became clear to him. He saw that for years generation after generation of Fernhurstians had worshipped at the altar of a little tin god. He saw athleticism as it really was, shorn of its glamour, and he knew its poverty. It led no whither. He wondered if boys realised of what little real use proficiency at rugger was as training for the more serious issues of life; [...] he wondered why no one had tried to alter things [...]. He saw the pitiful poverty of his former aims [but] an extraordinary irony lay in the fact that outwardly he was so successful. (239-40)

At the close of his school life Caruthers has come to the realization that everything he was striven for and finally achieved has a sporting illusion that had been passed down from generation to generation until he stood before his adult life and entrance into the war as a captain among other public school captains knowing that everything they had learnt and achieved had little, if any, meaning or relevance. The text describes that 'his place was at the front with the happier leaders of other years' but that he would have to stand beside them 'the lonely antagonist of destiny' (241). Trapped by his own place in history, he knows that his educational indoctrination into a games ethos was fraught with contradictions, hypocrisies and hollow victories. He can not understand why no one took responsibility for bringing about change and now, having to leave, he cannot see a life for himself outside of the Newboltian paradigm which he has upset but which still binds him to his former schoolmates as the future gentleman of England and its empire.

CHAPTER TWO

CRICKET AND THE COUNTRY HOUSE:

ENGLAND, EMPIRE AND THE (F)AILING GENTLEMAN

This chapter probes the cricketing scenes and motifs of *The Go-Between* (1953) by Leslie Poles Hartley and *Maurice* (1914/71) by Edward Morgan Forster and their relation to the country house settings and gentlemen of these novels. It argues that these texts, through their use of cricket and cricket's socio-political connections, present the country house as an always already (f)ailing site of Englishness, as a site which, even during its supposedly Golden Age, was marked by imperial, social and personal conflict, as well as decline and decay. From their respective but overlapping historical positions, Forster and Hartley cast a literary eye back over the first half of the twentieth century, demonstrating how these factors threatened the status and future of the English amateur gentleman as a hero of the nation. They both mobilize pivotal cricketing scenes not only to propel their plots forward and aid characterization, but also to examine the class and gender hierarchies that structure the country house experience and the social antagonisms it creates, masks, and seeks to ignore. In each case, cricket becomes the field of communal contestation, the space of confrontation between the 'house' and 'village', between the code of gentlemanly conduct and the disruptive cross-class sexual affairs being conducted. In both instances these tensions are embodied by a young, middle class and fatherless protagonist whose search for male role models/attachments and his own sense of masculinity at a moment of sexual awakening is enacted in this cricket fixture. While both authors examine a sexually and socially restrictive sense of Englishness they also exhibit a nostalgic relationship to, and

retreat into, a conservative vision of rural England which continues to underpin the nation's link to the imperial dimensions of the country house, its gentlemen and cricket even as all three are (f)ailing in the midst of the twentieth century shift away from amateurism.

The Imperial Englishness of the Country House and its Cricket

According to Vita Sackville-West, despite the vast differences between the large country homes of England, they are united by the uniquely English concept of the country house which she portrays in her novel *The Edwardians* (1930).¹ Typically referring to a rather grand abode of the ruling class set within luscious Southern countryside, the English country house has become architectural and imaginative shorthand for an idealized set of national characteristics and values, of the investment in hierarchy, service and honour which the existence and continuation of the landed class depends upon. For centuries it has been used by writers and poets to convey what England and Englishness can mean with novelists like Austen, James and Waugh using it as the backdrop to their familial dramas, often placing immense symbolic weight on the house itself.² This is especially true of Henry James whose description of the country house as 'the great good place' encapsulates the conflation of the supposed 'greatness' of the wealthy/landed and their apparent moral worthiness or mannered propriety, their 'goodness'; a conflation echoed in the nineteenth century notion of the English gentleman as both 'great'/renowned by birth and 'good'/genteel in manner.³ Kelsall's study of the same name notes that such properties often carry status conferring

¹ Richard Gill, *Happy Rural Seat: The English Country House and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 3.

² Ben Jonson's 'To Penshurst' (1616) remains the most famous country house poem and inaugurated a tradition. Other prose examples would include Thackeray, Trollope and Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) to name but a few.

³ For a discussion of the epistemology of 'gentleman', particularly the combination of birth/blood and morality/manners, see, David Castronovo, *The English Gentleman: Images and Ideals in Literature and Society* (New York: Ungar, 1987), 5-14.

labels like Hall, Castle, Park, Abbey, and so on, which can point to their historical purpose.⁴ This tradition sees Mrs Maudsley in *The Go-Between* over estimate the social/class position of the Colstons whose elegantly named home, 'Court Place', is actually an 'ordinary house' in a village.⁵ Kelsall also shows how, notwithstanding variations and amalgamations, the country house broadly derives from two architectural sources of inspiration, the castle or fortified mansion with its Gothic associations and the Mediterranean villa with its links to classical antiquity.⁶ These sources evoke insularity, defence and security on one hand and exotic expansion and exposure on the other. Authors like Hartley and Forster, however, may combine these attributes to create a space of exotic insularity where defence and security (of national, class and personal interest) sits alongside or within the lure and exoticization of wealth and difference. A known space of familiar inward looking concern is thus linked to external and unknown Otherness, particularly when seen through the eyes of a guest/intruder as with Leo Colston in *The Go-Between* and Maurice Hall in *Maurice*. Consequently, the country house becomes a symbolic home of the known and unknown, the internal and external, the protected and that which is in need of protection.

In *Happy Rural Seats* (1972) Gill emphasizes that the symbolic and literary currency of the country house lies in its ability to connect the individual and community, to show their interconnection and mutual dependence which centres upon the paternalistic role the gentleman of the house has over his tenants and the surrounding village/s. As rural

⁴ Waugh plays on this when Sebastian tells Charles that his family property was originally a castle 'a mile away' which was knocked down and the stones used to build Brideshead. See, Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* (London: Penguin, 2003), 77.

⁵ See, L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Penguin, 1958), 22. Hereafter all references to *The Go-Between* shall be given in text as taken from this edition.

⁶ Malcolm Kelsall, *The Great Good Place; The Country House and English Literature* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 8. It may be possible to add to this a third category, that derived from the large or impressive rural cottage as in Forster's *Howard's End* but Kelsall's two categories relate to the main types of properties associated with the landed aristocracy and period literature but also closely relate to the novels discussed here.

seats of power, the families of these properties are also England's policy makers, or are close to such parties, meaning that their domestic sphere is connected to and/or impacts upon the national and imperial agenda.⁷ Additionally, since many country houses are occupied while also being open to the public, as referenced by Hartley and Forster, they are simultaneously domestic/private and public spaces casting internal familial worries against a larger picture of national belonging and participation where privacy can be met with public awe and intrusion (positively and negatively so). Gill identifies how 'as an institution representing the structure and traditions of English society, it is a microcosm which has the advantage of being public and familiar, yet malleable enough to serve the protean interests of individual authors'.⁸ Forster and Hartley use this 'familiar, yet malleable' quality to set stories of disruptive sexual development against the familiar space of English (read gentlemanly) morality and restraint, thereby allowing the protagonists and, through them, the reader, to destabilize the patterns of gentlemanly Englishness proffered by the popular admiration for such properties.

Gill also illustrates how the country house, most especially as a literary and national symbol, provides a unity of past, present and future existing in a single locality – Baucom's 'location of Englishness'. Such unity of time and place marks *The Go-Between* and *Maurice* as each nostalgically reflects upon a past in a present that projects forward to a future that endangers the amateur gentleman and his country house while preserving their (f)ailing image as part of an unchanging and unending sense of heritage. It is a future of decline and decay but also one of posterity and preservation. Scruton claims this is part of the twentieth century fashion for an English heritage which displays 'aristocratic corpses varnished over and preserved in their dying

⁷ This point is forcefully and poignantly made by Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) which, similarly to *The Go-Between*, offers a flashback structure where Mr Stevens returns after twenty years to see his pre-war love Miss Kenton while remembering their household experiences in the run up to World War Two.

⁸ Gill, *Happy Rural Seat*, 14.

posture'.⁹ The degeneration of the country house accelerated exponentially after World War Two and was vividly rendered in *Brideshead Revisited*, Evelyn Waugh's novel of 1945 and the 1981 television serialization. Writing in 1959 about *Brideshead* Waugh suggested that although the piece 'piled on' the mourning for the country house 'it was impossible to foresee, in the spring of 1944, the present cult of the English country house [and] this book therefore is a panegyric preached over an empty coffin'.¹⁰ This is what I wish to call the (f)ailing image of the country house and its gentleman – where (f)ailing is a decline without an erasure in absolute death – which has only reinforced their place in the public imagination as a site and signifier of Englishness, one that glimpses into but quietly past the imperial history England has not yet come to mourn. In the postimperial and melancholic popular imagination the country house has taken on a singularly conservative role.¹¹ Visiting such homes, such beautiful and grand spaces of wealth and splendour, as well as watching their cinematic image, is part of the national obsession with the culture and industry of English heritage that truly burgeoned after 1980.¹² The 1987 Merchant-Ivory production of *Maurice* was part of this moment and though slightly earlier, Losey's cinematic adaptation of *The Go-Between* (1971) offers many points of similarity with what Andrew Higson has called 'heritage film'.¹³

Notably, the country house is part of the network of socio-economic relations that provided the driving force behind the nation's imperial adventure, especially during the

⁹ Roger Scruton, *England: An Elegy* (London: Continuum, 2006), 240.

¹⁰ Evelyn Waugh, Preface, *Brideshead Revisited*, 8.

¹¹ For an examination of the country house's relation to England's sense of 'postimperial melancholy' see Chapter 5, 'Among the Ruins' of Baucom, *Out of Place*, 164-189. For a similar view of relation between empire and Britain's melancholia see, Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004) or Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

¹² Hewison offers a useful discussion of England's move away from manufacturing and trade to the manufacturing and trading in its cultural heritage and the effects of this on the creation of national institutions and the distribution of wealth. See, Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a climate of decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

¹³ See, Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Raymond Williams states: 'What these "great" houses do is break the scale, by an act of will corresponding to their real and systematic exploitation of others [by] an established and commanding class power'.¹⁴ Hartley registers this exploitative manipulation of the local population, resources and positions of responsibility by mimicking the Norfolk directory's description of how Lord Trimingham's 'Winlove family has the *gift* of the livings of Brandham, Brandham-under-Brandham, and Brandham All Saints' (33, emphasis added). Part of the twentieth century crisis for the gentleman and his family has been their removal from such a position of hierarchical authority. Forster links present grandeur and past force by describing how Penge has been in the Durham family for four generations since 'old Sir Edwin [...] annexed the common lands'.¹⁵ Nevertheless, in spite of this history, Mrs Durham, Clive's oppressive mother, seeks an injunction against a public right of way through the estate. Such exploitation of the English countryside was also part of a wider system of imperial plundering and profiteering, the benefits of which often returned home to support the ruling classes. Critical accounts of the country house in the works of writers like Austen and Trollope have highlighted that this monument to Englishness was often built on or maintained by imperial wealth and connections as is quite famously the case with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1846) and its postcolonial relation *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1993) by Jean Rhys.¹⁶ In *Howard's End* (1910), Forster's most famous country house piece and the novel that immediately precedes *Maurice*, Mr Wilcox's Imperial and West African Rubber Company funds the country house his first wife inherited and that his new wife adores and plans to pass on to her illegitimate

¹⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 105-6.

¹⁵ E. M. Forster, *Maurice* (London: Penguin, 2001), 81. Hereafter, all references to *Maurice* shall be given in text as taken from this edition.

¹⁶ For a comparison of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* in relation to imperialism see for example, Gayatri Spivak, 'Three Women's Text and a Critique of Imperialism', in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000* ed. by Dorothy Hale (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 674-90. Also, Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

nephew.¹⁷ Following Edward Said, postcolonial criticism has repeatedly argued that this house is at once the house of England and its empire, that is, a house of imperial Englishness. Summarizing Said's reading of Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) in *Culture and Imperialism* (1979) Baucom crystallizes the argument.¹⁸

The country house [...] ramifies beyond its own domestic space; it is resonant with more than merely local significance. It signifies both Englishness and empire, the manifestation in England's built space of colonial capital and colonial discipline. It represents an authorized and elite – but increasingly hegemonic – order of England belonging that is financed by the acts of colonial possession but finds in the disciplinary protocols of colonial administration a model for its own procedures of identity formation and reformation. [It] cannot be inspected without our becoming aware of its dependence of those distant, all but invisible, spaces of empire to which it is connected through a perpetual passing of bodies, capital and commodities, and from which it derives principles of order, stability and rule.¹⁹

Money and wealth were crucial to this imperial order. As this explanation highlights, however, 'bodies, capital and commodities' lead to 'principles of order, stability and rule' so that even when the empire or imperial money are not explicitly mentioned the structure of wealth and exploitation, conduct and discipline, class and education, that belongs to the country house also, by the extension of these hegemonizing ideals, belongs to the empire and vice versa.

This 'order of England' is also an order of imperial Englishness linked to the code of the English gentleman and the disciplinary discourses of cricket which were reaching out to the empire as part of the hegemonizing spirit and returning in uncanny forms. This hegemonizing project had, at its core, the link between education and empire which placed great emphasis on cricket and the public schoolboy hero as seen in

¹⁷ In *Culture and Imperialism* Said also makes this point when he says of the Wilcox family: 'They had the colonial spirit, and were always making for some spots where the white man might carry his burden unobserved' (77).

¹⁸ To review Said's original and substantial consideration of *Mansfield Park* see, *Culture and Imperialism*'s section on 'Austen and Empire', particularly, 100-116.

¹⁹ Baucom, *Out of Place*, 166.

Chapter One. Often this boy's move from school to country house was a relatively simple part of his rise into adulthood, into a chivalrous, upper class, hetero-normative identity. Having been educated at public school and perhaps Oxbridge afterward (as with Clive Durham), he could return to his family's country house to enjoy his privileged place among the English gentry pursuing sporting activities like shooting, hunting and cricket alongside his role as local landowner and often local politician (again, as with Clive).²⁰ Whether or not he owns/occupies a place in 'town' – typically in London and most often for business and old school connections – the country house is his genuine 'home'. It is, as Gill says, 'the true habitat of the trueborn Englishman'.²¹ It is the site of familial heritage and inheritance (past and future), the seat of wealth and responsibility, the anchor of and stage for his performance of Englishness. This sense of Englishness emerges from the same system of values and hierarchies as the public schools and includes a similar interrelation of England and empire with issues of class, masculinity and sexuality. Hartley and Forster both expose and allow their characters to occupy spaces of inconsistency within these normalizing discourses of privilege, authority and obedience, particularly during cricketing encounters. Importantly for this discussion, the socio-economic patterns affecting such a gentleman and his home are also those which impact upon cricket, specifically via the game's links to the landed aristocracy, the amateur gentleman and village life.

Thanks largely to the mythology of Hambledon and the historicizing of cricket's pastoral roots, the game has become synonymous with the village green. Literary depictions of this rural idyll stretch from Mary Mitford Russell's *Our Village* (serialized 1822-4), which offered the first full length prose description of a match, to contemporary examples like Berkman's comedic *Rain Men* (1995) and its sequel

²⁰ Here I use 'gentry' as Castronovo does to identify a long association with the land. It is related to the conception of the 'gentleman' but as he says the two are not exactly interchangeable. See, Castronovo, 9.

²¹ Gill, *Happy Rural Seat*, 4.

Zimmer Men (2005). Hugh de Selincourt's *The Cricket Match* (1922) probably remains the most famous and delicate portrayal of cricket at the heart of village life, while Siegfried Sassoon's 'The Flower Shower Match', part of *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (1937), is a subtle reading of a pre-war village written from a post war position of change and return but one which has not entirely relinquished the ethos of gentlemanly conduct. In each of the last two cases the rural constancy and idealism of the village has been intruded upon and altered by imperial conflict directing attention outward from rural English cricket to far off imperial horizons; a pattern reiterated explicitly in Hartley's work and more subtly in that of Forster. Although the village has its own team, pitch and season it also exists in relation to the English country house as the two meet in an annual fixture.

In *A Social History of English Cricket* (1999) Birley describes how, from the 1850s on, there was 'a growing interest in casual country house cricket'.

At this level a cricket match was a good way of entertaining friends, neighbours, tenants and villagers, of bringing eligible young men for daughters to meet. Talented young amateurs would come along for the wine, women and song and the greatest of professionals for a fee; all you needed was a large country house with a few acres.²²

In an understated fashion, Birley reveals the socio-political impetus behind country house cricket where entertainment is part of a public performance, a way to demonstrate wealth/position, and to network for social prestige, potential marriage and inter-family connections. There are really two types of country house match. One is a self-enclosed game including only family, friends, guests and servants of the house. Midwinter's discussion of the overlap between writers and cricket in *Quill on Willow* often touches on these examples, including the participation of Jane Austen's family and J. M. Barrie,

²² Birley, *A Social History of Cricket*, 82.

among numerous others. Hornung's *Raffles the Amateur Cracksman* (1889) plays on the automatic acceptance of the amateur gentleman at such country house weekend matches and the ideologically disruptive presence of Raffles as a gentleman thief.²³ In a similarly satirical tone, A. G. MacDonnell's *England Their England* (1933) examines the weekend retreat from London to the scene of country house cricket as one of the most exacting ways to experience the ironic inconsistencies of Englishness. The other type of game is a traditional fixture between the house and the village and it is this type of match that is depicted by Forster and Hartley. Birley's statement hints at the way the occasion can act as a lubricant for social stability by bringing two separate class-defined groups together. Yet, communal unity under the patronage of the house and its master is also a means of social ingratiating, a way to endear the family to their neighbours and tenants. In *The Go-Between* this is quite explicitly the case as Marcus, in his typically snobbish tone, declares that the annual fixture against the village 'helps keep them quiet' (63) – 'them' being the 'plebs' whom he later claims cause a 'stink' at dinner (146) – and in *Maurice* Clive patronizingly announces to Maurice that he must 'make them happy' by participating in these 'Olympic games' (177).

Birley's remarks also highlight the persistence of the distinction between amateurs and professionals where the amateur gentleman is seemingly at home in his natural environment and accepted as a host or guest while the professional is paid to play, to provide the sporting standard and maintain the game then quietly take his leave. The class gap is not put aside only harnessed for the purpose of entertainment. In Hartley and Forster's works, this class distinction, based on the division of gentleman and players, is overlaid onto the participants in the annual house versus village match with

²³ For a consideration of the relationship between Raffles, cricket and Englishness see George Orwell, 'Raffles and Miss Blandish', in *George Orwell: Essays* (London: Penguin, 2000), 257-268. It is noteworthy that Raffles was killed in battle during the Boer War, bringing together cricket, England and empire despite his ironic inversions of their union.

the strong, working men – Alec and Ted – representing aggressive, cricketing professionalism against the quiet, conservative amateurism of the Lords of the respective houses – Clive and Trimmingham (though Alec, as a servant, is on the House-side). For an artistic impression of the differences between the country house set and the village labourer as cricketer (which is particularly close to Hartley's work) one can compare the paintings published by *Punch* in 1922 entitled 'Country House Cricket' and 'The Willow Bearer' respectively (see Appendix Three). The personal and social differences between them are brought into relief by the cross-class sexual affairs of the players and spectators as Alec and Ted are engaging in physical liaisons with their superiors, namely, Maurice and Marian. In this way, the cricket match becomes a microcosmic enlargement of country house living, providing a known, familiar yet smaller social stage upon which the actions and inter-actions of the players are individualized and magnified. For Sinyard, the cricket match was probably a reason for Pinter's attraction to Hartley's novel, perhaps even prompting him to write the screen play for Losey's film. Not only was Pinter a huge cricket fan but Hartley's match functions in much the same ways as other games do in Pinter's own work as 'a metaphor for, among other things, competitiveness, power, [and] sexual relations'.²⁴ This reading can also be extended to Forster's use of cricket in *Maurice*.

According to Birley, 'a few acres' is sufficient for a country house cricket match but 'a few' is actually more than enough and acts as a side reference to an abundance of land often found within such estates. This historic connection between the landed class and cricket has been important to the game's development. Indeed, the movement toward the standardization of play, regulations and club management largely derives from the

²⁴ Neil Sinyard, 'Pinter's *The Go-Between*', *Critical Quarterly*, 33:3 (1980), 21-33 (23).

desire of wealthy investors to protect their financial input and/or wagers.²⁵ Marqusee argues that the nineteenth century 'integration of world cricket under the English landed elite coincided with the beginnings of that elite's decline in domestic and international politics'.²⁶ His sense of cricket's historic connection to the self-importance and decline of the class that ruled England and its empire is, I posit, being played out in Forster's and Hartley's work, particularly through the cricketing performances of their amateur gentleman, just as his sense of the past weighing heavily upon the game is worked through in their attachment to the country house, cricket and rural England.

Going Between Cricket and Sexual Awakening

The lives of Hartley and Forster span the period 1879 to 1972, from the Golden Age of the empire, English cricket and the amateur gentleman to the period that marked their (f)ailing.²⁷ In their own ways *The Go-Between* and *Maurice* similarly span this transformative change over the first half of the twentieth century; the 'most changeful half century in history' for Hartley (269). Hartley's novel moves between 1952 and 1900, from the Boer War to post war Britain, from the watershed of a new century to the watershed of a new Monarch's reign, though both can be read as moments of

²⁵ For a historical discussion of the impact of gambling and large wagers on the development of cricket see Birley, *A Social History of Cricket*, especially 11-25.

²⁶ Marqusee, *Anyone But England*, 112. For him, a straight line can be drawn from the 1784 Star and Garter Committee of 'Noblemen and Gentlemen' who established a complete version of the laws of cricket and were 'men who took for granted their right to rule at home and abroad', and the modern membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club (53). This includes the late figure John Paul Getty who attempted to enjoy country house cricket at his Wormsley estate in Buckinghamshire and stands as an 'impressive testimony to the endurance of landed wealth as a touchstone of elite status in English cricket' even if he was 'an expensive copy' (95). Marqusee's vision of Getty is indicative of his more general reading of the hypocritical aspect of the game's relation to an Englishness which denies 'cricket's origins in commerce, politics, patronage and an urban society' but courts wealthy, prestigious patrons (71).

²⁷ According to Adrian Wright, Hartley's biographer, when Hartley first met Forster at Virginia Wolf's home he tried to avoid his literary predecessor for fear that Forster's keen observation would transform him into a character in Forster's work. Such a fear of being depicted in a literary form that could find its way into the public domain seems to be an ongoing concern for Hartley. See, Adrian Wright, *Foreign Country: The Life of L. P. Hartley* (London, Tauris Parke, 1996), 75.

backward looking closure.²⁸ Ingersoll perceives that 1900, the zenith of Britain's imperial presence and the last Victorian summer, 'marked an end misread by Leo as a beginning'.²⁹ Staying at Brandham Hall in Norfolk that summer as the guest of Marcus Maudsley, Leo Colston acts as the messenger in the love triangle of Lord Trimingham, his intended wife Marian Maudsley, whose father is renting the property from Trimingham's family, and Ted Burgess, Trimingham's tenant farmer and Marian's lover. Leo's corruption by the adult world and his traumatic exposure to sexual knowledge is contextualized by his recollections and revisiting of the past as an elderly man in 1952. *Maurice* also traces a story of emotional and sexual development which sees Maurice Hall in the 1910s move from his love of Clive Durham, his Cambridge companion and best friend, to securing a physical relationship with Alec Scudder, the under gamekeeper at Penge, the Durham's country house estate. Though written before 1914 and dedicated to 'a happier year', Forster reworked his text up until his 'Terminal Note' of 1960 and it was only published posthumously in 1971. Both authors suggest that a primal scene of cross-class sexual discovery prompts their narrative. For Forster this was the homoerotic touch of George Merrill and for Hartley this appears to have been the act of witnessing (perhaps beyond the realm of fiction) the monstrous 'shadow' of sexual activity.³⁰ In their tales of fatherless public schools boys, the class/sexual consciousness of the protagonist is aroused within the country house setting of their socially superior friend and then consolidated on the cricket pitch. In *The Go-Between* the cricket match is a substantial and central episode. Although in *Maurice* a similar

²⁸ Dangerfield has explained: 'One English Coronation is very like another; each has the same backward look. Each is a celebration of the past. Each rehearses, for a long hour or two, the glory that has departed'. This is certainly the sense taken forward by Hartley in Leo's recollections of 1900. See, George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1966), 49.

²⁹ Earl G. Ingersoll, 'Intertextuality in L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*', *Forum of Modern Language Studies*, 40:3 (2004), 241-257 (243).

³⁰ Adrian Wright suggests that there is some evidence that Hartley based his story and this incident on something from his own life. Wright described how in Hartley's correspondence with his sister, Nora, he wrote that the filming of Losey's *The Go-Between* was at Melton Constable Hall and not 'where it happened' but with Hartley and then his sister destroying nearly all his personal papers there are no further clues to the relation between fact and fiction. See, Wright, *Foreign Country*, 253.

match is given less narrative space, it is nonetheless a pivotal moment for Maurice and the text as it is the point of origin for Forster's transgressive homosexual resolution.³¹ In both texts, the cricketing action reveals the personalities and conflicts of the chief male characters, tests and defines the class and sexual allegiances of the protagonist, and references the imperial frame within which such games – cricketing and otherwise – are played.

In Hartley's work the cricket match is the turning point expressed via a pathetic fallacy as the record breaking heat of the summer gives way to the beginnings of the coming storm. For Leo the game is, as Willmott describes, 'an epic affair' in which he 'achieves success beyond his wildest dreams' coming on as the twelfth man to win the game for the Hall.³² Having been deprived of school cricket because of a measles outbreak, the match is Leo's first and last cricketing performance.³³ It is the moment of his initiation into the sporting world of men but, like many other things, after his breakdown at Brandham he never plays cricket again.³⁴ With the engagement ball for Marian and Trimingham cancelled, the match is the key social event at which everyone is present and the separate domestic spaces Leo travels between – the Hall and Ted's farm – are held together in a unified but competitive act. As the middle class mover between groups, houses, people and lovers, the sporting action brings Leo's two identities, as 'Mercury' the messenger of the social 'gods', Trimingham and Marian,

³¹ In *Quill on Willow* Eric Midwinter suggests that both episodes occur approximately two thirds of the way through (138). This, however, is not the case and when one considers their actual position in the texts, even if this is counted simply in terms of page numbers it is more accurate to say that while Hartley's cricket incident is central, taking up the two middle chapters, Forster's occurs at least two thirds of the way through as the beginning of his work's conclusion.

³² Michael B. Willmott, "What Leo Knew": The Childhood World of L. P. Hartley', *English*, 24:1 (1975), 3-10 (4).

³³ Hartley's father had been cricket mad and though his son played sport and even became captain of his house football team his appreciation of cricket never really matched that of his father and Hartley felt this was a disappointment to him. See, Wright, 13 & 27.

³⁴ Hartley endured his own breakdown in 1922. Wright draws out the connection between the over protection of Hartley's mother Bessie and the presentation of illness as securing one's importance (14). In *The Go-Between* it is Leo's breakdown that puts him at the centre of the finale rather than Ted's suicide and carries him forward as the character whose future is significant at the close.

and as ‘the postman’ for Marian and Ted, into direct conflict.³⁵ The match places his desire to raise himself to the social echelons represented by Trimmingham against his attraction to the masculine strength of Ted; between the landed gentleman and the working farmer; between the zodiacal signs of ‘the Archer’ and the ‘Water-carrier’ depicted in his diary of 1900 (10). Seeing the opposition between these two figures and all that they represent, he begins to appreciate that their sporting antagonism has Marian, the zodiacal ‘Virgin’, at its epicentre.

The general drama of the match [...] was sharpened by an awareness, which I couldn’t quite explain to myself, of a particular drama between the bowler and the batsman. Tenant and landlord, commoner and peer, village and hall – these were elements in it. But there was something else, something to do with Marian, sitting on the pavilion steps watching us. (138)

Marian, like her mother, is usually presented as a dominating force but here the women are sidelined and only drawn into the action by Leo’s line of vision and the threat of Ted’s boundary hits crashing into them. Nevertheless, Leo feels that she is the targeted audience of the male performers and includes himself in the group vying for her affections, though he remains excluded from the ‘something else’ of sexual rivalry. Ordinarily strong and wilful, Marian watches the game nervously fearful of betraying her feelings for Ted. While Marian is the ‘prize’ to be won her presence also serves a broader aesthetic purpose bringing together the colours of Hartley’s metaphorical palette of gold and green which revolves around her inheritance and gift giving (Leo’s

³⁵ The role of the ‘postman’ relates to Hartley’s own task while in the army. Also, this sense of movement across spaces and landscapes is an important element of Hartley’s text and one that was transferred particularly well into Losey’s film. Tashiro has given attention to the manner in which Losey’s film presents Leo as moving between the upstairs and downstairs spaces of the Hall as a vertical movement and from Hall to Farm in a horizontal movement while Leo’s standing within doorways at the Hall and Ted’s farm registers his in-between position within both locations. See, Charles Shiro Tashiro, “‘Reading’ Design in *The Go-Between*”, *Cinema Journal*, 33:1 (1993), 17-29. Additionally, Moan has described how physical and emotional mobility are also important components of the Epilogue of *The Go-Between*, especially in the film as the older Leo moves from Church to Cottage then out to Brandham Hall. See, Margaret A. Moan, ‘Setting and Structure: An Approach to Hartley’s *The Go-Between*’, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 15:2 (1973), 27-36 (32).

summer suit of Lincoln green and his green birthday bicycle), and the link between white and red which stems from her dress and the blood associated with her affair, as conveyed in her 'hammock of crimson' (37) and the blood Leo sees on Ted's hands at the farm which predicts Ted's suicide.³⁶ In the cricket scene these colours are interwoven as white figures strike a red ball on a green stage at a supposedly golden time but it is the white clothing of the players that takes on greatest significance. Reading out from Leo's triumphant post-match song which repeats 'Clad in virgin robes of white' (148), Sinyard argues that 'virgin white' recalls the white flannels of the cricketers as well as Marian's dress and Leo's perpetual virginity.³⁷ It acts as a costume worn by Marian and the cricketers to cover while also ironically highlighting the façade of their performances.

Leo has donned his school 'cricket togs' (41) for the match but on the advice of Marcus has left off his school cap – a sign of his childishness and social uncertainty at how to dress appropriately. Leo expresses his class prejudices and shifting allegiances through his reading of the attire of the two cricket teams, interpreting their differences through the gentlemanly codes and conflicts of empire. Initially he sides entirely with the Hall whose 'honour [he felt] was at stake' (129) in the match against their inferiors. Dressed all in pristine white, The Hall team emerge as a clean, pure and gentlemanly collective with the flannels appearing to mask the socio-economic variations between their members, some of whom are servants. (The same is true of the house team in *Maurice*.) On seeing the village team, Leo is repulsed by their lack of appropriate attire. He feels they are unworthy opponents because they have failed to adhere to traditional propriety by not following the dress code of gentlemanly self presentation. (The reality of cost

³⁶ For a pertinent discussion of the relationship between the use of red and white colouring in Losey's film adaptation see, Charles Shiro Tashiro, "Reading" Design in *The Go-Between*, *Cinema Journal*, 33:1 (1993), 17-29 which outlines the connections between desire, sexuality, blood and death as seen through the film's costumes.

³⁷ Sinyard, 32.

does not occur to him despite his similar predicament.) Yet, his opinion quickly slips from seeing this lack of attire as a sign of inferiority to one that demands respect.

The village distressed me with their nondescript appearance [...]. I did not believe that you could succeed at a game unless you were dressed properly for it. It was like soldiers fighting natives. And then it crossed my mind that perhaps the villagers were like the Boers [...] and I looked at them with new respect. (127)

Leo's views are determined by the code of cricketing conduct and the attitude that appearing as a gentleman is appropriate for gentlemanly sporting pursuits. To a degree, dressing correctly implies preparation and planning but it also acts as costumed superficiality having little to do with performance and achievement. By comparing the villagers with the Boers, Hartley alludes to the continuum of exploitation that extends from the English countryside out to the empire. Through Leo, he suggests that both groups, possibly even as a single entity, are fighting an army of well dressed and well supported (white) English soldiers. In this sense, the flannels of the Hall side become the suit of the gentleman who rules, his costume of cleanliness and etiquette worn over a body of domestic and imperial authority. The whites of the servants are therefore an extension of his global power base. This, however, is not the same as the physical strength of the villagers/Boers which is represented by Ted whose earlier appearances without clothes (shirtless or in his swimming attire) identified his manly qualities and physique. He is the exception to the village team because he wears white flannels but they 'transformed him almost as much as if he had been wearing fancy dress' (128). This transformation is double-edged. On one hand, his appearance in gentlemanly whites raises him from his farming clothing (and often nakedness) into a suit of social finesse. On the other hand, he looks less like himself, less like the man and masculine body Leo admires. His appearance undermines his efforts to dress 'up' and, like his later appearance at dinner in a suit, present him as a comically uncomfortable figure.

The implication is clearly that whites may appear an equalizing uniform but may not hide the class of the person beneath. If anything, they can grossly exaggerate it.

Leo's conflation of village and Boer before the game aligns him with the colonized rather than the colonizer. Previously he had linked the village and empire in his description of Ted's farm as 'an accepted symbol of romance, like a Red Indian's wigwam' (105) and identified himself as a 'Red Indian' on more than one occasion. Early on at the Hall he realized that he would have 'more in common with a Hottentot child than the young adults at the Hall' (35); these superior young adults who perpetually appear in white, 'the men in white flannels, white boots [...] the women also in white' (35). His allegiance with this seeming underclass stands against Marcus's imaginative performances as he 'would play at being Lord Roberts or Kitchener or Kruger de Wet [...] but only for a limited time and only on the condition that the English won' (105). During the cricket though, Leo undermines his own sense of sporting superiority, by revealing that 'the fact that they [the village] applauded a good shot did not give [him] a sense of unity with them' (129). His inability to appreciate their sporting gesture as a unifying moment points to his own schoolboy snobbery that seemingly derives from his uncertainty at the Hall, from the gap between the Hall and his own 'place'.³⁸ When five Hall wickets have fallen he echoes the snobbish tones of Marcus with 'these Boers in their motley raiment [...] how I disliked them' (130), using Boer as a racial insult that separates the Boers/villagers from the 'whites' as the flannelled Englishmen of the Hall team. As the position of the Hall is challenged, he retreats under the shadow of the ruling he class he envies and wishes to join while hypocritically abandoning the gentlemanly decorum he sees the village as lacking. Leo's position and allegiance change again, however, when Ted brings the village to the

³⁸ Wright suggests that Hartley was himself quite concerned about such class issues and suffered from his own sense of such snobbery. This was articulated when he discovered that his own relative was a servant at a great house rather than its master. See, Wright, *Foreign Country*, 208.

point of victory and he sides with the underdog (again). This backward and forward movement is less about Leo's overt political development, though it registers Hartley's negotiation with the English and imperial dimensions of the action, and more about Leo's inability to decide between his two surrogate father figures, Trimingham and Ted, and the examples of masculine heroism and patriotism they represent, especially in relation to the image of his own deceased father. As the game establishes the masculine and class hierarchies at work, setting Trimingham against Ted but also Ted against Mr Maudsley, Leo's affections and the cricketing action encapsulate the growing historical and social difficulties of the gentleman of England and empire.

In his biography of Hartley, Wright quotes the author as saying that 'the Boer War was a local affair' enabling him to set his 'little private tragedy against a general background of security and happiness'.³⁹ This, however, appears not to be the case because the narrative repeatedly draws the empire in, particularly through the Boer War, as Hartley fails to evade his own post war sense of conflict and imperial break-up (or down).⁴⁰ Trimingham's presence brings the empire and Boer conflict onto the cricket pitch, just as Sassoon does in 'The Flower Show Match'. In doing so Hartley's work reads the character of Trimingham in relation to his imperial fate and postimperial decline. Hugh Winlove, the ninth Viscount Trimingham, is the 'reserved and understated' (139) amateur gentleman of the match, a 'useful bowler' (120), 'pretty bat' (129) and a Captain of his word who takes charge of the bowling when Ted begins to dominate. Leo admires his status, his manners and his gallantry, seeing these as reasons why Trimingham is 'nicer' than Ted. These are the qualities Leo hopes to emulate but they

³⁹ Hartley cited in Wright, *Foreign Country*, 167.

⁴⁰ Similarly to Hartley's feeling of a misplaced distance from the Boer War, Sassoon describes his feeling on seeing his mother's calendar which showed a picture of 'The Relief of Ladysmith' saying 'I could never make up my mind what it was all about, that Boer War, and it seemed such a long way off...'. Yet just by registering the presence of the calendar and the Boer war within the domestic space of the family home, particularly within the life giving space of the pantry, Sassoon identifies its proximity and interrelation to the home front despite the seeming innocence of the young protagonist. See, Siegfried Sassoon, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (London: Faber, 1980), 439.

do not exert the hold on his affections that Ted does. Trimingham is a rather flat stereotype of gentlemanly civility. One may not be able to protest against his character but neither can one be overly taken with it. His views and conduct are indicative of a dying breed. As a Lord and war veteran, his presence on the cricket pitch is traditional but unsettling. 'He walked to the wicket with the unconscious elegance of bearing that made such a poignant contrast to his damaged face.' (129) His poise and elegance are markers of his gentlemanly grace, his physical belonging, but the illusion to his face is a reference to the 'ugly' scar he gained during the Boer war. Leo's first fearful belief that this injury meant Trimingham could not close his eye or his mouth acts as a premonitional image of Hugh's inability to avoid Marian's affair and the impossibility of speaking against her because of his belief that 'nothing is ever a lady's fault' (161). It also references his refusal to speak of or against the sights of empire he has witnessed. For, although he talks about war he never describes what he saw or what role he played. He does, however, recognize that he 'is not much of an advert for Army life' (206).

Dangerfield has shown that the Boer war hurt the conservatives at the turn of the century and Trimingham personifies this injury.⁴¹ His face is divided between but holds together handsome youthfulness and deformed brutality. Imperial fighting has transformed the English gentleman into a Janus-faced representative of England's imperial project, of imperial Englishness. On one cheek his 'sickle-shaped scar ran from his eye to the corner of his mouth [...]. His whole face was lopsided' (61). The reference to the 'sickle' again highlights a continuum between farming and fighting, between local farmers like Ted who may rebel against him and the Boers who obviously fought quite fiercely against him. More importantly, it inscribes the violent dangers of imperial service onto the body of the landed gentry who, on returning home, bring this

⁴¹ Dangerfield, 21.

imperial scar back onto the domestic cricketing stage, the place where the 'play up' ideology that prompted their departure was constructed. The double-sided, lop-sidedness of Trimingham's face expresses the problem of the code of gentlemanly conduct standing alongside imperial aggression/oppression. When Leo asks Trimingham about the Boers 'breaking the rules of war' (162), Trimingham articulates the irony of this juxtaposition explaining to Leo that the 'Boer's not a bad fellar [...]. It's a pity we have to shoot so many of them' (162).⁴² The painful gap between kindness and killing is the incompatibility that Leo struggles with as his memory of his own pacifist father who had sided with the Boers is met with his concern for and adoration of Trimingham. Hartley references the pacifist beliefs of his own father through Leo and indicates that although Trimingham's status and military experience shook Leo's tendency for pacifism the image of Mr Colston and his peaceable life remains dominant and another reason why Ted, who stands outside of military service and conflict, appeals to Leo as a father substitute.

At the wicket Trimingham gives a 'taste of his quality' (129) with three elegant strokes but he only adds eleven to the Hall's score. His presence is unproductive. Gentlemanly style adds little to the collective endeavour. 'A round of applause, subdued and sympathetic and more for him than his play, greeted his return.' (129) Sympathy for this Boer War veteran encompasses embarrassment and unease at the failure of the local Lord, and perhaps at the knowledge that he would have wanted to impress Marian. Marian herself applauded 'vigorously, as for the hero of a century' (129). Her over compensation underscores his failure at not making 'a century' of runs while also reminding us that the gentleman may have been the 'hero of a [past] century' but this is not the present. Further, the popular tone of concern for Trimingham and his supposed

⁴² It is the incompatibility of these sentiments that Orwell wrote against in 'Shooting an Elephant'. See, *George Orwell: Essays*, 18-25.

'bad luck' (129) effeminizes his failure offering him an unheroic return from the wicket. The bringing together of war and cricket hints that he may have been as unproductive in conflict as he was at play, adding as little to the war as he does to the score, not because he is ungallant, uncaring or uninspiring, but because he is unproductive and out of place among men who are either stronger (Ted) or more opportunistic (Mr Maudsley).

Lord Trimingham may be the Hall captain instead of Mr Maudsley (121), who is really the master of the house at present, but Mr Maudsley provides the substance upon which the Hall and its team operate. His batting reveals all that is unsaid about him and his quietly significant role in the novel. 'The qualities that had enabled Mr Maudsley to get on in the world stood by him on the cricket field – especially the quality of judgement.' (130) This 'wispy' man in his fifties with a skinny neck, drooping moustache and eyelids, is not aesthetically pleasing or physically powerful. He 'never hit a boundary' (130) but he did punish loose deliveries by dealing with them 'empirically' (130). In this cautious but cumulative fashion he proceeds to an undefeated fifty just as in life he goes on to 'nearly ninety' (277). To Leo's mind 'it wasn't cricket that an elderly gnome-like man [...] should reverse the proverb that youth will be served' (131). When Denys, his eldest son, comes to the wicket determined that his father should not tire himself, his protectionist attitude causes his father much annoyance until the situation comes to a head:

Mr Maudsley, always anxious to steal a run and knowing exactly when to, was frequently thwarted by Denys' raised arm, which shot up like a policeman's [...]. At last, when the signal was again raised against him, Mr Maudsley called out, "Come *on!*" It was like the crack of a whip; all the authority so carefully concealed in his daily life spoken in those two words. (131, original emphasis)

Denys, castigated and sacrificed, is run out for his attempt to patronize and control his father. The sacrifice of the eldest son and the general lack of concern for Denys point to his irrelevance to the family's future, in contrast to the typicality of hereditary lines, and to the sizeable investment they are making in Marian's life course. Mr Maudsley's anxiety about stealing, achieving, securing and improving his score is the marker of his personality, of his upper-middle class position, his hope for upward mobility and his fear of stasis. As Leo says, the 'crack' of his tongue exposes his true authority within the family, Hall and game. Although Mrs Maudsley is the dominating figure in their marriage her influence does not appear to intrude upon her husband's life as he is left out of her social plans, free to roam the house, keep bees and monitor the weather, where his monitoring of the temperature becomes a metaphor for his observation of the house and its guests. His unexpected appearances, his quiet entrances and exits, help suggest a sense of possession, authority and omnipresence. He appears to know something of Ted's reputation as a 'lady killer' (205) and to either suspect or know about the affair. In the epilogue Marian describes how he 'took charge and restored order' (277) after the scandal while her mother was removed into care. It is his money, achieved through his determination in the City that is the foundation upon which the Maudsleys are building their social standing. The nature of his business remains hidden from the reader, part of the 'masculine secrecy about money' (65), but is substantial enough to secure Trimingham and his title for his family as his 'trail of gold' passes to Marian. These are the resources that separate Marian from Ted more definitely than Trimingham's status. Hence, although Leo is torn between Trimingham and Ted as they compete for Marian, it is Mr Maudsley's batting that is most clearly contrasted with Ted's because Mr Maudsley's money will determine his daughter's future.

Before the match, Denys identifies Ted as the village's most dangerous batsman but this is dismissed by both Trimingham, who declares Ted 'just a hitter' (120), and Mrs Maudsley, who reminds them that he failed to score last year.⁴³ Ted reinforces this image of himself saying 'I'm not much of a cricketer. I just hit out' (128). He is cast as a strong, forceful batsman aggressively carefree and unreliable. Cricket, particularly batting, appears as an extension of his physicality, of his strength and manliness. Striding to the pitch, 'whistling' and 'carrying his bat under his arm, rather unorthodox' (134) he cuts a contrary figure to both Mr Maudsley and Trimingham. After 'several mis-hits' (134), Ted begins to score, smashing a 'glorious six' over the pavilion (134). As the fielders rest while the ball is found he and his batting partner look 'like victors on a stricken field' (134) implying that with one well timed shot the Hall team has been knocked down by the village. Ted races on to fifty.

It was a very different half-century from Mr Maudsley's, a triumph of luck, not of cunning, for the will, and even the wish to win seemed absent from it. Dimly I felt that the contrast represented something more than the conflict between Hall and village. It was that, but it was also the struggle between order and lawlessness, between obedience to tradition and defiance of it, between social stability and revolution, between one attitude to life and another. (135)

Leo senses the opposition between Mr Maudsley and Ted, between Mr Maudsley's authority and Ted's resistance but he mistakenly sees Mr Maudsley as standing for 'social stability' and continuity when it is actually his own rise that positions Mr Maudsley against Ted. As Ted's innings pushes the village closer to victory, Trimingham brings himself on to bowl and after dismissing Ted's batting partner his slow, cunning bowling is directed at Ted. This is the opposition at the centre of the dramatic tension and it, rather than that with Mr Maudsley, is the contest between 'tradition and defiance of it' but the traditional relationship between gentleman as

⁴³ This may imply that his affair with Marian had not yet begun or that there was no threat to their relationship as there is now with the presence of Trimingham.

batsman and professional as bowler has been reversed indicating an upset to order and hierarchy. Trimingham's less traditional role as bowler points to his desire to work against Ted, to uproot and expel this deadly adversary. It becomes the substitute for the tradition of duels over women which killed his male relative. As Trimingham sends down his 'dipping ball' (138) Ted 'ran out and hit it past cover point to the boundary' (138). The pre-determined nature of Ted's forceful batting is a sign of dissent and resistance and an enactment of his self assertion and love for Marian, his willingness to play for and to her against the oppositional forces of her father and her intended husband. By leaving the safety of his batting area (or crease) and striking out he is able to pass the boundary line, to hit out beyond the established field of play in a metaphorical allusion to his other mode of boundary breaking – his act of sexual and class transgression. Such boundary crossing, however, is fraught with danger. In the match this only results in a metaphorical death with the fall of his wicket but later the discovery of his transgressive incursion into the foreign territory of the outhouse (and Marian) leads to his destruction and that of Leo's sexual maturity.

As Ted strikes out Leo's sympathies become clear to him, he wants Ted to succeed and the village to win, again backing the colonized against the colonizer. When one of Ted's shots injures a fielder Leo makes it on to the pitch. Feeling himself part of the scenery, 'upheld by the long tradition of cricket' (137), he fields for Trimingham and spectacularly catches Ted out (as he will do again later) for 81, leaving the village three runs short of victory. Ted's score is the highest of the match and a personal best as his love and anger brings out his greatest achievement. His personal success is more substantial than either Trimingham's or Mr Maudsley's but fails to bring about a team win (perhaps implying that individual victories do not overturn class structures). In contrast to Trimingham, he receives the ovation of the 'crowd's favourite' (140). At the

dinner party afterwards Ted and Leo both sing and Leo's song is taken as his second great success of the day, and another that has overshadowed Ted's. At this engagement Leo comments that he 'would rather be a professional cricketer' (149) than a singer, and a villager claims that Ted better 'look out' (140). The implication is clearly that Ted is their local professional or the nearest thing to it. His class position and cricketing ability align him with country professionals against amateur gentlemen like Trimingham while Leo's alignment with Ted and cricket is part of his own sexual awakening, part of his hope to emulate the masculinity and sexuality of this working man, though these aspects remain unknown to him.

After the cricket match Hartley uses two further cricketing points to negotiate Leo's sexual awakening through Ted and Marian's affair. The first comes the day after the game. Knowing about the engagement, Leo anticipates that his awkward position as 'postman' for Marian and Ted will come to an end. He attempts to imaginatively retreat from Ted and the farm while testifying to his jealousy of Ted's power over Marian and Ted's hold on him (154). In his mind Trimingham is never a rival to be jealous of because he is 'on a higher plane' (154). Leo's inability to understand or anticipate the sexual relationship between Marian and Ted leaves him caught within the cricketing etiquette of fair play when he considers the possibility of their continuing to meet:

She might do it until the day of the engagement, but not after. It was automatic; it was a rule; like leaving the wicket at cricket when you were out; and it scarcely crossed my mind that to comply with it might be painful. (156)

Leo describes himself as a 'stickler for codes' (121) and here his innocent belief in the code of good conduct is, as yet, untainted by the sexual reality of the situation. His adherence to the social conformism is obvious from his substitution of the word 'rule' for what is not a regulation of the game (itself a 'law'), but a part of the traditional code

of 'playing the game', of voluntarily leaving the crease when you are out, of not questioning the umpire or offering any visible sign of dissent by delaying departure from the wicket. Leo has not realized that Marian is a woman and, as such, why should she be so automatically bound to the code of sporting discipline he associates with gentlemen. Leo really only begins to see that the application of a cricketing 'rule' could be difficult, restrictive and hurtful to those outside of the dominant group (in terms of sex and class) when he witnesses Marian's distress, her frightening anger and her perseverance. The destruction of this code is part of the breakdown of Leo's innocence and the dominance of the England's ruling class of gentleman as Ted and Marian undermine the laws of the social game.

The second incident follows on from the first and comes when Leo runs to Black farm after being verbally assaulted by Marian. When he arrives, distressed and upset, Ted, who is cleaning his gun, begins to comfort him. The cleaning of the gun becomes a way of referencing the conflation of phallus and death – or the death drive of phallic involvement. It is the same gun with which Ted later kills himself. This is a weapon of the farm, of agricultural life and production rather than a weapon of war as Ted never goes to South Africa as Trimmingham had encouraged. Ted's suicide prevents a supposedly more patriotic death in battle but is seen as a greater tragedy as Leo/Hartley moves away from the imperial hero of the gentleman class. Ted invites Leo to watch him clean his gun and in a gesture of reciprocity Leo oils Ted's cricket bat. Leo 'handled the bat as reverentially as if it had been the bow of Ulysses' (173). It was the weapon that had struck the heart of the Hall – both Marian's heart and the heart of their bowling. He has obtained his highest score with it and thought that he would never make another fifty; it is the symbol of his greatest and last success. Leo's admiration of Ted turns to physical enjoyment as he begins to oil his hero's bat.

I poured a little oil on to the middle of the bat and began to work it in gently with my fingers; the wood seemed to drink it thirstily and gratefully, as if it too was suffering from the drought. The rhythmic rubbing half soothed and half excited me; it seemed to have a ritual significance as if I were rubbing out my own bruises, as if the new strength I was putting into the bat would pass into its owner. I was thinking more normally now: I belonged to the present, not the ruined past and the menacing future. Or so I felt. (174)

Hartley's sustained description carries all the markers of a masturbatory scene as Leo excites and soothes himself, gently working with his fingers, while Ted cleans his gun. Leo's desire for Ted becomes interwoven with his sporting admiration for the man's physical strength, his masculinity and its association with the farm. The reciprocity of the activity is a renewal of their collective adoration of Marian and demonstrates Ted's position as Leo's male sexual role model (rather than being an example of a homoerotic/homosexual exchange). The hedonistic action captures Leo in the moment, ignoring all that precedes and follows on from it, from all the innocence which comes before and the sexual paralysis that follows. It is a moment of sexual initiation but one that does not result in an awakening of knowledge as it precedes Ted's aborted attempt to explain 'spooning'.

Previously, Leo had asked Ted why his horse was having a foal and Ted said that she had been 'spooning'. Against social restrictions and silence, Ted's defence for 'spooning' is that it is natural. His association of nature with procreation is the reverse of Leo's assumptions about the 'natural' class order and the appropriate deference he showed Trimingham on discovering he was a Viscount and that Ted showed to him on discovering he was from the Hall. (Leo does not realize that Ted's interest in his connection with the Hall is not about his class but about access to Marian.) Leo understands kissing and holding hands but can not imagine or envisage 'what more' there is to 'spooning'. His lack of knowledge is painful: 'shaming [him] like a physical defect' (116); a defect that implies that Trimingham's scar may also come from

ignorance or innocence. Ted is unable to verbalize what this 'spooning', this 'more', really is and angrily insists that it is Leo's father's job to enlighten him. When Leo decries that his father is 'dead', Ted realizes his significant role as Leo's example of manhood and sexuality but 'finds his role as surrogate father beyond his verbal ability'.⁴⁴ In a parallel scene in *Maurice*, Mr Ducie, Maurice's schoolmaster, takes him aside to talk about sexual development and relationships between men and women so that his mother never has to in his deceased father's stead (18-20). Yet, just as Ted's use of 'spooning' mystifies Leo, Mr Ducie's descriptions in Latin and his illustrations in the sand, only confuse the innocent Maurice whose response is that he 'shall not marry' (19). Where Ted handles his gun while speaking of sex, Mr Ducie uses his walking stick to carve his (indecipherable) message into the sand as both hold their phallic expressions of selfhood close to them. Both men seek to protect their charges but their mystification of sexual intimacy only heightens the sense of trauma later felt by the young protagonists. Ted wants to protect Leo – 'you don't want to come to it too early' (118) – but his denial of knowledge helps protect himself and Marian. Also, this refusal to disclose becomes one of the key factors that causes Leo's traumatic sexual arrest as he is forced by Mrs Maudsley to witness Ted and Marian together – 'a shadow on the wall that opened and closed like an umbrella' (262) whose darkened anonymity consumes Leo's sexual adulthood. If Ted had explained 'spooning' to him, the shock, the difficulty, the violence of this vision of the 'virgin and the water carrier' could have perhaps been averted or minimized. Instead Ted's refusal or inability to act as a surrogate father contributes to Leo's descent from the facts of life to a 'life of facts' as a 'dull dog' librarian who makes a virginal return to Brandham more than fifty years later.

⁴⁴ Moan, 32.

Where Hartley presents a heterosexual affair that causes the arrested development of Leo, Forster offers a story of sexual development which results in a successful homosexual union and what Gardener discusses as their 'possession of England'.⁴⁵ John Fletcher has quite rightly assessed Forster's *Maurice* as 'the one explicitly homosexual *Bildungsroman* produced within the mainstream English tradition by a canonical author'.⁴⁶ He identifies Forster's encounter with George Merrill and Edward Carpenter as a primal scene, tracing its presence throughout the text and explaining that Maurice's homosexual awakening is set within a dissenting political idiom of cross-class unity, but that Forster refuses to equate this with radical political change and instead retreats into the supposed safety of England's perpetual greenwood. In her biography of Forster, Beauman contends that the inspirational prompt for *Maurice* came not from this homoerotic encounter as Forster's 'Terminal Note' claims but rather the suicide of Ernest Mertz in July 1909. She notes numerous similarities between the details of Mertz's life and *Maurice* including the linguistic move Mertz/Mortiz/Maurice.⁴⁷ In both cases there is an important gesture of homosexual compensation, of what Forster calls the imperative need for a 'happy ending' that society denies male couples and which can only be obtained via a retreat from class, society and the official spaces of the country house.⁴⁸ In *Maurice* this happy ending begins with the batting partnership between Maurice and Alec Scudder during the cricket match. Writing against the emotionally and sexually undeveloped public school boy, Forster describes in his 'Notes on the English Character' that 'it is not that the Englishman can't feel – it is that he is afraid to feel. He has been taught at his public school that feeling is bad form [...]. He must bottle up his emotions, or let them out

⁴⁵ Philip Gardner, 'E. M. Forster and "The Possession of England"', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 42 (1981), 166-183.

⁴⁶ John Fletcher, 'Forster's self erasure: *Maurice* and the scene of masculine love' in *Textual differences in lesbian and gay writing* ed. by Joseph Bristow (London & New York: Routledge, 1992) 64-90 (64).

⁴⁷ See, Nicola Beauman, *Morgan: A Biography of E. M. Forster* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), 227-235.

⁴⁸ Forster's 'Terminal Note' describes his desire to depict a strong 'happy ending for his lovers. See, *Maurice*, 218.

only on a very special occasion'.⁴⁹ The cricket match becomes this special occasion when Maurice can, at last, release and express his emotional attachment to a homosexual partner. Messenger identifies the cricket match as the only point in the novel where Maurice is 'standing his ground emotionally', where 'Forster is prepared to give us a vision of a minority showing solidarity and forcing society to change'.⁵⁰ This, however, does not last long and, in a similar argument to Fletcher's, Messenger holds the same episode up as exposing 'the central weakness of Forster's position in the novel. [That] society can never be changed. Personal happiness is a private magic that can only exist in the spaces that society allows through its ignorance'.⁵¹

The day of the cricket match is one of transformation for Maurice and the beginning of Forster's narrative resolution. While Clive and his wife were away electioneering the previous night, Maurice ended his long virginity in a physical union with Alec. Having mourned his loss of Clive and Clive's marriage, Maurice has finally succumbed to his homoerotic desire for physical reciprocity. In a reversal of the earlier scene at Cambridge when he had dared to climb through Clive's window to kiss him, Alec raised himself through the window in order to come to the gentleman he admired. Alec's ability to raise himself is an implication of his hope for a better life, a life he plans to pursue in the Argentine. The next morning Alec's ladder is removed from the window and Maurice is left with no way back or down. During the cover of darkness, Maurice had traded intimacies with Alec, including the equalizing gesture of calling each other by their first names, but the morning brings the separating responsibilities of class. Alec's role as under gamekeeper means that he must rise to roll the wicket, the English

⁴⁹ E. M. Forster, 'Notes on the English Character', in *Literature in the Modern World: critical essays and documents* ed. by Dennis Walder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 176-177 (177). Quentin Bailey makes the same case in 'Heroes and Homosexuals: Education and Empire in E. M. Forster', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 48:3 (2002), 324-347 (333-34).

⁵⁰ Nigel Messenger, *How to Study an E. M. Forster Novel* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 20.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

soil, on which he and Maurice will later enact their unity. Like Ted, there is a redemptive power associated with his manual labour and its potentiality for their future.⁵² In contrast, Maurice remains in bed, indulging in the warm safety of their consummation until disturbed by Simcox, the butler. With Clive's absence, Simcox invites Maurice to Captain the house side claiming that 'things always go better under a gentleman' (175). Maurice declines declaring, somewhat like Ted, 'I'm not a cricketer' (175) but, unlike Ted, he can nevertheless condescend to choose the 'best bat' (175) as his replacement, who is in fact Alec, and then demand that he will only field deep and bat 'about eighth' (175). His selection of the leading batsman is a subtle hint at the underlying cricketing prejudice of preferring and respecting batsman (as thinkers) over bowlers (as workers), as demarcating the line between amateur gentlemen and professionals. Only this time Maurice has inadvertently raised his lover to the position of gentleman, a title he cannot retain in the presence of his master during the game.

Maurice actually despises cricket and his dislike of the game comes from both his class prejudices and the game's inhibitive relation to the notions of gentlemanly behaviour.

Maurice hated cricket. It demanded a snickety neatness he could not supply; and, though he had often done it for Clive's sake, he disliked playing with his social inferiors. Footer was different – he could give and take there – but in cricket he might be bowled or punished by some lout, and he felt it unsuitable. (175–6)

For Maurice cricket endangers his sense of self importance because it may result in his 'inferiors' causing his symbolic demise. It is linked with his fears that Alec may cause his social downfall by revealing their union. Maurice rejects the equalizing ideal of cricketing fair play in favour of an allegiance to the landed ruling class he has become

⁵² Christopher Lane, 'Betrayal and Its Consolations in Maurice, "Arthur Snatchfold", and "What Does it Matter? A Morality"', in *Queer Forster* ed. by Robert K. Martin and George Piggford (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 167-192 (175).

associated with through Clive, in the same way that Leo initially identifies with the Hall. His rejection of the sporting ethos of the game is part of his contradictory attitude to his own education at public school and Cambridge, to his consequent understanding of the gentlemanly code and its restrictions, particularly in terms of physicality and sexuality, which cause his exclusionary lack ('he could not supply'). His preference for rugby football is another class assertion though it is laden with the homoeroticism of physical 'give and take' that marks his investment in other male-orientated activities such as teaching young boys to box. His rejection of the 'snickety neatness' of cricket denotes his distrust of appearances, of the mask of gentlemanly whiteness and the cover it provides because he also uses this disguise. To him, the game, and its neatness, represents all that is fussy and stiff about the idea of the English gentleman, which he struggles with, and of Englishness itself. This plague of social conformity is clearly asserted by his cricket whites and arrival at breakfast.

Maurice dresses in his cricket whites but omits his college blazer which, like Leo's cap, implies youthful naivety and is a symbol of his celibate relationship with Clive. It is also a sign of his amateur gentleman status which he may wish to cast aside in order to become closer to Alec. Before leaving his room he catches sight of a 'flake of mud' (175) on the window, a sign of Alec's presence, of the earth he works, of his low status, not to mention a mark of dirt and contamination, of guilt and revulsion that contrasts with Maurice's clean attire. Finally, 'clothed all in white, he at last descended to take his place in society' (175). Like Marian's white dress, Maurice's flannels mask his sexual impurity, covering the illegal act that has defiled his friend's home. They can also be read as a signifier of the purity of homosexuality in Forster's mind, of the honest rapport Maurice and Alec will build as friends, partners and lovers. On the cricket pitch, Alec sports the same disguise but his overlays both his sexual orientation and his

class position meaning that he 'looked like a gentleman or anyone else' (177) though he is not treated as one.

Having negotiated with his 'toilet' that now seemed 'alien' to Maurice, the 'gong boomed' for breakfast imposing upon him the order and regimen of privilege: 'Class was calling' (173). At the breakfast table Maurice's letters are more intrusions from outside, from the life he has over filled in a gesture of compensatory disguise with people and manly activities that offer him no fulfilment. At the table 'each human being seemed new, and terrified him: he spoke to a race whose nature and numbers were unknown, and whose very food tasted poisonous' (175). Bailey sees these remarks as highlighting Forster's imperial displacement of 'contaminating discourses of race and class' onto familiar or domesticated environments, such as the country house or Cambridge in *Maurice*, and this is developed after the match as Alec takes on a role of dangerous and threatening Other.⁵³ When Maurice eventually goes to join the game he sits at the feet of his social superiors, brooding and childlike, emphasizing his dissociation. 'A storm of distaste was working up inside him, and he did not know against what to direct it.' (176) 'He felt unspeakably oppressed' (176) by society, his class, his country, his homosexuality; oppressed by the conventionality of the scene and his own struggle with unconventionality. By swallowing 'an unknown' (or perhaps known) 'drug' the previous night 'he had disturbed his life to its foundations and couldn't tell what would crumble' (176). To him the game looks 'exactly like other years' (176), dull and tiresome, but his attachment to Alec changes everything. Like Leo, Maurice's social and personal prejudices are tested during the match. When 'a lady' comments that a gentleman would never have 'put himself in first' as Scudder has done, Maurice defends the decision explaining that he's 'our best bat [...] apparently'

⁵³ Bailey, 336.

(176). While including himself in the team, in a collective identity with Alec (rather than Clive) he tries to distance himself from any personal engagement because, like Marian, he fears emotional exposure. The woman's view that the 'man was conceited' (176) are ignored as typically mindless comments – something quite expected of Maurice's misogyny and Forster's relatively harsh depictions of women in the novel. Maurice starts to lose his own prejudicial distance from the game and class of men Alec represents and, thereafter, even identify with them. Maurice wanted to block society out just as 'Alec blocked Mr Borenius's lob' (176), keeping out the pastor's religious deliveries on the pitch and later by avoiding the Pastor's plans for his religious confirmation. Maurice then goes out to join Alec, in a critical passage.

When he went out to bat it was a new over, so that Alec received the first ball. His style had changed. Abandoning caution, he swiped the ball into the fern. Lifting his eyes, he met Maurice's and smiled. Lost ball. Next time he hit a boundary. He was untrained, but had the cricketing build, and the game took on some semblance of reality. Maurice played up too. His mind had cleared, and he felt that they were against the whole world, that only Mr Borenius and the field but the audience in the shed and all England were closing round the wickets. They played for the sake of each other and of their fragile relationship – if one fell the other would follow. They intended no harm to the world, but so long as it attacked they must punish, they must stand wary, then hit with full strength, they must show that when two are gathered together majorities shall not triumph. And as the game proceeded it connected with the night, and interpreted it. Clive ended it easily enough. When he came to the ground they were no longer the leading force; people turned their heads, the game languished, and ceased. Alec resigned. I was only fit and proper that the squire should bat at once. Without looking at Maurice, he receded. He too was in white flannels, and their looseness made him look like a gentleman or anyone else. He stood in front of the shed with dignity, and when Clive had done with talking offered his bat, which Clive took as a matter of course: then flung himself down by old Ayres. (176-7)

In practical terms no actual cricket game is presented, no score, no runs and no result are mentioned. In fact it is abandoned in the narrative as soon as Maurice leaves as if it only exists in relation to him or from his perspective, operating at a purely metaphorical level so that he and Alec can perform their new found connection and its future

potential. The short, abrupt statements of this passage mirror Maurice's heady excitement and snatched thoughts. The new over provides a fresh start for the newly formed couple and as they stand at opposing ends of the wicket, occupying their respective batting territories, they embark on a collective project of social dissent. Alec becomes a confident risk taker, ready to express his daring to Maurice and the world on the stage/pitch which he himself has tended and prepared. With this supposedly being Alec's last performance on such an English stage, he brings to the game a reference to the imperial prospects that await him in the Argentine and his potential rejection of England. Meanwhile, Maurice's education links his cricketing participation to the hegemonic messages of imperial Englishness which his homosexuality is ironically distorting from within. Alec's strength is therefore a farewell strike against everything that denies him the opportunity for a better life just as Maurice's assertion is an attack on all that has sought to deny him a fuller knowledge of himself and his own sexual identity. The 'lost ball' is a sign of their aggression and an indication that for Forster such love must retreat 'into the fern'. The imposing threat presented by England is that of the English society present at the game, not the landscape of England that will be their safe homely retreat. Like Ted's batting, Alec's boundaries express his contempt for the opposition, for their social propriety and the sporting rituals of class participation and segregation. Paradoxically, it is these sporting and social rituals that help clear Maurice's mind and he starts to engage with the game now that he has something at stake. By 'playing up', he plays his part in the gentlemanly game but also arrives at a new type of mature manhood and sexuality that stands against the schoolboy ethos of 'playing up' but uses the same linguistic idiom of war. The language becomes 'beleaguered and embattled' as their batting against the world demonstrates what Messenger calls their 'brave vulnerability'.⁵⁴ Forster's claim that if one fell so would

⁵⁴ Messenger, 19.

the other, echoes his famous assertion that ‘if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country’.⁵⁵ Here, Maurice’s childhood dreams, the first about the erotic nakedness of George the garden boy forced to leave the Maurice’s family home as he entered puberty, and the second about a mystery and illusive call to friendship, a lasting and concrete friendship never to be broken, are united in Alec. In addition, just as cricket has become shorthand for class and national allegiances, Maurice senses that he would rather abandon his role within the game by giving up his wicket, and so his position within his class and country, than abandon Alec. During the height of their passion, Alec realizes that he too feels this way, though this is briefly jeopardized later.⁵⁶

Clive’s arrival inserts a combination of the law and the country squire back into the cricketing scene resulting the temporary disjoining of the lovers.⁵⁷ Clive’s return ‘symbolizes the forces of convention and the power of class hierarchy’.⁵⁸ He represents the arrival of law, order and tradition that threaten Maurice and Alec with criminality and imprisonment (physical and emotional). His appearance strips Alec of his place at the wicket and his role as captain – a double emasculation which he seems to carry with ‘dignity’ (177), though flinging himself down next to ‘Old Ayes’ he is tired and angry at having to abide by such codes of class conduct. Clive’s return also reminds Maurice of their platonic (or at least non-physical) friendship and the divide between them with Clive’s association with Hellenic intellectualism and landed tradition and Maurice’s ties to Suburban upper middle class finances and physicality. As Maurice’s fear of revelation or self-disclosure returns he overcompensates in his gestures of friendship to

⁵⁵ E. M. Forster, ‘What I Believe’, in E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1951), 77-85 (78).

⁵⁶ Lane makes the same point noting Alec would have ‘died for his friend’ but that he also participates in what he terms Forster’s ‘peculiar eroticism of betrayal’ with his attempts at blackmail (169).

⁵⁷ Fletcher similarly states: ‘As a “blend of lawyer and squire”, Clive’s intellectuality is situated by Forster in class terms. [Following the] historic association of the Law with the landed gentry’ (75).

⁵⁸ Messenger, 19.

Clive. They chat for some moments until a fielder interrupts with 'Now gentleman' as if to remind them of their sporting duties. The time they spend chatting puts some distance and Clive between Alec and Maurice yet 'Maurice went out first ball' and soon follows his lover off the pitch in a silent gesture of solidarity.

All the servants except Alec applaud Maurice for his sporting achievement. It may be that like Marian and Maurice earlier, Alec cannot trust himself to hide his emotions but Maurice is alarmed by his silence. He dissects Scudder's appearance, making him appear as a villain with 'a cruel mouth' (177). Where he had earlier seen Alec's whites as gentlemanly, he returns to his class prejudices by asking 'why was the shirt open like that at the throat?' (177); the exposure of flesh and the suggestion of ingestion alarms Maurice into disgust. His movement backward and forward in his prejudicial judgements of Alec is part of his inability to establish his own sexual position and the consequences of a homosexual allegiance. It is also indicative of Forster's own sense of feeling 'both inferior and superior' to such labouring men, as was the case for Leo.⁵⁹ Panic quickly ensues for Maurice who 'felt sure that the breakdown was coming' (177). His physical expression of his sexual identity, in bed and on the pitch, seems entirely incompatible with the codes of conduct he has absorbed as an English gentleman and triggers a psychic implosion. He meets Anne and informs her he is sick and her offer of a Doctor is met with 'Never another doctor' (177). Having been failed by Dr Barry and Mr Lasker Jones the hypnotist, he refuses the medicalization of his homosexuality as a sin, disease or crime.⁶⁰ His desperate rage is at its height. 'Nothing's the same' he realizes. His sentences break down as he rushes back to his room which 'brought home to him the precise facts of the situation, and he was violently sick' (178). His re-

⁵⁹ Jane Brown, *Spirits of Place: Five Famous Lives in Their English Landscape* (London: Penguin, 2002), 49.

⁶⁰ It is noticeable that the word 'homosexuality' is only used twice in the novel and both of these times are by Lasker Jones. On all other occasions it is euphemised.

entrance into the site of homosexual initiation triggers his internal homophobia, his class repulsion and his fear of exposure so that his regurgitate becomes an attempt to remove the drug already taken.⁶¹ The chapter ends with him hurrying away to the station in Clive's car.

The drive skirted the cricket field before entering the woods. Scudder was fielding now, looking reckless and graceful. He was close to them, and stamped one foot, as though summoning something. That was the final vision, and whether of a devil or a comrade Maurice had no idea.

Following the cricket match there is a brief period of unease for both Maurice and Alec as each believe that the other is about to betray him. Alec heads to London to intrude upon Maurice at work and slips into weak threats of bribery only to then be swept along to the British Museum and finally into bed, as they find their companionship irresistible in the face of Alec's departure to the Argentine.⁶² After a clandestine encounter in a down market London hotel, Alec risks all by missing his boat. Waiting for him onboard, Maurice realizes this and heads to Penge, to declare the truth of their relationship to Clive and finally unite with Alec in Penge's boathouse. Clive is treated brutishly by Maurice who, for the first time, forcefully explains the extent and sincerity of his homosexual desires – something Clive can neither understand nor accept.⁶³ As Maurice disappears to find Alec, Clive is left standing, not knowing that this disappearance was a final farewell and not knowing where Maurice and Alec go. Their final union is in the hidden, decaying space of Penge's boat house. It is a private union of two men who wish to be left alone, outside of class and society to live their lives

⁶¹ This scene of homophobic regurgitation is similar to that presented in *The Crying Game* as discussed in Chapter Five.

⁶² The British Museum was the first major public museum in the world, founded by an Act of Parliament in 1753. See, Higson, 86.

⁶³ Forster acknowledges in his 'Terminal Note' that Clive's character deteriorates in the latter stages of the novel as he cares about him less and less and so treats him quite harshly by the dramatic close. He says: Clive deteriorates, and so perhaps does my treatment of him. He has annoyed me. I may nag at him over much, stress his aridity and political pretensions and the thinning of his hair, nothing he or his wife or his mother does is ever right.' See, *Maurice*, 219.

together as Englishmen. Consideration is now given to such spaces of the (f)ailing of the country house, and its relation to the decline of the gentleman as well as the retreat into rural England that is offered by both Forster and Hartley.

The (F)ailing Country House and its Amateur Gentleman

The cricketing content of these novels and the sexual affairs they depict are couched within, and form part of, wider narratives that repeatedly expose the (f)ailing of the country house and its amateur gentleman. As Castronovo says;

it was [the gentleman's] duty to preserve his property as the visible sign of the social order and to see that life on the land gave each member of the community his place in the social hierarchy. The gentleman had to preserve a continuity with the past; he had to live up to the achievements and contributions of his ancestors. At the same time he had to consider his descendants; his reputation for honesty and integrity would also reflect on those who came after him.⁶⁴

Hence the (f)ailing of his property was an indication of the gentleman's own (f)ailing and that of the social order which he represented, depended upon and upheld. Here, (f)ailing is meant to suggest the ailment or dis-ease of decline, of fading, waning away. While it retains the sense of failure and collapse it more precisely denotes a process of failing which does not necessitate an absolute end in death but rather is part of an inescapable, crippling but nonetheless continuing illness. In 1974 the Victoria and Albert Museum held an exhibition entitled *The Destruction of the Country House*. This is the irony of the (f)ailing of the country house in that as its destruction is being recognized it, or at least its image, is being preserved as a signifier of an England that is supposedly dying or has already been lost.

⁶⁴ Castronovo, *The English Gentleman*, 77.

In both *The Go-Between* and *Maurice*, the turn of the century English country house is suffering from a serious financial ailment, cost. The expense of maintaining such large and largely purposeless properties is a repeated country house theme and one that only gathers momentum as the century progresses. In these novels and those like them, derelict spaces and signs of disrepair are indicators of a declining ruling class or at least a class that has no obvious path to a productive or prosperous future. Their reliance on external capital through marriage and business, through new money, becomes a necessary compromise for their survival. Historically, this is not new. Forster and Hartley, however, both demonstrate the increasingly sizeable gap between the grand appearances of the country house and its inhabitants and the financial realities that underpin its continuance as an English institution. The difficulties of maintenance and inheritance begin to dominate the lives of the gentlemen in the novels as their future is precariously uncertain and their hereditary line far from secure. The (f)ailing of the country house is therefore tied to the (f)ailing of the English amateur gentleman as an important national hero. I wish to suggest that the works of Forster and Hartley show a process of decline and decay of the country house and its amateur gentleman which undermines the golden quality of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods while also preserving their (f)ailing image and the importance of a perpetual ideal of rural England.

In a letter to Richard Gill, Hartley wrote that *The Go-Between* was set against Brandenham Hall in Norfolk where he had stayed for a week in 1909 as the guest of the Moxleys who were renting the property from the owners the Rider Haggards in an arrangement that he transposed onto the Maudsleys and Winloves. In fiction as in life, the property was not only rented but also open to the public. In the same letter, Hartley bemoans how consequently such houses have become 'half museums, and the life has

gone out of them. They are no longer monuments of personal grandeur'.⁶⁵ This sense of the disintegration of the individual wealth and position of the gentleman class through the (f)ailing of his property was relatively common place by the post war 1940s and 50s, as Hugh David records, but Hartley's novel situates this as already existing much earlier (as does Forster's). The renting of the property and its public display are signs that the owners, as the Rider Haggards or Winloves, need to sacrifice their place in the familial home in order to cover the costs of the property and their leisured life styles. The result, as Leo remarks, is that Trimingham is 'a guest in [his] own house' (74); a house which he can only afford through a marriage with Marian. His ability to rule his own country house (and so England and its imperial connections) is dependent on new, upper middle class money with a union of title and capital. The same lack of financial security is extensively addressed in Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1932) where Hetton is also a financial black hole open to the public, and *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) in which Brideshead becomes an army rehabilitation barracks during the war.

In *The Go-Between*, Hartley lengthens his stay at the Hall from seven to twenty three days and has admitted to 'aggrandizing' it but not its effect on his mind.⁶⁶ The grandeur of the place and the past, however, is undercut but Hartley's exposure of their seemingly golden hue which he depicts as precariously double edged, as the colour of money (the 'trail of gold') and power, of heat and discomfort, of the cutting down of the golden threads (of hay) which support the farm. The undermining of gold is also connected to the unfavourable connotations of green. When Leo stands on the sluice platform and sees how the river had sunk because of the heat he perceives that on 'the gold and green side, the water was almost lost from view beneath the trailing weeds' (112). This pattern of grandeur undercut by pestilent decay is repeated in the depiction of the Hall

⁶⁵ Richard Gill, 'A Letter from L. P. Hartley', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 5:3 (1976), 529–531 (531).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 531.

and the dereliction that surrounds it. Leo cites the Norfolk Directory's description of the 'imposing early Georgian mansion' set in 'a park of some five hundred acres' (32) with its elegant staircase that provided the central stage of the household comings and goings.⁶⁷ Yet his memory of the 'house is vague' (32) and his emotional attachment to the place resides outside of this guidebook synopsis. He can only recall the Hall's 'hinder parts', the spaces 'invisible from' the 'imposing' South Western frontage that greets the public (33). He accesses the Hall through a side door and finds it 'higgledy-piggledy and rambling' with its 'Georgian additions' (33). To him the place is a maze of confusion, with identical and poorly lit corridors that could cause you to 'lose your way' (33). His sense of the house's dark, misleading ways, its surprises and architectural add-ons, point to its deceptive and corrupting force, to the potentially subversive or foreign passageways it offers away from the public's gaze. The aspects of the property that most interest Leo are those outside the main house, away from its formality, in the external spaces associated with work and dirt, play and danger. For him the coach house is a 'treasure house' where the workings and equipment of the Hall are free for him to view much like the accessories of Ted's farm. He prefers the 'rubbish heap' that offered a 'sense of adventure which was absent from the garden' (253). This, the Hall's 'heap', stands in contrast to the 'straw stack' of Black Farm which Leo enjoys. Where the straw is linked with nourishment and working the land, the rubbish heap is a disused pile, a mountain of decay discarded or neglected by the house of excess. Where the 'stack' causes Leo to temporarily bleed, the 'heap' is part of the traumatic landscape that paralyzes him. It is part of the decaying landscape that surrounds the Hall and is epitomized by the 'derelict outhouses' which for a young boy 'had obviously more attraction than the view of Brandham Hall from the SW' (38).

⁶⁷ Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (London: Penguin, 2003) also uses this motif of guide book description, 14.

It is in one of these outhouses that Leo discovers the Bella Donna. This particular outhouse is roofless and the plant flourishes in the open, unprotected conditions. Leo fears that his dark, lush, alluring plant will 'eat' him though his fear of consumption is his naïve articulation of his desire for it and Marian. With the Bella Donna a potent metaphor for Marian, its position in a roofless outhouse is evidence of her longing to escape the restrictions of the main house. Like the hut in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) and the boat-house in *Maurice*, the outhouse becomes a site of sexual freedom and social rebellion, a place within the country house setting where two individuals, divided by class, can physically merge.⁶⁸ These derelict spaces become the margins of country house life, the space that is both internal and external to their hierarchical ordering, the place which is protected from the external world by its proximity to the house just as its position also exposes it to the pressures of country house conservatism.⁶⁹ These dark, damp, cavernous enclaves are architectural metaphors for the sexual spaces their inhabitants seek to explore. In Hartley's narrative, the outside becomes a site of traumatic exposure as Mrs Maudsley drags Leo past the 'forlorn row of huts' to the outhouse of sexual knowledge. On the way, he sees 'the tousle-headed stump' of the Deadly Nightshade 'still lying on the path, limp and bedraggled' (262). The once strong and devouring plant has been destroyed in Mrs Maudsley's attempt to regain control and establish order over the land and Marian. In Forster's work, however, the boathouse becomes the site of unity and partnership, his 'happy ending' for Maurice and Alec. It symbolizes their escape, their ability to float away as well as

⁶⁸ Dixie King makes a similar comparison between the boathouse in *Maurice* and the hut in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, suggesting that both are 'secret places in the woods, and [...] serve as symbols of forbidden sexuality that is affirmed.' See, Dixie King, 'The Influence of *Maurice* on *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', *Contemporary Literature* 23:1 (1982), 65-82 (78).

⁶⁹ Christopher Lane has drawn out the similarities between *Maurice* and 'Arthur Snatchfold', a short story from *The Life to Come and Other Stories* (1972). Lane suggests that like Maurice and Alec sex between Arthur and Conway, on Donaldson's ground, is an act of class and sexual transgression but one which results in the arrest and prosecution of Arthur rather than the happy ending seen of *Maurice*. 169-178.

Alec's abandonment of his plan to sail to the Argentine. In both cases, however, such a blackened, decaying space registers the fall of the gentleman of the house.

Although composed earlier than *The Go-Between*, the signs of the (f)ailing country house are even more pronounced in *Maurice*. The Durhams live in a remote country house called Penge, a property set on the Wiltshire-Somerset border, probably based on Stourhead or Longleat.⁷⁰ Clive's early comment that 'homes emasculates', initially a reference to his overbearing mother, two sisters and lack of a father (a situation he shares with Maurice) returns as something of a statement of his inability to secure the future of Penge, either financially or through an heir. By the time Maurice arrives 'a hundred years had nibbled into the fortune, which no wealthy bride had replenished, and both house and estate were marked, not indeed with decay, but with the immobility that precedes it (81). With the estate subject to death duties and inheritance tax, particularly after the rise of death duties with Lloyd George's budget of 1906, new sources of wealth, gained chiefly through marriage, are necessary and without them decline must follow.'⁷¹ Here, though, Forster registers the stasis that precedes it. Maurice sees the sizeable void between the inhabitants of Penge and their blindness to and ignorance of its incompatibility with their surroundings. Forster describes how

[a]fter dinner [...] these people had the air of settling something: they either just had arranged or soon would arrange England. Yet the gateposts, the roads – he had noticed them on the way up – were in bad repair, and the timber wasn't kept properly, the windows stuck, the boards creaked. He was less impressed than he had expected with Penge. (83)

⁷⁰ Though the Ivory-Merchant production was set in Wilbury Park, Wiltshire, and the house renamed Pendersley.

⁷¹ Hugh David suggests that the increase of such taxes by the Labour government after 1945 were 'throttling' the rich, particularly the English gentleman. See, Hugh David, *Heroes, Mavericks and Bounders: The English Gentleman from Lord Curzon to James Bond* (London: Michael Joseph, 1991), 207.

Control, power and authority still belonged to this leisured class but to Maurice's suburban/city eyes this sits uncomfortably within a house that is falling down or apart. The disrepair of Penge is the preliminary sign of what awaits its inhabitants. Later, on his return to Penge after Clive's marriage to Anne, 'the sense of dilapidation had increased [...] Miss Woods had brought no money to Penge [...] she belonged to the same class as the Durhams, and every year England grew less and less inclined to pay her highly' (145). Unlike Marian, Clive's wife presented no solution or contribution to the survival of his family estate. England's reluctance to 'pay' for her is a part of its more general reluctance to continuing supporting her, and the Durham's, class. After the food and entertainment of dinner have passed the ceiling begins to leak and while Anne and Clive attempt to make light of the familial 'hole' the exchange is notable:

"There's the sweetest hole in the ceiling," cried Anne. "Clive can't we leave it." "We shall have to," he remarked [...] "I ring the bell and the servant brings nothing," said Clive [...] "Anne's dear little hole may grow in the night. There's only a lean – to roof over this part of the room." "Poor Penge!" said his mother. (149)

Persistent and growing disrepair is met with make shift structures and evasive or difficult servants.⁷² 'Poor Penge' becomes a statement of affection, affliction and potential poverty. Yet as water seeps through into the house, offering a source of refreshment and deliverance, it is Maurice who seems to benefit from Penge's impending decline. Indeed, 'in the dreariness of Penge his [Maurice's] purpose grew stronger' (150). His homosexual identity and confidence grows in proportion to Penge's decay, to the decay that exposes the holes within its hegemonizing discourses of the gentleman's Englishness, as he meets Alec under this very 'hole' and eventually consummates his relationship within the (f)ailing house. As Gardner quite rightly says,

⁷² It was increasingly difficult to find and maintain enough staff to man such large houses and high staff turnover often saw young employees leaving for better paid jobs in the cities. Hugh David recognizes this as 'the servant problem' and was a common cause for complaint for landed householders. See, David, *Heroes, Mavericks and Bounders*, x.

‘Penge comes to stand for the decline of the landed upper class, a class that is ripe for supplanting by an alliance between middle and lower classes, fruitless though this may be’.⁷³

The hole in the ceiling also serves to euphemize the sexual and reproductive openings provided by Anne. Early on in *Maurice*, Clive expresses the pressure of ‘the need of an heir for Penge. [His] mother calls it marriage’ (90). The pressure to reproduce seems more about the need for an heir to Penge than for the perpetuation of the family name (though they obviously come together). Clive’s move into conformity is secured with his marriage to Anne and Forster makes it clear that although this union was consummated, the matter of sexual relations is left under the cover of darkness, ‘veiled in night’ (144), without pleasure, comfort or passion. When Clive arrives at the wicket in the cricket match he is able to see that the ‘they’ve actually mended [Anne’s] dear little hole’ (177). The suggestion may carry some relation to Anne’s reproductive potential, her vaginal space. Her ‘hole’ may have been repaired but this repair is in the form of a patch, a seal, a closure and by the end of the novel there is no sign of a child for the Durhams. Forster refuses to provide them with a narrative of perpetuation and instead only leaves a hanging sense of the impending end to the hereditary line. This same sense of a coming end to the gentleman is also portrayed in Waugh’s *A Handful of Dust*. Tony Last – the ‘Last’ gentleman of Hetton, his much beloved though out of date and expensive country house – has wandered out into the jungle of Guiana following the death of his only son on the day of his initiation into fox hunting and his wife’s estrangement. There he is held captive in order to read to Mr Todd who sends word that Tony has died. Receiving this news, his remaining family erect a monolith in memory of him in the Hetton grounds – a straight, true and erect statue reflecting his

⁷³ Philip Gardner, ‘E. M. Forster and “The Possession of England”’, 180.

gentlemanly attributes. The crisis of inheritance, of what will happen to Hetton, is real but the death of the gentleman is not as he continues to exist in the distance spaces of empire. His end will be the end of the gentleman's reign but it never actually arrives in the text, it is always only impending.

The pseudo end of such a hereditary line, of the line of the English gentleman, is clearly articulated by Hartley. In the epilogue of *The Go-Between* Marian, now Lady Trimingham, explains what has happened to the Winlove dynasty. Her son, Ted's son, was an only child meaning that the Tenth Viscount Trimingham was the illegitimate child of a village farmer. Hugh, who was killed at war, has no child of his own, at least no legitimate heir to his family name and estate. The Tenth Viscount also had a single son and heir before he too died at war. (That is, imperial conflict has kept damaging Trimingham's familial line even if it is not his blood line.) This child, Marian's grandson, Edward, is the physical re-embodiment of Ted, his paternal grandfather. By reincarnating the farmer Hartley wipes out the blood line of Triminghams/Winloves and replaces Hugh with Ted in the mind of the reader or, one could say, super-imposes Ted's physical appearance on to the manners and money of the Winloves. At the close the Winlove blood line has been destroyed by the sexual unification of Marian and Ted, with money and labour overthrowing mannered leisure, as in *Maurice*. This eclipsing of the landed gentleman by the two social classes below him was already indicated on the cricket pitch in his meagre score of eleven which was surpassed by both Mr Maudsley and Ted. Like Clive, the inability to score seems to imply an inability to breed. Nevertheless, as Edward, Ted's grandson, holds the name, title and estate of the Triminghams, the figure of the gentleman hangs as a ghostly past over his present situation and conduct just as Marian's affair does. The gentleman has died but his image remains a ghostly force in the background of 1950s England.

This (f)ailing of the gentleman and the crisis of his country house inheritance was part of the shifting socio-economic pattern of the nation during the twentieth century. His heroic position in the national imaginary had been cemented by the union of landed and wealthy elites with public school education, the Christianized cult of athleticism and the moral purpose of imperial rule, but this was unravelling. In *Maurice*, Clive articulates the dissatisfaction of the nation saying, the country is ‘weary of us leisured classes coasting round in motor-cars and asking for something to do [...]’. No one wants us’ (94). Hugh David remarks that it was such belief in his own redundancy that spurred the post war toppling of the gentleman.⁷⁴ Where Girouard suggests that the gentleman’s downfall came in the Great War,⁷⁵ Collins argues that while opposition to the gentleman was present in the first half of the twentieth century, as Clive notes, his fall occurred between 1955 and 1971 caused by ‘a mixture of class relations, party politics and changing morality’.⁷⁶ In ‘The fall of the English gentleman’ Collins addresses how the implosion of England’s institutional certainty, specifically with regard to the empire, was catastrophic for the gentleman and ‘deprived English culture of much of its once-famed cohesion’.⁷⁷ According to Collins, cultural pluralism ‘rent a gentlemanly-sized hole in the fabric of Englishness’.⁷⁸ His sense of the historic shift occurring in the late 1950s identifies the period that immediately follows Hartley’s writing and locates the moment when the amateurism of the amateur gentleman was seen to be collapsing. Indeed, the gentleman was fundamentally challenged as his amateur unproductivity, demonstrated by Clive and Trimingham, was cast against economic and sporting professionalism. He retained a strong hold on the administration of sport, particularly cricket, but was increasingly found wanting under a system of sporting meritocracy.

⁷⁴ Marcus Collins, ‘The fall of the English gentleman: the national character in decline, c. 1918-1970’, *Historical Research*, 75:187 (2002), 90-111 (207).

⁷⁵ Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

⁷⁶ Collins, ‘The fall of the English gentleman’, 108.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

Holt has identified the key issue in the move away from amateurism as being ‘the shift in the definition of an amateur from a straightforward social distinction to a monetary one’ which substantially helped erode the sense of a natural or moral social order.⁷⁹ 1952, the year of *The Go-Between*’s creation, saw Ian Fleming pen a new heroic figure in the character of James Bond (with the first film, *Dr No.*, released in 1962). Thereafter, the Suez debacle ‘exposed the bankruptcy of gentlemanly rule’⁸⁰ and the race to achieve the four minute mile, first broken by Roger Bannister in 1954, became a pivotal, perhaps final, moment of achievement for amateurism. A decade later in 1963 the Profumo Affair linked a sex scandal, the country house and lying to parliament, and was soon followed by the resignation of Harold MacMillan, the last gentleman prime minister.⁸¹ The same year also saw the end of cricket’s distinction between gentlemen (amateurs) and players (professionals).⁸² Harold Wilson is recorded to have continued the assault upon the gentleman class by declaring that ‘at the very time the MCC has abolished the distinction between amateur and professional, we are content to remain in science and industry, a nation of gentlemen in a world of players’.⁸³ This attack on the amateur gentleman was supremely successful and other heroic male figures, like Bond, rose from his ashes even as his ashes were being retained within the country house and English heritage. Although Forster and Hartley undercut the morality and exclusivity of the country house amateur gentleman and point to this future demise they not only insist on presenting his (f)ailing condition, thereby preserving his image, but also establish a renewed link to a rural sense of Englishness which is not entirely distinct from the set of values that underpin the gentleman ideal of England they appear to challenge.

⁷⁹ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 107.

⁸⁰ Collins, 102.

⁸¹ The Profumo Affair actually began at Cliveden, Lord Aston’s country house. See, David, 254.

⁸² For discussion of the importance of the changes to sporting amateurism see, Holt and Mason, *Sport in Britain 1945-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), particularly Chapter 3; and Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in Sport: An Analysis and Defence* (London: Frank, 2001).

⁸³ Wilson cited in Marqusee, *Anyone But England*, 101.

Forster's novel insists on the importance of English men and rural England just as it rejects the model of Clive as an English gentleman and distances itself from the restrictive behaviour and future of the country house. What remains crucial, however, is the need for a home. As Clive says, the entire nation just wants 'a comfortable home' (94). For Forster 'home is everything'⁸⁴ and his haven for Maurice and Alec is one that must be within rural England, initially the hidden spaces of Penge and then England's greenwood. Penge is actually the name of a place within the Borough of Bromley in London, but under previous local boundary divisions had been a location in Surrey and a district in Kent. Penge was a Celtic word meaning 'the hill within the forest', the forest being 'The Great North Wood' of Croydon. Its name and seemingly unfixed geographical location are suggestive of its representativeness, of its ability to stand for *the* English country house. Like Brandham, the home of the Durhams enjoys a raised position within a semi-rural setting. However, this setting is a forest, a place of nature and the natural, whose hidden, dark, green spaces gesture toward the utopian freedom of the forest-like retreat of Carpenter and Merrill at Milthorpe. In Forster's original version of *Maurice*, he included an appendix which saw Aida discovering her brother and Alec living in the greenwood years later. Forster removed this from the final text, perhaps believing it too far fetched from his historical perspective of 1960. Nevertheless, it remains clear that he intended for the lovers to retreat into and represent a particular type of rural England, one where Englishness and homosexuality are not mutually exclusive categories but aspects of a single loving comradeship. A pastoral vision of England as the greenwood is set to protect them from the pressures and ills of class and money and, at the same time, to attest to their masculinity and masculine love in a pre-war context. As he says, *Maurice*

⁸⁴ Brown, 44.

belongs to the last moment of the greenwood [...]. Our greenwood ended and catastrophically and inevitably. Two great wars demanded and bequeathed regimentation which the public services adopted and extended, science lent her aid, and the wilderness of our island, never extensive, was stamped upon and built over and patrolled in no time. There is nor forest or fell to escape to today, no cave in which to curl up, no deserted valley for those who wish neither to reform nor corrupt society but to be left alone. (221)

Forster admits that through *Maurice* he was writing against modernity, against industrialization, against the advance of progress, its technological intrusion and the calamities of two world wars of destruction. He is protesting against the Foucauldian incursion of surveillance and regimentation, against the social disciplining of the self and body that modernity has enforced, and against the medicalization of homosexuality that haunts Maurice. His answer for Maurice and Alec is an imagined retreat into a Robin Hood-like existence of pre-war innocence and a home within the freedom-filled spaces outside of social existence. Forster's retrospective view of the passing away of such freedoms and spaces of retreat suggests that his narrative of radical sexual political and cross-class unity exists within a conservative paradigm of Englishness and that his attachment to individual freedom is not concerned with collective social transformation but rather confined to isolated escapism from but still within England.

Maurice reconciles his national and sexual identities to secure a future with Alec by transforming his understanding of an Englishman's sexual and emotional integrity but not his sense masculinity or nationality. Initially, Maurice's educational and familial trajectory meant that he 'was stepping into a niche that England had prepared for him' (53) and it is his struggle with his homosexuality that disrupted this straight line. When Clive declares that he loves Maurice, it is their status as Englishman that Maurice uses to reject Clive's advances as ridiculous declaring, "'Oh rot!'"[...] "Durham you're an Englishman. I'm another. Don't talk nonsense"' (56). English decorum and restraint are self-defence mechanisms but ones which he later discards (though Clive can not).

Later, when Alec first tells Maurice of his emigration plans, Maurice dismisses imperial travel by insisting that it's 'England for me' (166), tying himself to the country forever. Alec gives up his own future plans and the pair retreat into a rural idyll away from the social pressures that surround them. This turn toward England, and its rural green spaces as homosexual havens, begins for Maurice when Alec misses his boat.

For a long time he gazed after her [the ship], then he turned to England. His journey was nearly over. He was bound for his new home. He had brought out the man in Alec, and now it was Alec's turn to bring out the hero in him. He knew what the call was, and what his answer must be. They must live outside class, without relations or money; they must work and stick to each other till death. But England belonged to them. (208-9)

England, in this statement, belongs not to the country house or its gentleman, but to two homosexual comrades whose sense of equality and loyalty entitles them to claim England, rather than its imperial connections, as their own and makes them heroes of the nation. This claim to equality began with their partnership in the cricket match and now turns to a partnership in the rural countryside of the country they cannot leave behind but whose social institutions they wish to escape without overtly rebelling against or destroying. It is here, in their 'Possession of England' that the contradiction of Forster's liberal humanism and what seems to be a conservative attachment to rural England is articulated. The clear rejection of social norms is cast against his adherence to the mythical value of the unchanging English countryside, of the pastoralism of rural England, the Anglo-Saxon heritage of a homeland that the English gentleman had sought to absorb and redirect in his imperial pursuits. Along the same line of argument, Bailey states that '*Maurice* reveals the limits of representation that the Anglo-Saxon myth of Englishness, born of postmutiny imperialism, places on narrative modernist texts',⁸⁵ as Forster can not escape the values of Englishness and masculinity that were

⁸⁵ Bailey, 325.

intrinsically part of his own imperially directed education and led to his work in the colonial office. Consequently, his narrative of escape is really only a narrative of a rural return to an unchanging England that remains tied to the project of imperial Englishness. As Seamus Deane writes in his introduction to *Nationalism, Colonial and Literature*, 'it bespeaks of the failure of the political creed of liberalism, with its peculiarly intense valorisation of the autonomous human subject and its consequent failure either to apprehend or to comprehend the operations of the system that initially gave birth to it and ultimately undermines it'.⁸⁶

Hartley's novel also expresses a warm nostalgia for a rural, conservative version of England and Englishness that is at odds with his sense of imperial, class and sexual exposure. Written away from England at a significant turning point in the nation's history, Hartley holds together a conservative idyll of the rural village and recognition of the dramatic social and political changes taking place. His 'Epilogue' presents a return to rural England as the elderly Leo revisits Brandham Hall in 1952. This post war retreat to the countryside offers Leo a new or renewed forward looking beginning, but at the same time provides an opportunity for him to witness and admire the unchanging image of England's villages. In fact, he is presented with two options. He can either choose to mourn the loss he has carried throughout his adulthood, the loss of innocence, of certainty, of hope and of sexual development, or remain trapped by the past and within a static vision of the Hall as it is presented to tourists. Upon re-entering the village Leo's line of vision, his perspective, has altered as an adult a foot taller, and he initially sees how 'the place had chanced with all the changes of fifty years' (269). Yet, almost immediately afterward, he looks down from the Church and sees the cricket pitch almost untainted by the passage of time.

⁸⁶ Seamus Deane, 'Introduction' to *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* by Terry Eagleton, Frederic Jameson and Edward Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 5.

I stood in the churchyard and looked down on the cricket field. It was mid-May, and they had been mowing it and rolling and generally putting it in order for the season. Evidently cricket still flourished in Brandham. The pavilion was still there, facing me, and I tried to make out where I had been standing when I made my historic catch, wondering what it felt like to be a cricketer, for cricket was another thing I had been excused when I went back to school. (271)

Leo's sight of the cricket pitch is an act of nostalgic reflection and mythic reconstruction as he evokes the tranquil image of the village green and the unchanging cycle that ushers in a new cricket season. That cricket is 'still flourishing' is taken to be a sign that all is well in the community. His note that people are 'generally putting it in order' implies both the need for ground maintenance and that any disorder or unruliness of the winter months may be worked away ready for summer displays of cricketing comradeship. Leo erases the antagonisms he was a witness to and any sense of conflict, disaster or loss thereby forgetting or silencing the imperial associations, class dynamics and personal conflicts that were linked to his own 'historic' match. His absence from school cricket, indeed his exclusion from many such activities, motions us toward his failure to enter the fields of boyhood and adulthood. Nevertheless, the thrust of his observation is to put the cricket pitch at the centre of village life, to uphold its perpetual place within English country living and to suggest that the past, the past of his own lifetime, has failed to erode cricket or its association with rural England. Indeed, the passage registers the brief resurgence of cricket England enjoyed immediately following the war and also makes the village pitch anonymous in its peaceful and perpetual state of being, in its representative Englishness.⁸⁷ This anonymity at a moment of personal and collective English remembrance reminds us of Baucom's explanation of the sameness and interconnection of all cricket pitches to the mind of postimperial England.

⁸⁷ Though cricket was generally been in popular decline since the Second World War, there was a brief surge of interest and attendances in the early 1950s which was evident when England regained The Ashes in 1953.

As England comes to its cricket fields to recollect itself, it confronts an essentially featureless image of itself, or an image in which every distinctive feature of the island's and the empire's countless British subjects has been subordinated to an English image of "the same...the same." While the cricket field thus emerges as the cathedral ground of an English cult of memory whose central rite is the obligatory forgetting of difference, the field offers England another way of remembering itself that is dependent on the nation's ability to forget precisely what it pretends to be remembering.⁸⁸

Leo's memory functions rather similarly as he forgets the cricketing past he claims to be remembering. In this context, the novel's famous opening line – 'The past is a foreign place they do things differently there' – reminds the reader that the past is still active, that it was imperially foreign and locally known, that it was linked to education, empire, the gentlemanly code and the cricket pitch even if Leo's view of the cricket pitch obscures many of these aspects. The novel closes with the 'south-west prospect of the Hall, long hidden from [his] memory sprang into view' (281) as if Leo is now part of the viewing public, seeing the grandeur and the glory of the place once more, the (f)ailing image of imperial Englishness and its connections with an already lost imperial past that is confronted by the postcolonial mid-century present, by what Baucom comes to see as the nation's rediscovery and fetishization of its country house as a space of memory and forgetting 'valued less for itself than the absence or lack that it at once covers and names'.⁸⁹ Hence, the close of the novel also links to the postimperial sense of England and Britishness dawning in 1950s Britain and the postcolonial emergence of a new world and cricketing order.

⁸⁸ Baucom, *Out of Place*, 149.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

PART TWO

CARIBBEAN HEROES AT THE LITERARY CREASE AFTER 1950

here was one of us, performing in *excelsis* in a sphere where competition was open. It was a demonstration that atoned for a pervading humiliation, and nourished pride and hope.

[...]

“That’s my boy”

C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), 93.

CHAPTER THREE

BOWLER, BATSMAN, UMPIRE:

CRICKETING INDEPENDENCE AND MASCULINITY IN TRINIDAD

'In their first Test series – against England in 1928 – Westindies were humiliated, whereas in 1966, they steam rolled England to become undisputed champions of the world.'¹ Birbalsingh aptly characterizes the period as *The Rise of Westindian Cricket: From Colony to Nation* (1996). It was, as Beckles marks, 'The Age of Nationalism'. Following James, Beckles, Birbalsingh and others, have recognized the key social, cultural and political role cricket and cricket heroes played in the push for nationhood, independence and freedom, at both island and regional levels. A critical point in this battle came in 1960 when Frank Worrell was appointed as the first permanent black captain of the West Indies cricket team.² Lazarus has suggested that the gap between Constantine in the 1920s and Worrell in the 1960s registers the Caribbean's 'moment of decolonization';³ the moment of transition from a cricketing hero of a colony to a hero and leader of a collective of nations representing an independent Caribbean. After the short lived Federation (1958-62), the islands-as-nations gained independence, beginning with Jamaica and Trinidad in 1962. Throughout this nation building process, cricket had provided an outlet for male self assertion and achievement as well as an avenue for communal unity and success. In the face of colonial history, the game offered what

¹ Frank Birbalsingh, *The Rise of Westindian Cricket: From Colony to Nation* (Antigua: Hansib, 1996), 24. The period was well represented in cricket calypsos with Laurel Aitken's 'West Indian Test Match' commemorating the 1963 series and Worrell as the 'everlasting captain'. Kitchener's 1967 calypso 'Cricket Champions' celebrates the West Indies gaining the title of world champions against England in 1966 and Mighty Sparrow's 'Sir Garfield Sobers' praises the supreme talent of Sobers, the 'cricket king'. See, Appendix Six.

² Previously Constantine had taken over on the field as Captain during 1937-38 series against England and George Headley had been captain for the first Test of 1947-8 series, also against England, when John Goddard could not play.

³ Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, 168.

Diawara calls ‘performance as self-invention’⁴ for male players or what may also be described as ‘masculinity-in-action politically’, to adapt the phraseology of Rohlehr.⁵ In addition, it provided what can be termed ‘performance as nation-invention’ where the island became the independent nation in actuality but the region remained the potential, but as yet unformed, nation imaginatively enacted by the West Indies team. Cricket thus served two important and overlapping functions: first, it was the space in which self respect and individual freedom could be performed by male participants but also undermined by their failure; and second, through cricket regional co-operation, even amalgamation, persisted alongside, and even in spite of, island independence as the game remained the only stable and continuing site in which the region-as-nation was publicly performed.⁶

This chapter originates in the Caribbean’s move from colony to nation and builds on the interest shown by Beckles, Birbalsingh and Rohlehr in literary works of the independence era which engage with the sport.⁷ It addresses the struggle for and journey toward individual, communal and national independence as presented in three Trinidadian texts which, in their varying ways, interrogate the cricketing aspects of heroes of the nationalist period. These texts are *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* (1958/63), Errol John’s ‘prototypical’ yard play;⁸ *Miguel Street* (1959), V. S. Naipaul’s collection of seventeen interwoven short stories; and *Salt* (1996), Earl Lovelace’s most recent and ambitiously epic novel for which he received the 1997 Commonwealth Writer’s Prize.

⁴ Manthia Diawara, ‘Englishness and Blackness: Cricket as Discourse on Colonialism’, *Callaloo*, 13:4 (1990), 830-44 (839).

⁵ This is an adaptation of Rohlehr’s statement that ‘politics as masculinity-in-action has proved to be little different from the traditional stickfight’. See, Gordon Rohlehr, ‘I Lawa: Masculinity in Trinidad and Tobago Calypso’, in *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities: Theoretical and Empirical Analyses* ed. by Rhoda E. Reddock (Jamaica: University of West Indies Press), 326-399 (399).

⁶ June Soomer identifies the way cricket related to the Federal project but also how it has maintained its place as a regional institution despite the collapse of the Federation. See, Soomer, ‘Cricket and the Origins of Federation Organizations’, in *An Area of Conquest*, 103-112.

⁷ At the end of *The Rise of Westindian Cricket* Birbalsingh provides brief but insightful discussions of Naipaul’s ‘Test’ (1963), Brathwaite’s ‘Rites’ (1969) and James’s *Beyond a Boundary* (1963).

⁸ Judy S. J. Stone, *Theatre* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 34.

Condensing Beckles's periodization of the history of Caribbean cricket,⁹ Manning identifies 'a succession of black goals: to get to bat, to gain places on island-wide teams and regional tours, and, as recently as the 1960s, to be named vice-captains and captains of Test teams'.¹⁰ After a contextualizing discussion of cricket, calypso and the mask of masculinity, the chapter is organized into three main parts – Bowler, Batsman, Umpire – reflecting this sense of the game's development. 'Bowler' deals with the performance of masculinity by the black fast bowler particularly as seen in the yard of *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* with the figure of Charlie Adams, a fictionalized version of George John, the playwright's father. 'Batsman' concentrates on Naipaul and cricket, the father and son relationships that emerge around the game in his early writing and the symbolic violence associated with the cricket bat in *Miguel Street*, especially when it is in the hands of Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean performers. Finally, 'Umpire', considers *Salt*'s portrayal of Bango and Alford where Alford's status as an umpire precedes his rise to communal and political leadership and so provides Lovelace with a metaphor for his critique of the political scene in post independence Trinidad. The chapter demonstrates that in these texts relationships between surrogate fathers and sons revolving around cricket act as vehicles to address the question of how to father a nation, to examine the reliance on individual male heroes and to suggest the need for political leadership to instead come from a collective of free and responsible individuals and communities.

⁹ Beckles has usefully periodized the development of cricket in the region under five stages. Stage 1 was the period up to the mid 19th century when it was assumed that cricket would stay within the domain of the white elite community. Stage 2 was the late 19th century when there was an ongoing debate surrounding the inclusion of poorer whites and the respectable propertied non-white gentlemen. Stage 3 was the early twentieth century which was characterized by the forceful entry of a few blacks. Stage 4 was the mid twentieth century when a system of white leadership over a black majority is being worked out. Finally, Stage 5 saw the challenge and replacement of white leadership and the emergence of popular democratic representation in the later part of the twentieth century. See, Hilary Beckles, 'The Radical Tradition in the Culture of West Indies Cricket', in *An Area of Conquest*, 42-54 (44).

¹⁰ Frank Manning, 'Celebrating Cricket: The symbolic construction of Caribbean politics', in *Liberation Cricket*, 269-289 (271).

Moon on a Rainbow Shawl and *Miguel Street* were both composed in London in 1955 and, like much of the West Indian or Caribbean literature written in the metropolitan centre at that time, represent something of a literary re-crossing of the Atlantic. They also both journey back to the image of the author's father and his profession – cricket for the Johns and writing for the Naipauls. John and Naipaul both recall and recreate the post war Trinidad they left behind, fictionalizing their own departures to England in 1950, while also reflecting back to the earlier period of the 1920s and 30s. As yard works, they exhibit similarly cutting and unromanticized visions of poverty in Port of Spain and bear the obvious marks of the 1930s barrack tradition founded by James's 'Triumph' (1933) and *Minty Alley* (1936), Mendes's *Black Fauns* (1935) and other similar pieces.¹¹ Although *Salt* is not a yard work *per se*, unlike *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979) which Hamner labels as such,¹² the second half of the novel moves from the countryside into Port of Spain and touches upon many of the types of characters, actions and tones – most notably the satirical humour of calypso – which Hamner identifies as yard characteristics, thereby linking Lovelace's work to its predecessors. Where *Moon* and *Miguel Street* both look forward to independence from 1950s Britain, *Salt*'s broad historical register places Trinidad's independence between the false freedom of the past and the 'half-way freedom' of life after independence.¹³ Composed some forty years later by an author who decided to stay tied to Trinidad, its hope is that the liberty of the historically enslaved self and community can be achieved without resorting to universal victimhood in a future after the National Party, where the National

¹¹ For a consideration of Trinidad's 1930s literary burgeoning see, Reinhard Sander, *The Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the nineteen-thirties* (New York: Greenwood, c.1988).

¹² Robert D. Hamner, 'The Measure of the "Yard Novel": From Mendes to Lovelace', *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, 9:1 (1986), 98-105 (99).

¹³ Earl Lovelace, *Salt* (London: Faber, 1996), 45. Hereafter, all references to *Salt* shall be given in text as taken from this edition.

Party is a fictional though very direct rendering of the People's National Movement (PNM) which remained in power from 1956 until 1981 and the 'Leader' bears an uncanny resemblance to Eric Williams. Despite what may appear to be a historical and geographical divide between John and Naipaul on one hand and Lovelace on the other, all three authors express a similar concern with Caribbean independence and its connection to masculinity, the formation and worshipping of heroes, and their relation to popular cultural practices like cricket, calypso and carnival.¹⁴

John, Naipaul and Lovelace all use cricket as a space in which, at a vital stage in their development, the principal male characters pursue their quest for a masculine self which is free from socio-political oppression and limitations; a quest which is bound to the future of the nation. In each text, cricket exists as a boy's game and a manly topic of discussion that serves to distract from the reality of male boredom and, quite often, a physical sense of stasis or paralysis. For many Caribbean men, the sport seems to be a means of escape from poverty and isolation but is portrayed by these authors as a Janus-faced illusion whose dreamlike promise of popularity, prosperity and success (obtained by an exceptional few) exists alongside defeat and exclusion (for a wider majority) as well as even drinking and jail, as experienced by Charlie and Hat. In each case, cricketing stories are strategically placed to provide the narrative origins and endpoints of the larger plot or narrative trajectory. The works also have, at their core, tales of cricketing remembrance that illustrate cricket's relation to past personal histories, its connection with calypso and carnival, and the problems these fields of masculinity present for the leading male figures. Consequently, cricket provides the men with an

¹⁴ For readings of calypso's prominent cultural position within Trinidadian culture, see: Louis Regis, *The Political Calypso: True opposition in Trinidad and Tobago 1962-1987* (Barbados: University of West Indies Press, c.1999); Gordon Rohlehr, *Calypso & Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad* (Trinidad: G. Rolehr, 1990); and, Keith Q. Warner, *The Trinidad Calypso: A study of the calypso as oral literature* (London: Heinemann, 1983). For consideration of the interrelation of calypso and carnival, see: John Cowley, *Carnival, canboulay and calypso: traditions in the making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and, Donald R. Hill, *Calypso Calaloo: early carnival music in Trinidad* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993).

opportunity to imagine and re-member themselves as masculine heroes but also for this re-membering to be examined as the game is seen to offer a space in which male identities are at once established and undermined, performed and revealed as performance, remembered and exposed as a failed re-membering, especially where surrogate father-son relationships are portrayed.

Although fathers are present in these texts, blood father-son relationships are fraught with distance, absence or 'nothing', as in *Salt* (27). From his investigation of estate archives, Beckles acknowledges that 'slave holders had neither social nor economic interest in black fatherhood'.¹⁵ Edith Clark's influential study of Jamaican families, *My Mother Who Fathered Me* (1957), emphasizes that this insecurity and neglect of the father has continued into twentieth century family structures and the absence of Afro-Caribbean fathers has become a prominent feature of contemporary sociological comment. Yet Reddock draws attention to Peter Wilson's suggestion that while lower working class fathers may have been absent or marginal to the domestic space, such men still provide role models by dominating the external world, particularly the space of the street.¹⁶ In these texts, fatherly absences make way for other male role models and poignant surrogate father figures from outside the domestic setting and this discussion focuses upon these surrogate father-son relationships and their engagement with cricket. Such relationships work to negotiate between the past and present and revolve around the creation and interrogation of the cricket hero, whether successful or failed, especially where the surrogate father is a cricketing hero of the nation and the generational separation between the male figures underscores both the continuing reality of social enslavement and the continuing hope of future change. In examining the past and the men or examples of masculinity provided by their own pasts, John, Naipaul and

¹⁵ Hilary Beckles, 'Class, ethnicity, nation and notions of masculinity: Black masculinity in Caribbean slavery', in *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities*, 225-243 (231).

¹⁶ See Reddock, 'Introduction', in *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities*, xvii-xviii.

Lovelace are all analyzing what Naipaul labels as ‘the problem of how to be a man among we men’,¹⁷ of how to exist as a Caribbean man of colour among men during and after colonialism.¹⁸ In each text, the act of memory functions to recall and re-member (to imaginatively put back together) the surrogate fathers and their previous masculine performances, but also serves to expose the instability of those past performances and the disjuncture between them and their present emasculation; a disjuncture which pushes the younger men or surrogate sons like Eph and the Naipaul’s narrator (read John and Naipaul) to flee to the Mother Country and sees Alford reassess his bond with his island, its history and its future. By focusing on these elective father-son relationships, the chapter suggests that the process of re-membering (as recalling back to mind and putting back together physically, psychically and emotionally) a ‘father’, specifically a type of cricketing father, was important to the process of fathering a nation but that the over reliance on such a single hero or martyr is unproductive for an emerging, independent, society.¹⁹

Moon, *Miguel Street* and *Salt* all depict the complex pattern of race, gender and class relations that colours Trinidad. They also mobilize the cultural tools, styles and masculine postures provided by the tradition of drums, calypso and pan to localize the characters, their actions and motivations and to stylistically unify and animate the

¹⁷ V. S. Naipaul, *Miguel Street* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 14. Hereafter all references to *Miguel Street* shall be given as in text as taken from this edition.

¹⁸ Frantz Fanon expresses the same feeling, declaring ‘All I wanted to be was a man among other men’ in *Black Skins, White Masks* trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 112.

¹⁹ Here re-membering carries the explicit connotations of memory, physicality and reconstruction or reconstitution, as a physical putting back together through memory. It is also more exactly used in the sense outlined by Giovanna Covi in ‘Re-memorying, Decolonialising and Translating in Jamaica Kincaid’s *The Autobiography of My Mother*’, in *Centre of Remembrance: Memory and Caribbean Women’s Literature*, ed. by Joan Anim-Addo (London: Mango, 2002), 52-65. Building on Tony Morrison’s use of ‘rememory’ and ‘disremember’ in *Beloved* (1987), Covi explains her sense of a ‘process of re-memory, which allows for former oppression to shape present liberation and resistance and to conceive subjectivities that, however temporary and changeable, are fully conscious of the forces of power that threaten to reduce them to subaltern positions, precisely because they are grounded in those facts of history – personal and collective – which cannot and should not be erased’ (52). These are the parameters within which the male cricketers are also operating as their re-membering of themselves is part of their move toward liberation but one that comes with uncertainty and inconsistency and is often undermined by their performance of masculinity and its incompatibility with their present circumstances.

writing. Throughout the texts the picong, machismo and gender battle of calypso remain omnipresent and account for much of the ironic and satirical humour deployed. For John and Naipaul, calypso and pan help to clear a cultural and psychic space for creolized Caribbean identities, particularly working class male identities, in-between, though very much affected by, the competing economic, political and social influences of England and America during the transitional post-war period. Calypso is a dominant feature of *Moon's* soundscape, it is the local sound and the sound of the *locale* inserted and asserted in-between 'Land of Hope and Glory' and Frank Sinatra, and is personified onstage by Ketch the calypsonian forced to run 'after the yankee dollar'.²⁰ Calypso is also a primary intertextual resource in *Miguel Street*, as Naipaul uses at least fourteen calypso songs from the 1930s and 1940s.²¹ In *The Middle Passage* (1962) Naipaul claims that it is 'only in calypso that the Trinidadian touches reality'.²² In *Miguel Street* he and his characters operate almost entirely within the ironic idiom of calypso as they expose the harsh realities that surround them. Arguing against Lamming's condemnation of Naipaul's 'castrated satire', Rohlehr contends that Naipaul's deployment of probing ironic and satirical strategies, like those found in calypso, actually enables him to 'examine the past without sentimental self-indulgence'.²³ This reading can also be extended to John and Lovelace. Rather than appearing entirely critical of Trinidad or the Caribbean, as his comments often led us to believe, Naipaul has suggested that if this type of picong society 'breeds cynicism, it also breeds tolerance [...] for every human activity and affection, for every demonstration of wit and style'.²⁴ This is the tone his piercing humour offers in *Miguel Street*. As Thieme

²⁰ Errol John, *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl: A Play in Three Acts*, revised 2nd edition (London: Faber, 1963), 50. Hereafter the play's name shall be abbreviated to *Moon* and references given in text as taken from this edition except where stated as from the first 1958 first edition of the play.

²¹ John Thieme, 'Calypso Allusions in Naipaul's *Miguel Street*', *Kunapipi*, 3:2 (1981), 18-33 (19).

²² V. S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage* (London: Picador, 2001), 66.

²³ Gordon Rohlehr, 'The Ironic Approach: The Novels of V. S. Naipaul', in *The Islands in Between: Essays on West Indian Literature*, ed. by Louis James (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 121-139 (139).

²⁴ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 73-4.

rightly claims, Naipaul imaginatively returns from England through calypso to express, perhaps for the only time, ‘a genuine concern for [and] degree of sympathy with the ordinary West Indian’;²⁵ the figure he increasingly distances himself and his father from in the cricketing content of *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961). Although Lovelace also makes direct calypso references, he expresses a deep and continuing sympathy for such men, including the cultural move toward Black Power, and typically does so through his investment in what he calls the ‘indigenous practices’ of stick fighting, pan and carnival. Indeed, it is the performative combination of responsibility, competition and humour of the carnival that is the starting point of his vision of a liberated creolized unity, as seen in both *The Dragon Can’t Dance* and *Salt*.

In ‘Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values’, Rohlehr establishes the aesthetic, cultural, political and economic intersections between cricket, calypso and the Caribbean literary imagination, expressing their combined relation to the pivotal role of the masculine mask of heroism and its mock heroic exposure in Caribbean culture. Further, in ‘I Lawa: Masculinity, in Trinidad and Tobago Calypso’, Rohlehr examines the tradition of the warrior hero of the stick fight, his evolution in the heroes of calypso and cricket (among others) and calypso’s ability, ironic and humorous, to ‘elevate and deflate the ideal of phallogentric masculinity’.²⁶ He explains how ‘phallus worship [...] is largely a mask worn by calypsonians because of tradition but equally mocked by them because of its disconnections from reality’.²⁷ It is this mask which is shown and exposed in these novels and their cricketing actions and relations as performances of masculinity fail to relate to the emasculated realities of the male protagonists. In light of Rohlehr’s authoritative analyses, the cricketing stories and characters herein considered are read through a calypso frame because calypso affects not only the

²⁵ Thieme, ‘Calypso Allusions in Naipaul’s *Miguel Street*’, 19.

²⁶ Rohlehr, ‘I Lawa: Masculinity in Trinidad and Tobago Calypso’, in Reddock, 345.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 346.

writing style of the authors and the self styling of their male characters, but also the very type of creolized cricket played in the Caribbean.

Making this argument, Burton has noted that the 'street values' of calypso – reputation, aggression bravado etc. – inform or mould the type of cricket played in the region whether the game is on a beach, in a street or on the international stage. Taking up the work of Roger Abrahams and Peter Wilson, Burton believes that because of the two traditions found in West Indies cricket, those of Englishness and those of Caribbeanness, the game must be read through the dialectic of inside/respectability/yard/woman and outside/reputation/street/man that structures carnival and the carnival society.²⁸ Burton's understanding of cricket, its two traditions and the values association with the yard and street is useful, particularly as this chapter moves from John's yard out into Naipaul's street, but the chapter ultimately sees the battle to establish and maintain a coherent and stable masculine identity as one that takes place in both these, and other, socio-cultural places/spaces because it is central to the pattern of gender relations that characterizes the picaroon society. In this chapter, calypso and cricket, as well as calypso-cricket, are understood to allow John, Naipaul and Lovelace to 'simultaneously create and question their own emerging heroes and the values for which they stand' as Chang demands.²⁹ The authors are shown to be concerned with the arrival and performance of potential heroes and the existence of both the failed hero and the mock or false hero, especially when he performs his heroics on or around the cricket pitch.

²⁸ See, Richard D. E. Burton, 'Cricket, Carnival and Street Culture in the Caribbean', in *Liberation Cricket*, 89-106.

²⁹ Victor Chang, 'Elements of the Mock-Heroic in West Indian Fiction: Samuel Selvon's *Moses Ascending* and Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*', in *Re-Siting Queen's English: Text and Tradition in Post-Colonial Literatures*, ed. by Whitlock & Tiffin (Amsterdam: Rodoi, 1992), 91-101 (94).

Eleven men toss one ball with his arm.
Yet, ball speaks *his* eloquence. [...]
Ball in his hand is a nation's voice [...]
But his arm works his nation's arm!³⁰

From Woods and Cumberbatch in the early 1900s, to Ambrose and Walsh in the 1990s, the West Indies has a long tradition of 'real quick' bowling.³¹ These bowlers are not just fast, they are typically aggressive, explosive, even lightening quick, and are often imposing performers who can change the course of a game. Generation after generation the Caribbean has produced such bowlers and bowling combinations, including world dominating quartets, in greater numbers and with more international success than any other cricket playing region. David Firth articulated the overtly racial fears this bowling tradition can provoke (especially in England) when he attacked what he saw as the 'seven-foot monsters' of West Indies cricket.³² According to Viv Richards such fears sparked the legislative backlash against West Indies bowling hostility.³³ Writing in 1934 Neville Cardus stumbled upon something of the reality of the situation when he wrote that 'to train a West Indian slow bowler you must begin with his grandfather' because all West Indians try to bowl fast 'as a matter of course'.³⁴ The point beneath the mild condescension of Cardus was that, as James identified, the speed bowling of the West Indies comes from the set of social relations that are specific to the region's history of sugar and slavery.³⁵

³⁰ James Berry, 'Fast Bowler', in *Hot Earth Cold Earth* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1995), 95-6.

³¹ For a musical tribute to Ambrose and Walsh see Sugar Aloes's 'Two Great Bowlers' in Appendix Six. They are also remembered in Colin Shakespeare's poem 'England v The West Indies 1988', in *To be a Condemned & Other Poems* (Bradford: Oak, 1994), 35-7.

³² David Firth cited in Marqusee, *Anyone But England*, 146.

³³ In *Hitting Across the Line: An Autobiography* (London: Headline, 1991) Richards notes how no objections were raised against the 'absolute ferocity of the Australian duo of Thompson and Lilley against the West Indies in 1975-6' and that the authorities have targeted the fast bowlers of the West Indies when, he writes, they started to field four quick bowlers precisely because they had faced Australia (73-4).

³⁴ Cardus, cited in Michele Savidge and Alistair McLellan, *Real Quick: A Celebration of West Indies Pace Quartets* (London: Blandford, 1995), 17.

³⁵ See James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 72-81.

In the Caribbean, cricket was one of a slightly altered set of three C's as 'Cricket, Canes and Church, [which] constituted the planter-merchant hegemony'.³⁶ It was brought to the garrisons and plantations by English colonials in the eighteenth century. Mocking and mimicking slaves were mostly at the game's edge until plantation owners began to employ them as bowlers so that gradually non-whites entered the ideologically protected domain of cricket. In 1836 Dickens captured the thankless task of the fast black bowler in his *Pickwick Papers*: 'faithful attendant Quanko Samba [...] mustered up his last remaining strength – bowled me out [...] Poor Quanko – never recovered it – bowled on, on my account – bowled off, on his own, died sir'.³⁷ Quanko's cricketing death, caused in Mr Jingle's narrative by his batting supremacy (i.e. masculine potency), was the first literary example of the black professional who bowled away his body at the behest of the white man he could neither disappoint nor disobey and his fate, if not always his death, was repeated *ad infinitum* by Caribbean black bowlers during and after emancipation. In the nineteenth century, the extension of the racially determined labour division and hierarchy of the plantation system was extended to the game as non-whites were allowed to perform cricket's most physically demanding role – bowling – leaving white men to bat and lead. Stoddart pinpoints the turn of the century as the moment when the spectacle of fast seam bowling emerged, causing a colour shift in the popular heroes of the masses from white to black.³⁸ As more clubs were established, blacks were hired as groundsmen, as bowlers at practice (where they only bowled) and as bowlers in teams where they could target opposing white batsman under the direction of their own white captain. Like professionals in England, they were dependent on the pay and retention of batsman who desired practice and teams

³⁶ See, Beckles, 'Introduction', in *An Area of Conquest*, xvii.

³⁷ Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, ed. by James Kingsley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 105. It is noticeable that Mr Jingle's narrative brings the Caribbean cricket playing context, and the cricketing violence of the empire more generally, back into the domestic scene of the local cricket match between All-Muggleton and Dingley Dell.

³⁸ See, Brian Stoddart, 'Cricket and Colonialism in the Caribbean', in *Liberation Cricket*, 9-32 (24).

who needed strong, hardworking bowlers. Birbalsingh explains that ‘by the last decade of the [nineteenth] century, the plantation origins of the West Indian society had produced a situation in which the best batsman were generally white and the best bowlers were black and *fast*’.³⁹ Beckles describes how these bowlers, particularly those from working class backgrounds, made real headway after the First World War.

Where slavery meant the capture and suppression of the ‘defeated male warriors’ who then had to be ‘kept’ and ‘kept down’, fast bowling was a route to masculine self assertion, to an understanding of one’s self as a warrior hero and such a sporting warrior could propel himself and his weapon – the ball – at those above and beyond his immediate social and economic reach.⁴⁰ Such bowlers were using the ball to express themselves and the aspirations of their community through the physical freedom of bowling, as captured by James Berry’s poem ‘Fast Bowler’ cited above. The bowler could use his physical and mental strength to challenge and endanger the system that excluded him on the very field that was supposed to protect and reproduce Englishness and white superiority. St. Pierre asserts that the frustrations caused by colonialism were sublimated into the socially accepted channel of cricket and made visible in fast bowling.⁴¹ Lamming captures the ferocity of the ‘bloodthirsty fast bowler’ with Crim (short for criminal) in *Season of Adventure* (1960), drawing attention to the overlapping categories of race and class to depict the black working class bowler at his most fearsome.⁴² Through carnival and play Burton claims that such bowling is intrinsically

³⁹ Birbalsingh, *The Rise of Westindian Cricket*, 16.

⁴⁰ Beckles, ‘Class, ethnicity, nation and notions of masculinity: Black masculinity in Caribbean slavery’, in Reddock, 228.

⁴¹ See, Maurice St. Pierre, ‘West Indian Cricket – Part I: a socio-logical appraisal’, in *Liberation Cricket*, 107-124 (111-113). St Pierre develops his reading of the Caribbean game in ‘West Indian Cricket – Part II: an aspect of creolisation’ also in *Liberation Cricket*, 125-140.

⁴² With speed as their weapon, and Crim’s, ‘a ball was like a dagger in his hand’ (353). Rohlehr is right when he states that ‘this reference to cricket is a mere detail in a novel whose achievement is to have analyzed the tension and social unease of the period between colonialism and Independence’. See, Rohlehr, ‘Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values’, in *An Area of Conquest*, 55-102 (72). Yet the position of Crim and his cricketing ability exhibit a significant structural position at the start and end

bound to the reputation based values of the street and calypso.⁴³ This tradition of a performance of masculine heroism, of showmanship and confrontation made the black bowler a 'man' in his own eyes and a communal hero: a hero who could take on and defeat the Massa at his own game. This investment in the cricketing hero meant that his failure or exclusion, more common than success, was a personal and social tragedy. Despite his reference to the success of black Trinidadian fast bowler Tyrell Johnson in *Miguel Street*, Naipaul recognized the tragedy of the failed bowling hero.

Cricket has always been more than a game in Trinidad. In a society which demanded no skills and offered no rewards to merit, cricket was the only activity which permitted a man to grow to his full stature and to be measured against international standards [...]. The cricketer was our only hero-figure [...]. And that was why, of those stories of failure, that of the ruined cricketer was the most terrible. In Trinidad lore he was a recurring figure: he appears in the Trinidad play, *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*, by Errol John.⁴⁴

After founding the Whitehall Players with Errol Hill in 1946, actor, writer, producer and director, Errol John left Trinidad to study theatre in England in 1950.⁴⁵ He wrote *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* in 1955 to counteract the dearth of roles available to black actors and at the same time provided himself with an avenue back to the memory of his cricketing father. It won the 1957 Observer play competition and went on to be a seminal piece of Caribbean theatre which, though dated, continues to be reproduced around the world.⁴⁶ Judy Stone writes that John's title and inspiration came from his

of Lamming's novel indicating that while not much space is given over to an exploration of the game it still holds an immense collective importance for the men linked to the Reserve. Indeed, the game 'proved that the division between Chiki and Crim was real, but the roots of the Reserve had remained' (345). See, George Lamming, *Season of Adventure* (London: Allison & Busby, 1979).

⁴³ Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 181.

⁴⁴ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 42.

⁴⁵ Errol John, 'Mama Look A Mas', in *Masquerading: The Art of the Notting Hill Carnival* (London: The Arts Council, c.1986), 7-19 (10).

⁴⁶ The play first appeared as *A Moon Too High* on the BBC's Caribbean Voices in 1955 before going on to secure John two Guggenheim fellowships (1958 and 1966). In 1958, after Faber had published the first edition of *Moon*, John adapted the play for BBC World Radio, calling it *Small Moon Island*. Having enjoyed a premiere at the Royal Court Theatre in 1959 the play did not appear again in England until John himself directed a production at London's Theatre Royal in 1986. Following an adaptation in 1960 for Associated Television, John rewrote some of the play for an award winning off-Broadway production in

admiration of Eugene O’Neil’s play *Moon for the Misbegotten* (1952).⁴⁷ Both invest in the moon as a unifying visual metaphor that reigns over the dreams of the unfortunates below. Its bright, full light emerges from a sea of black night to speak to those beneath with a poetic force that captures the innocence, humanity and sensitivity of the inner lives that are blighted by the realities (and memories) of daylight. In John’s work this is accompanied by a ‘rainbow shawl’ that stands for the colours and ‘texture’ of Trinidad’s racially mixed population and is physically presented onstage as a bedcover or security blanket upon which the light, promise and hope of the moon shines.⁴⁸

John’s play depicts a small yard in which all of the characters long to escape to a fuller, happier life whether this is through cricket (Charlie), marriage (Rosa, Mavis) or departure (Sophia, Esther, Ephraim). In the yard, the telling refrain ‘caught yer, caught yer’ (28) screamed by the playing children allows a cry of wicket taking success (i.e. getting caught out) to become a call of social restriction and criminal imprisonment (to be caught or imprisoned). The ambitious dreams of the characters uphold Peter Wilson’s distinction between women who desire respectability and men who quest for reputation.⁴⁹ The yard itself is a female, even feminine space dominated by Sophia

1962; published by Faber the subsequent year. Derek Walcott brought the play to Trinidad for its home debut in 1968. Ironically, the same year, Chris Searle was not permitted to produce the ‘local’, ‘spicy’ play at the school he was teaching at in Tobago though the piece went on to become a text for the Caribbean CXC examination. See, Chris Searle, *Pitch of Life: Writings of Cricket* (Manchester: The Parris Wood Press, 2001), 159-169. The latest UK production by Eclipse Theatre in 2003 was the first effort of the Art’s Council’s ‘Black Regional Initiative in Theatre’ (BRIT) reinforcing John’s legacy as a provider of strong, substantial roles for black actors on the stage. Judy Stone suggests that its influence can be seen in later works such as *Nigger Yard* (1980) by Anthony Hinkson, *A Hero’s Welcome* (1986) by Winsome Pinnock and *A New Beginning* (1988) by Urias Peters. See, Stone, *Theatre*, 38.

⁴⁷ Stone, *Theatre*, 36.

⁴⁸ After a brief outline of the racial mixture of Trinidad the author’s instruction for the casting of the play states that ‘one should try as much as possible to pattern this racial patchwork, the mixture being more violent sometimes in the backyards of the type described in the play’. See, John, *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*, 1958 (7) and 1963 (10) Faber editions. Additionally, John himself was born to a mother from Barbados and a father from St Vincent, reinforcing a sense of diversity and regional amalgamation.

⁴⁹ See Peter J. Wilson, ‘Reputation and Respectability: A Suggestion for Caribbean Ethnography’, *Man*, 4:2 (1969), 70-84. The impact of Wilson’s argument is noted in Reddock’s ‘Introduction’, in *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities*, xvii-xviii.

Adams, matriarch, ‘bully’ and moral centre of the play.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, in this womb-like retreat from the street, it is the men, Charlie and Ephraim (Eph), and their desperate actions that drive the piece forward. The play circles around Charlie’s theft from Ole Mack’s café and reaches its dramatic climax when Eph, the disillusioned young trolley bus driver, storms out of the yard to head for England, regardless of his girlfriend Rosa or their unborn baby. The relationship of Charlie and Eph carries the play’s investigation of masculine identities and independence which is principally negotiated through the memory of Charlie’s cricketing past. Although *Moon* was first published in 1958, John’s revised 1962 version (published in 1963), set in the East Dry River District, home of the pan, emphasizes and expands the play’s cricketing and calypso aspects and consequently is used herein unless otherwise stated.⁵¹ In this version, it is more clearly the drum – calypso and/or steel – that sets the tone, pace and rhythmic baseline of much of the action. It subtly evokes the pounding heartbeat of Rosa and Eph’s unborn baby which, like many, is soon to be without its father, and its repeated striking is the beating out of daily monotony that rises and quickens to the pace of Eph’s anger and falls or slows to the speed of Charlie’s despondent bat mending. It also recalls the thumping footsteps of Charlie’s bowling run up and projects forward to Eph’s striding out of the yard.

Charlie Adams is the ‘ruined cricketer’ Naipaul identifies as a recurring figure in ‘Trinidad lore’.⁵² Beckles notes that even his name evokes ‘a regular, common kind of being – if not the first man in terms of biblical text’.⁵³ This first-everyman is a personification of all failed would-be cricketing heroes but especially black bowlers.

⁵⁰ John describes Sophia as ‘a bit of a bully’ in *Moon* (1963), 23.

⁵¹ The 1958 first edition employs the same examples of cricket and calypso and they are invested with the same symbolic significance. The 1963 version sharpens the attack made by John on the cricketing authorities while also increasing its calypso references. John moved the action from Woodbrook, the residential area in which he grew up, in the first edition to the East Dry River District in the second, perhaps to emphasize the working class cultural connections to cricket, carnival, calypso and pan.

⁵² Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 42.

⁵³ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol 1.*, 105.

By applying Lorde's term 'biomythography' to Charlie's narrative, his story can be read as both ordinary and mythic, the biographical and the mythographical because, as in Lorde's analysis, 'in the specifics of [his] history, [is] also the embodiment of the hope of a nation'; a hope for an escape to freedom through cricket.⁵⁴ In addition, John's writing obviously touches upon his own autobiography and something of the biography of his father. McWatt argues that 'fictional autobiography [is] a way of rescuing the self through the power of fiction'.⁵⁵ Similarly, Breiner claims West Indian autobiography goes beyond the self to produce 'representative texts about shared experience', what he calls an 'autobiography of the tribe'.⁵⁶ John's play, and particularly Charlie's cricketing story, can and should be read as an example of such 'communal autobiography' as Charlie's cricketing career contained and expressed the desire for a collective, communal, and national identity being forged by the inhabitants of the yard, and similar yards, through his cricketing heroism while John's play is part of the creation of a national or regional Caribbean literature.

The representative nature of Charlie and his story as well as the significance attached to the surrogate father-son relationship between Charlie and Eph has been emphasized by the stage productions of John's work. In 1962 upcoming American actor James Earl Jones played Eph as his own estranged father performed as Charlie. More importantly, with Charlie representing George John, Errol John played Eph himself in 1960 and again in 1973, each time occupying the son's position in relation to his own fictionalized father. Then in 1986, when he was too old for the younger role, Errol John performed under his own direction as Charlie. In *Beyond a Boundary*, James records that George John 'was just the right height, about five foot ten, with a chest, shoulders

⁵⁴ Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (London: Sheba, 1990), viii.

⁵⁵ Mark McWatt, 'The West Indian Writer and the Self: Recent "Fictional Autobiography" by Naipaul and Harris', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 3:1 (1989), 16-27.

⁵⁶ Lawrence A. Breiner, 'Lyric and Autobiography in West Indian Literature', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 3:1 (1989), 3-15.

and legs on him all power and proportion. With his fine features he was as handsome a man as you would meet in a day's journey'.⁵⁷ Moreover, James notes, Errol was 'the living image of his father'.⁵⁸ Consequently, by playing Eph, the surrogate son, Errol, the real son, served as a physical reminder of his 'handsome' father in his younger days and, as such, the man Charlie/George once was. Later, by performing as Charlie/George he registers the physical memory of his father after his cricketing career was over and his looks and strength had faded. It is possible to contend that through these performances, Errol John brought himself, his father, Charlie and Eph into a single representative figure, a single representative body, that was not set to convey the story of the Johns exactly but to portray the sense of exclusion, failure and emasculation that such men were wrestling and which was being written onto the body of former cricketing heroes.

In his youth, Charlie had attempted to 'grow to his full stature' through cricket. Sophia remembers how he had been 'slim and handsome', real 'spit and polish', with women and a 'big' future (41). He was, in fact, the young attractive male body Eph presents to the audience, although Eph's anxiety over being viewed as a sex symbol by the women registers his desire to escape the reduction of his black identity to his body, to escape Fanon's sense of the reduction of the black man to penis.⁵⁹ On stage we see Charlie, the once powerful sporting performer, become a rum drinking thief who steals to provide for his daughter's education. Charlie's fall from masculine self assertion, achieved through fast bowling, is written onto his 'big, bloated, brown skinned' (39) body which is now soft, fat and effeminized by its similarity to his wife's own 'plump' figure (23). Eph reads Charlie and his body as a warning, as a vision of his own future if he does not leave the island. Indeed, Charlie's body, especially in comparison to the sexual appeal

⁵⁷ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 73-4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵⁹ See, Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 170.

of Eph's, speaks of the older man's social, economic and, perhaps, sexual impotence. (The 1958 first edition implies that Esther may not be his biological daughter.) Yet, Charlie is never violent or abusive, as men are ordinarily in *Miguel Street*, and his character is marked by his kindness and the continuing affection everyone has for him. In the yard his loosely worn mask of drunken happiness, of a man of the street celebrating the heroes returning from war, quickly evaporates. In this feminine/homely space, he breaks down crying as he confesses his crime to Sophia. When she comforts him in her maternal fashion Charlie becomes a boy in her arms: 'the masquerade is over' (40) and Charlie is a far cry from the cricketer he or the others re-member.

In the 1920s, Charlie had been a fast bowler of international promise. Speed, aggression and 'red hot' bowling were the qualities that anchored his masculinity and his position in the world. He had a local reputation and was considered a hero-in-waiting until he protested against the unfair boarding conditions for coloured players during an intercolonial tour of Jamaica in 1927. The 'stink' got into the papers, ending his career and his chance to escape the clutches of poverty by moving to an English league side. Re-membering himself, approaching thirty, 'strong as a bull – and at the height of his power of as bowler' (61), he tells Eph:

my big talent was with the ball. I used to trundle down to that wicket – an' send them down red hot! [...] in my time, John, Old Constantine, Francis, them fellas was fast! Fast! Up in England them so help put the Indies on the map [...]. But for the West Indian tour to England that year – I didn't even get an invite to the trials [...]. In them days, boy – The Savannah Club crowd was running most everything [...]. They broke me. (61-2)

Broken by his cricketing past, Charlie reasserts his former success, his proximity to those who 'made it' and the injustice of his demise. Charlie Adams is based on Errol John's fast bowling father, George John, whom James describes as the 'knight-errant of

fast bowling’, ‘the fast bowlers’ bowler’, ‘not hostile but hostility itself’. He ‘incarnated the plebs of his time’ and he and the white gentleman batsman George Challenor embodied their cricketing generation.⁶⁰ John’s career was interrupted by the First World War but he toured England in 1923, aged at least 39, when his bowling and that of Learie Constantine and George Francis (the ‘fellas’ Charlie recalls) made them all heroes and helped the West Indies gain Test status in 1928; to ‘put them on the map’. According to *Wisden* the 1928 bowling line up, still featuring Constantine and Francis, constituted the ‘the strongest combinations of fast bowlers in any Test side’.⁶¹ For Beckles, this inaugural Test series, this new beginning, was ‘a prime symbol of a nation imagined’, a regional nation that is, with the team operating as ‘emissaries of a national consciousness slow in the making’.⁶² It is this moment, this historic and collective entrance onto the world stage as potential sporting equals to England, still the colonial and cricketing Massa, from which Charlie is excluded as the playwright shifts from recognizing his father in Charlie to paying homage to his father’s cricketing reputation as ‘John’ in the list of greats.⁶³ Charlie is not only denied the chance ‘to be measured against international standards’ and contribute to the formation of a national imaginary, but he is even refused the opportunity to prove himself worthy to compete, that is, he is denied the right to a ‘trial’. Consequently, he haunts the yard and specifically Eph as a reminder of the racial and class injustices that structured Caribbean cricket and society, and, from Eph’s pessimistic account, continue to do so in the 1950s.

⁶⁰ For James’s description of George John see *Beyond a Boundary*, particularly 73-81.

⁶¹ Savidge and McLellan, *Real Quick*, 17.

⁶² Hilary McD. Beckles, Introduction, *A Nation Imagined: First West Indies Test Team* (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003).

⁶³ In the 1958 first edition Charlie is said to have missed the 1923 tour to England but this is moved forward to the 1928 tour in the second edition. While the historical detail shifts, almost mirroring the gap between the first and second editions, the arguments attached to Charlie’s role and his exclusion from the international trials remains consistent though the national emphasis is stronger in the second.

As a fictional member of this ‘generation of black men bowling fast [that] was more sure of itself’,⁶⁴ however, it was Charlie’s position of confidence that caused his downfall. When he articulates Constantine’s sense of ‘they are no better than we’,⁶⁵ he discovers that a substantial power differential remains. Consequently, by acting outside of the field of play, as a man defiant enough to confront the realities of discrimination, he became another tragic hero, another fallen figure at the feet of the ‘Savannah crowd’ and their cricketing/colonial power where the Queen’s Park Oval is, as James puts it, the ‘boss of the island’s cricket relations’.⁶⁶ The Oval is the socio-political force that Charlie describes as ‘pushing yer out of the stream – and on to the bank – So that yer rot in the sun’ (63). As a bastion of colonial elitism, the Oval embodies the pressures white hegemonic masculinity places on the other male identities. By not knowing or abiding by his ‘place’ (62) Charlie loses everything. His story tells us that for the men of his generation, fast bowling was a physical and ideological weapon they could throw, or bowl, at the colonial power base represented by the (white) batsman; a means by which these men could build a sense of importance, a sense of achievement and masculinity. At the same time, and especially before the watershed of Frank Worrell’s transformative arrival as captain in 1960, the black bowler was not only tortured by his physical duties but also by the obvious and life determining power of the cricketing/colonial authority he bowled under. This meant that such black bowlers stood in-between agency and subjection, resistance and complicity, masculinity and emasculation. Thus, in *Moon* Charlie’s bowling can be read as both his means of self expression and masculinity-in-action politically, a cause for the nation to invest in the black cricketing hero, but also the self alienating labour white men (as batsmen and captains, etc.) control. Like Sophia’s explanation of his past, Charlie’s recollection, simultaneously bitter and nostalgic, serves to re-evoke his previous masculine status and heroic potential at the

⁶⁴ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 79.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

very same time that it testifies to his collapse and the fragmentation of his masculinity, of his future, of his sense of self.

In the 1958 edition, on hearing the news of the theft from Rosa, Sophia jokingly remarks that the culprit 'must have been The Shadow'; some kind of dark super hero from 1930s and 40s America popular culture who steals from the Ole Mack whose high rent Sophia considers as theft from the poor.⁶⁷ Unbeknown to Sophia she has, unwittingly, drawn attention to Charlie's 'Shadow'. Indeed, the theft was an act by Charlie's shadow self, his darker side that was desperately longing to reclaim an identity by establishing his position as father-provider, as an equal among men, among fathers. In her article, 'Ghosts in Mirrors: Reflections of the Self', Elizabeth Tucker points out that a ghost 'is an apt representation of the shadow-self'.⁶⁸ In both the 1958 and 1963 texts Charlie describes how Rosa, knowing that he is the thief, looked upon him 'as though she'd seen a ghost' (44). Sophia retorts: 'Go look in the mirror, mister – then come tell me what yer see' (44). She already views Charlie as a ghost, as a ghost of a man, the ghost of his former self, and she expects that if Charlie could see himself this is what he too would realize. According to Buse and Stott, ghosts 'disrupt our sense of linear teleology' precisely because they represent past and present, absence and presence, body and spirit, life and death, all in a single moment.⁶⁹ In this sense Charlie is a ghost. His 'old-man' body is almost transparent as the audience can see through it to his other, younger body and self as represented on stage by Eph and unsuccessfully re-membered by Charlie and Sophia.

⁶⁷ 'The Shadow' was a radio programme in the 1930s, a comic book in the 1940s and a film made in 1940. It also became a carnival figure as recorded by Errol John in 'Mama Look a Mas', in *Masquerading*, 11. While this discussion does not wish to enter into a debate about Jung, it is notable that in Jungian terms the Shadow is your own 'dark side' and the same sex as the subject. Jung suggests that the Shadow is not wholly bad but the unconscious other of the ego that needs to be dealt with, understood and integrated into consciousness. Charlie's shadow appears to function in a similar sense.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Tucker, 'Ghosts in Mirrors: Reflections of the Self', *Journal of American Folklore*, 118:468 (2005), 186-203 (194).

⁶⁹ Peter Buse and Andrew Stott ed., *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 14.

When Sophia tells Charlie to ‘look in the mirror’, she is asking him to do the impossible – to see himself as he *is* rather than how he imagines himself to be. In his presentation of ‘the Mirror Stage’, Lacan argues that when a child (6-18 months) looks in a mirror they experience their body as fragmented and incomplete yet view the mirror image as a complete whole – as single entity or being.⁷⁰ Lacan developed his thinking to emphasize that this disruption between the experience of the self and the projected image was an ongoing structural feature of psychic life in adults. Hence, Charlie cannot look in the mirror without seeing his own image as a completed whole which fails to correspond to his own sense of disunity and can not reveal the reality that those around him perceive – i.e. his ghostly status. We anticipate that the image Charlie has of himself is that of a cricketer, of Charlie Adams the fast bowler and potential international star. But this ‘Ideal-I’, this imaged self was never complete and, as Lacan shows, relied on external objects and people to shore it up. For Charlie this object was the cricket ball, and the people were those who saw him play and reinforced his fictive image of himself. Now, on stage as ghost and shadow, Charlie is suffering from a disunity of self and a lack of identity which he can not overcome without the game or some substitution. In this sense, Charlie actually haunts the yard, Eph particularly, as a walking reminder of the race, class and other barriers that prevent independence, equality and free competition. Perhaps more pertinently for this discussion, Charlie is the ghost of all such fast bowlers and, as such, a ghost of West Indies cricket whose presence – a kind of haunting absence presence – tells and retells the story of its structural inequalities in spite of the heroics of his successful bowling counterparts.

While his previous life and self was tied to bowling, in the yard Charlie is reduced to a bat mender reliant on the patronage of the wealthy cricketing elite who expelled him.

⁷⁰ See, ‘The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience’, in Jaques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 1-7.

He is working when he tells Eph of his past and the bats onstage stand as physical references to the phallic power of the white batsman, hegemonic masculinity and the colonial order. Eph comforts Charlie with the knowledge that he was 'class' (62) but he blames Trinidad for what happened to him despite Sophia's suggestion that it is more complicated. Eph, like Charlie and others before him, wants to make it 'big', to be a 'big man' and no 'small boy' but in his desire to achieve this size based masculine sense of self he rejects what he knows and loves (his grandmother and Rosa) only to end up predicting his own future collapse, reminiscent of Charlie in Sophia's arms, by labelling himself a 'big boy' (54). As Eph takes up the cricket bat to play some 'air shots' while talking to Charlie he reconnects with the game, his surrogate cricketing father and the island yet is simultaneously seeking to move away from Charlie's position as black bowler and failed hero. His handling of the bat points to his attempt to grab, acquire and perform the phallic power he thinks he will be able to obtain in England even though England is the source of the colonial imagination that destroyed Charlie and, with a depressing irony, Liverpool – Eph's exact destination – was a key port for the slave trade. At the end of the play Young Murray arrives to collect these bats and reclaim these symbols of colonial power. Charlie and Eph had discussed his talent and his father's wealth as they believe him to be a future international player – a suggestion of the ongoing cricketing prominence of the elite schools, particularly the Queen's Royal College in Trinidad and the Lodge, Harrison and Combermere in Barbados. When Sophia returns from visiting Charlie in jail, Murray explains that he has arranged for Charlie to coach the 'juniors' at Queen's Royal College. This last painfully ironic blow could have provided Charlie with a road out of the yard and with such a job he could have re-established his sense of masculinity by being husband-father-provider. However, it would have resituated him in the position of black bowler, employed by the white colonial and cricketing elite and only able to perform *at* them if it is also *for*

them. Instead, he resides in jail. It seems that the power of the bat has not yet become available to the men of the yard, though it is used/abused on the street.

Batsman

When the ‘traditional order, [was] a line of white batsman and a line of black bowlers’,⁷¹ the black or non-white player taking up the cricket bat stands as a reversion of the colonial order cricket helped create and maintain. This became especially important when batsman from lower social circles rather than those educated at the elite schools were making their way into the West Indies team. In Caribbean cricket history, this transformative potential came to the fore with the isolated batting talent of George Headley in the 1930s and has continued through to the record breaking talents of Brian Lara via the three W’s, Gary Sobers and Viv Richards, to drop generationally significant names that shall be considered further in Chapter Four. When international cricket resumed after the global upheaval of the Second World War, the West Indies continued their regional and cricketing self assertion with the Barbadian trio of world class batsman in Worrell, Weekes and Walcott who went on to dominate the decade. Where *Moon*’s historical focus is on the relationship between bowling, heroism and the dawn of international cricket for the West Indies, this section shifts toward the symbolic value the cricket bat as seen in the writing of Naipaul, most specifically *Miguel Street* and the father-son relationships that contextualize and emerge from this text’s engagement with cricket.

In a 2001 column for *The Hindu*, Ramachandra Guha seeks to ‘spring a surprise’ on those who have failed to consider Naipaul alongside cricket. To this end, he draws

⁷¹ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 94.

attention to cricket's place in Naipaul's life and work, including the fact that Naipaul's name first appeared in the British press in June 1952 when his cricket performance for his Oxford College was reported in the sports pages of the *Oxford Mail*. Guha highlights that Naipaul's letters from university to his father and family are sprinkled with cricket conversation. After consulting 'a dozen learned friends', he is also able to enumerate four cricketing points in Naipaul's main body of work, namely: Mr Bhacku in *Miguel Street* (1959), a statement about cricket heroes in *The Middle Passage* (1962), a cricketing simile in *A Way in the World* (1994) and Percy Cato in *Half a Life* (2001). From such a starting point he considers Naipaul's engagement with cricket during 1963 when he wrote two pieces about the tour of England by the West Indies that summer and a review of *Beyond a Boundary*.⁷² Yet Guha's brief piece does not fully register the number of cricketing examples found in Naipaul's work. There are actually three notable cricketing episodes in *Miguel Street*; several remarks about a pitch and a trip to a match in *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961); two points about cricketing heroism and a cricket playing District Commissioner in *The Middle Passage*; and three further cricketing moments in *The Mimic Men* (1967). Guha is unable to recall any cricket in Naipaul's three books on India though *An Area of Darkness* (1964) depicts a 'deep hole' next to a cricket pitch, *India: A Wounded Civilisation* (1977) mentions Bombay's Gymkhana ground, and, more substantially, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) contains five cricket references: one to Bombay's old Brabourne Stadium; one to tensions between Hindus and Muslims caused by the 1987 Cricket World Cup; and another three during stories about fathers and sons. Naipaul's relation to cricket seems to be a part of his ongoing negotiation with his Indo-Caribbean origins and his often ambivalent or contradictory relationship to the game is expressed in the shift in his writing from the character in 'Test' (1963) who says 'the only thing in which I remain

⁷² Ramchandra Guha, 'Across the Boundary of Writing', *The Hindu*, 28th October 2001.

West Indian is cricket',⁷³ to Percy Cato in *Half a Life* (2001) who claims to be 'the only Black man or Jamaican or West Indian you will meet in England who knows nothing about cricket'.⁷⁴ Notwithstanding Guha's effort and these additional examples the relationship between Naipaul and cricket remains something of a 'surprise' and has received little, if any, critical attention. This is something countered by this discussion as it investigates the place of cricket and father and sons in Naipaul's early writing.

The autobiographical link between Naipaul, cricket and father and son relationships is evident in *V. S. Naipaul: Letters Between a Father and Son* (1999). This collection of correspondence concentrates on the period between 1950, when Naipaul arrived in England aged eighteen to study at Oxford on a scholarship, and 1953, when his father died and he began a literary life in London. The letters give a sense of Naipaul's impression of England and studying, his family's ongoing money worries and the literary vocation that linked himself and Seepersad. They also indicate an interest in cricket. Although Naipaul says his cricket 'isn't hot stuff',⁷⁵ he tells of his rise to the College First XI, his appearance in the *Oxford Mail* with the college's best bowling figures of four wickets for 33 runs and how he top scored with 24 and again took three wickets in his last match which leads him to conclude: 'So I have developed my cricket, if anything'.⁷⁶ The most important aspect of this ongoing cricket conversation, however, is the way it relates the game to the publishing prospects and literary ambitions of father and son in a manner that prefaces Naipaul's early fiction.

⁷³ V.S Naipaul, 'Test', in *Cricket Through the Pages: An Illustrated Anthology Spanning 200 Years of Cricket* ed. by David Rayven Allen (London: André Deutsch, 2000) 248-57 (249).

⁷⁴ V. S. Naipaul, *Half a Life* (London: Picador, 2002), 62.

⁷⁵ V. S. Naipaul, *V. S. Naipaul: Letters Between a Father and Son* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1999), 192.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

Naipaul's arrival in England in August 1950 coincided with the furore caused by that summer's Test series as the West Indies defeated England at Lord's for the first time and went on to secure their first series victory over England, winning 3-1 in the Mother Country.⁷⁷ The jubilant mood, caused by this historic moment was famously captured by Lord Beginner's calypso 'Victory Test Match', popularly known as 'Cricket Lovely Cricket', with its celebration of the spin bowlers Sonny Ramadhin and Alf Valentine as 'those two little pals of mine'.⁷⁸ Hailing from Trinidad, Sonny Ramadhin was the first Indo-Caribbean cricketer to represent the West Indies and was in fact on debut in 1950.⁷⁹ Wishing to capitalize on the popular mood Seepersad sold two pictures of him to the *Trinidad Guardian*, the newspaper he had worked for as a journalist.⁸⁰ He also writes that like his son he too 'made the mistake of sending a Ramadhin story – synchronizing with the last Test – to the *News Chronicle*, instead of sending it to the *Sunday Chronicle*' with its longer interest pieces.⁸¹ That is, wishing to find their way in the literary world, father and son make the same misjudgement. Nevertheless, Naipaul responds encouragingly to his father: 'Send your stuff to any of the Sunday papers. It is not too late. Ramadhin is known to everyone in England, and very few know anything about his background'.⁸² The prompt to reveal Ramadhin's 'background', something of the Indo-Caribbean history they share, is a signal for Seepersad to begin presenting their 'doubly colonized' position to the very nation whose imperial project caused its creation. The link between cricket and writing/publishing reoccurs later when Naipaul

⁷⁷ These cricketing victories presented a defining and transformative moment for the Caribbean people newly arrived in England as well as those back home. For more details on the 1950 tour see Michael Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket* revised edition with Donna Symonds (London: André Deutsch, 2002) and Vijay P. Kumar, *Cricket Lovely Cricket* (New York: Vijay P. Kumar, 2000).

⁷⁸ When the West Indies won the Second Test at Lord's calypsonians Beginner and Kitchener led the Caribbean supporters around the pitch to celebrate their first victory at 'the home of cricket'. See, Appendix Six for this track. As well as Beginner's famous calypso, Kitchener also memorialized the event in 'Kitch's Cricket Calypso' and King Radio composed 'We Want Ramadhin on the Ball' for the 1951 Carnival season.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the place of Indo-Caribbean players in West Indies cricket see, Frank Birbalsingh and Clem Schiwaran [Seecharan], *Indo-Westindian Cricket* (Antigua: Hansib, 1988).

⁸⁰ Naipaul, *V. S. Naipaul: Letters*, 18.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 28.

says that he is 'playing cricket this term'.⁸³ Seepersad's response enumerates the three things that pleased him about his son's letter: 'the first, that you are playing cricket; the second, that you have done as many as ten stories; and the third, that you – and [Henry] Swanzy – think I write even better than Selvon'.⁸⁴ As Seepersad moves from cricket through Naipaul's writing to his own the game is again a shared point of interest that stands alongside their literary pursuits and helps convey the tone of mutual respect and encouragement they offer each other.

Like the rest of their letters, these cricketing dialogues are warm, thoughtful expressions of a friendship that bears little evidence of the generational gap or familial hierarchy that could have separated them. The two share practical advice about accessing the publishing market and support the literary merits of each other's talent. Naipaul's suggestions to his father are always well heeded and Seepersad only ever adopts a fatherly tone to nurture and support his son's intellectual future. Though always wishing he could give more, Seepersad's thought of retaining the letters for a future book becomes this very collection and his notion of beginning a story with himself leads Naipaul to his fictional masterpiece, *A House for Mr Biswas*. Unfortunately, by June 1952 Naipaul is in a state of depression and withdrawing from their reciprocal exchange. In a letter dated 2 June 1952 addressed to 'Everybody' his cricket news becomes interspersed with an assessment of a 'breakdown' caused by 'loneliness, and lack of affection'.⁸⁵ Here the game provides a way to reconnect with his Caribbean home, but by belonging dialectically to England and the Caribbean cricket is also indicative of, as well as contextualized by, the emotional and mental strain caused by his relocation to England. Shortly after, Seepersad suffers a heart attack and dies in October 1953, aged 47, without seeing his son. Naipaul later reflected: 'I had left my

⁸³ Ibid., 192.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 193.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 196.

father in 1950, not looking back. I wish I had [...]. He died miserably [...] three years later'.⁸⁶ From this point on Seepersad's influence extends as an absent-presence throughout Naipaul's writing and he has repeatedly acknowledged it as such.

After finally going back to 'the periphery' in 1961 Naipaul wrote about his experience of seeing Trinidad again as a series of images 'running fast' like a 'cricket flick book',⁸⁷ that is, all bodies and movement and motion. Imaginatively though, he had already returned to Trinidad in his early writing. By picking his way back to and re-membering the early literary experiences his father had given him, including what would become *The Adventures of Gurudeva* (1995), he found his own authorial voice.⁸⁸ His early works, particularly *Miguel Street* and *A House for Mr Biswas*, mobilize cricket as a means of reconnecting with his childhood and the tragic magic comedy of his father and the island while at their same time testifying to his physical distance from them.⁸⁹ Landeg White argues that in *Miguel Street* Naipaul erases the father, and thereby his father, in order to re-explore Trinidad on his own terms.⁹⁰ Reading *A House for Mr Biswas*, Judith Levy presents the death/killing of the Mr Biswas's father as a Lacanian move to enter into language, to assume the Name-of-the-Father, to simultaneously be rid of the father and to devour him in an act of incorporation.⁹¹ This also accurately summarizes Naipaul's removal of the father in *Miguel Street* as he incorporates his father's humorous literary idiom without registering his physical presence. When, in *The Mimic Men*, Ralph Singh gives away the bat his father had brought him for Christmas his rejection of the bat, and the fantasy of a trip to the Oval, precipitates his father's disappearance into the hills to preach. Cricket functions here as a sphere of

⁸⁶ V. S. Naipaul, *Literary Occasions: Essays*, ed. by Pankaj Mishra (London: Picador, 2003), 78.

⁸⁷ V. S. Naipaul, *A Way in the World: A Sequence* (London: Heinemann, 1994), 33.

⁸⁸ Naipaul, *Literary Occasions*, 15.

⁸⁹ Sue Thomas has observed that Naipaul's 'narratives of arrival in England return repeatedly to his father'. See, Sue Thomas 'V. S. Naipaul', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, 228-247 (228).

⁹⁰ Landeg White, *V. S. Naipaul: A Critical Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 58.

⁹¹ Judith Levy, *V. S. Naipaul: Displacement and Autobiography* (London & New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 5-7.

masculine exchange between Indo-Caribbean fathers and sons, but one which, perhaps because of the symbolic value attached to the pen/stick/bat as phallic weapon as well as an instrument of colonial authority and resistance, leads to their separation as the son matures just as it does with the surrogate father-son situations in *Miguel Street*.⁹²

Naipaul wrote *Miguel Street* in 1955, his 'break through' year, while working for the BBC's *Caribbean Voices*.⁹³ The stories are mainly told from the point of view of a nameless and seemingly fatherless boy narrator. They capture Naipaul's childhood impressions of street life in Port of Spain following his family's move there from the Hindu countryside and so derive directly from this double Hindu/Creole inheritance. Only one of the sketches, 'The Maternal Instinct', concentrates on a woman, Laura, and Naipaul uses her to humiliate her partner Nathaniel whom she beats in a reversal of the calypso 'Knock Dem Down'. The others have at their core the relationship between the narrator and the male role models he encounters as he and his friends, Errol and Boyee, attempt to imitate Eddoes, Bogart and Hat, the street's dominant males who present 'life lived [...] on the pavement'.⁹⁴ The narrator tells of the masks of masculinity offered on the street, including their connections to popular American culture and cinema, and explores the depths, problems and insecurities of these performances. Although the narrator journeys through his adolescence with various heroes who act as surrogate fathers, he enjoys a special bond with Hat – the street's 'smartman', a version of the hero of calypso who is also a medium brown Rex Harrison (160). Hat is the man that boys and men aspire to be, who sets the street's standards of behaviour and the limits of

⁹² It is important to note two things here. First, that there appears to be a symbolic continuity between the pen, the stick and the cricket bat as phallic symbols that can be understood in relation to the tradition of Kalinda and calypso where a wooden implement aides the construction and presentation of a masculine self image. Second, that taking up the cricket bat, like taking up the pen, is an act of disruption and opposition.

⁹³ Naipaul, *Literary Occasions*, 13.

⁹⁴ William Walsh, *V. S. Naipaul* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1973), 11.

laughter, who, more than anyone else, perceives ‘the pain beneath the pose’.⁹⁵ During Naipaul’s examination of street masculinity, cricket features as a topic of conversation and gambling among the men and a game for boys. In such games, the ball regularly gets wet ‘in the stinking gutter’ (22) as their cricket is tainted by the ‘stink’ of the poverty in which they live.⁹⁶ Cricket also structures the narrator’s interaction with three of his potential surrogate street fathers: Man-man, Bhakcu and Hat. In each case this leads to the narrator’s physical severance from a surrogate Caribbean father as he remembers and sees through their masculine mimicry. It is to these cricket based surrogate father role models to which I now turn, beginning with Man-man.

Based on a fabled Port of Spain resident whose Messianic tale is captured by the Mighty Wonder’s calypso ‘Follow Me Children’,⁹⁷ Man-man is the ‘mad-man’ of *Miguel Street* whose descent into religious fantasy results in a mock (and failed) crucifixion and, thereafter, permanent incarceration. Man-man’s identity, his very name, expresses the dialectic of ‘Man’ – capitalized and universal – a supposedly homogenous collective, and ‘man’ – uncapitalized and singular – a sometimes lonely and socially isolated being. He embodies the promise of humanity as ‘Man’ the Messiah and the comedic fall of ‘man’ the mock hero of calypso. In *The Crucifixion* (1987) Ismith Khan also employs the story of the preacher’s self crucifixion while Lovelace recreates the motif of Christ-like sacrifice in Taffy⁹⁸ and then Bolo⁹⁹ and even resurrects Man Man (no

⁹⁵ Lillian Feder, *Naipaul’s Truth: The Making of a Writer* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 165.

⁹⁶ Similarly, the proximity between cricket and local living means in *The Humming Bird Tree* (London: Heinemann, 1969) Ian McDonald describes how ‘the outfield was littered with clots of dung’. Also Kaiser’s mother invades the pitch during a village game to beat her son for hitting the ball so far it hit their cow. His father is called and after he controls his wife he also punishes his son (57-59). Michael Anthony also records games in the street and the perpetual interruptions caused by the rain during the wet season. See, Michael Anthony, *Cricket in the Road* (London: Heinemann, 1973), 40-43.

⁹⁷ See, Bruce King, *V.S. Naipaul* (London: Macmillan, 1993), 19; White, *V. S. Naipaul* 50; and Thieme, ‘Calypso Allusions in Naipaul’s *Miguel Street*’, 20.

⁹⁸ ‘The Prologue’ to Lovelace’s *The Dragon Can’t Dance* (London: Faber, 1988) begins:

This is the hill tall above the city where Taffy, a man who say he is Christ, put himself up on a cross one burning midday and say to his followers: ‘Crucify me! Let me die for my people. Stone me with stones as you stone Jesus, I will love you still’. And when they start to stone him in truth he get vex and start to cuss: ‘Get me down! Get me down!’ he say. ‘Let every sinnerman

with a stick – a miniature version of the phallic implements used by both stick fighters and cricketers – and eventually refuses to become the heroic saviour of his fellow men, and, ‘Man’. Naipaul’s narrator exhibits a strange fascination for Man-man’s insights and actions, perceiving that something substantial and meaningful resides behind his inscriptions and comedic performances. He senses that the link between cricket, literature and popularity, even heroism, is central to the way Man-man is read by the local population, as mad, then saviour, then as mad again. The link appears to be between theory and practice, between inscription and action. Man-man’s distance from the practicality of action his inscription references, from both formal education and cricket games, hints at his distance from genuine heroic actions and implies that his role is one of highlighting what may be done but not being able to do it himself. The young narrator soon sees that his performances are just that, provocative performances that can be read but are not taken further. Naipaul’s links the symbolic value of Man-man’s stick as pen and cricket to suggest a conflation between writing and cricket both of which seem to alienate the street men until their frustrations are played out for the young narrator to see. These frustrations take on physical forms in the marital relations the narrator witnesses which reinforce St Pierre’s point that with ‘the cricket bat, violence is even more pronounced’.¹⁰⁰

The act of wife beating that eventually sends Hat to jail is a repeated feature of *Miguel Street* and Naipaul’s works more generally. Both John and Naipaul both show the cricket bat as a phallic weapon used in domestic violence where wife beating is accepted as commonplace, performed in a kind of calypso comedy and supposedly undercut by the emasculating tongues of the women. In *Moon*, Prince snatches one of the bats Charlie mends and makes as if to strike Mavis, his new fiancée. When she

¹⁰⁰ Maurice St Pierre, ‘West Indian Cricket – Part I: a socio-logical appraisal’, in *Liberation Cricket*, 107-124 (113).

rebukes him declaring that they 'aren't married yet' he retreats to become 'the patsy' again (55).¹⁰¹ In *Miguel Street*, Mr Bhakcu, 'The Mechanic' and narrator's hapless Indo-Caribbean uncle, beats his wife with a cricket bat. The narrator describes the situation:

For a long time I think Bhakcu experimented with rods for beating his wife, and I wouldn't swear that it wasn't Hat who suggested a cricket bat. But whosoever suggested it, a second-hand cricket bat was bought from the Queen's Park Oval, and oiled, and used on Mrs. Bhakcu.

Hat said, "Is the only thing she really could feel, I think."

The strangest thing about this was that Mrs. Bhakcu kept the bat clean and well-oiled. Boyee tried many times to borrow the bat, but Mrs. Bhakcu never lent it. (119)

[Bhaku] hated his wife, and he beat her regularly with the cricket bat. But she was beating him too, with her tongue, and I think Bhakcu was really the loser in these quarrels. (123)

The humour of the scene is undeniable but, as in calypso, only adds to the penetrating critique. Hat's role as prompt and commentator suggests that he has an interest in the seizure of power represented by the bat but he undermines Bhakcu's masculinity by suggesting that it was the only phallic implement that Mrs Bhakcu 'could feel'. The example suggests that the cricket bat is used to suppress, control and emasculate men of color before they (re)direct it against women. In this sense, one should appreciate that taking up the bat is an attempt to offer some kind of anti-colonial stroke, a move to seize power from the grip of the white (bats)man and the colonial order represented by Queens Park Oval. Bhakcu's situation, however, disrupts this black/white dynamic and draws in Trinidad's wider racial picture. A probable descendent of indentured Indian labor, Bhakcu's seizure of the bat symbolizes his struggle against white hegemonic masculinity and with its black opposition. His performance follows Lovelace's presentation of Reena Loutan's thesis in *Salt* and Reddock's explanation of:

¹⁰¹ In J. B. Emtage's *Brown Sugar* (London: Collins, 1966) the public want a man who murdered his wife to play cricket because he is better than the man chosen in his stead, where a meritocracy takes wife killing to be of side importance compared to fielding the best cricket team (26).

Indo-Caribbean masculinity as a difficult and sometimes confusing struggle against creolization, on the one hand seeking acceptance within this paradigm, but at the same time seeking to maintain Indian domestic patriarchal power. This is a struggle, following Wilson (1969), between the values of honour (Indian) and reputation (Creole).¹⁰²

Still, even if the effeminized Bhakcu is contesting hegemonic and black calypso-related masculinities, he reinforces the point that the hierarchy of masculinities is typically united by the oppression, or attempted oppression, of women. Mrs Bhakcu seems complicit in this violent performance of marital rites, claiming the bat as her own and refusing to release it into the playful hands of the children. Yet hers is a performance of emasculating power as the force of her tongue appears to recall the relatively strong position of Indian women during indentureship, male attempts to regain control over them post indentureship and Bhakcu's impossible attempts at domination. Importantly, in the examples of Prince and Bhakcu, the female tongue – standing in for the female voice and sexuality – defeats the male display of phallic power but does not improve the condition of the women. This only happens when the men decide to do something else, in Bhakcu's case becoming a pundit. Mavis and Mrs Bhakcu are only able to emasculate their partners by destroying the mask of masculinity they wear because the men are afraid of losing this mask, yet are constantly doing so. In the same way that the objectifying gaze of the women toward Eph in *Moon* may be a displacement of the white gaze identified by Fanon, one suspects that the verbal attacks of the women are really the verbalization of the cricket bat's white hegemonic voice speaking back to the man of colour who uses it. Notably, the narrator distances himself from these relatives, seeing their farcical parade as a comedic performance of social desperation and instead

¹⁰² Reddock, Introduction, *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities*, (xxii). Reena's 'thesis was that women were being kept out of power by a macho and insecure male, made largely impotent under enslavement and colonialism vis-à-vis the whiteman and who consequently harboured a residual sense of shame at having been exposed in the presence of his woman, the Indian male even more vulnerable because he perceived the African political power as a new threat, so he felt the need to keep Indian woman hidden away, unexposed, cocooned by whatever means available to him.' See, *Salt*, 231.

retreats toward the Creole figures of the street, especially Hat, only to discover very similar behaviour behind Hat's 'smartman' mask.

Hat is Naipaul's 'Port of Spain Indian'¹⁰³ who brings to his Indian identity the characteristics of Creole street life. The penultimate tale, simply entitled 'Hat', tells of the narrator's first encounter with Hat when Hat took him and eleven other children, including the two nephews who live with him, to the Oval for the last day of Trinidad versus Jamaica. This memory is placed alongside the narrator's outgrowing of Hat and the calypso culture of the street and Hat's fall from his previous, seemingly heroic, position to jail. Taking this tribe of boys to the game is something of a kindness by Hat but it is also something of a joke, a trick, as he pretends to be their father. His mock fatherhood grants him attention, importance and respect among the crowd of interested eyes as the children appear to attest to his manliness, to his fertility, to his phallic credentials. However, the validity of such an idea has already been undercut in the text by tale of Mr Morgan, the Pyrotechnist, who was publicly emasculated by his wife despite their having ten children (63-72). While watching the game, the different aspects of Hat's persona are revealed. On one hand, Hat shouts, gesticulates and places 'impossible bets' (156). His exuberance and excitement are very much part of the game's action and are examples of the street values which enhance the crowd's interaction with the players. At the same time, Hat conveys cricket's traditions of gentility and honour to the narrator by teaching him about the beauty of the game, the cricketer's names, the scoreboard and that a batsman can be said to have 'finished batting' (155) rather than just being 'out'. Here his adoption of the Creole performativity of the street is associated with the Afro-Caribbean culture, while his reverence for the game evokes its established colonial position. He holds together

¹⁰³ Naipaul, *Literary Occasions*, 54.

Burton's identification of the two traditions of West Indies cricket as the white elite and its coloured imitators versus the black masses or the Anglo-creole 'play up, play up, and play the game' versus the Afro-creole 'play' but does so as a creolized Indo-Caribbean.

When Gerry Gomez (1919-1966) reaches 150, batting with Len Harbin, Hat cries out, 'White people is God' (155). Although Hat's support for Trinidad's captain is entirely understandable in the context of an intercolonial game and Gomez's position as a reliable batsman, he does not praise Gomez individually, or the batsman as a pair, but white people collectively. His shout proclaims his humorous investment in 'whites' whose performances are rewarding his own financial speculation. Nevertheless, Gomez, the Cambridge blue and island captain, also stands for the restrictive colonial, specifically racial, hierarchies that dominant Trinidad's social relations, on and off the field. He was a player, manager, selector and administrator and one whom James expressed immense respect for when he was appointed as the West Indies manager for the 1960-1 tour to Australia. Yet, James also recognizes that along with Jeffrey Stollmeyer, Gomez has 'been for many years the embodiment of Queen's Park'.¹⁰⁴ When he died he was President of Queens Park Cricket Club and the Oval has a stand named after him. In Hat's eyes, he is successful and masterful, the example of the 'white' cricketing elite he backs and praises. Importantly, Hat's 'crazy bets' set Gomez against George Headley of Jamaica, who, in 1948, became the first black man to lead the West Indies team onto the field and whose presence therefore gestures forward to a black regional collectivity and leadership within and beyond cricket.

¹⁰⁴ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 250. Additionally, Mighty Sparrow's calypso 'Kerry Packer' references the patriarchal authority of Stollmeyer and Gomez had over West Indies cricket and the attitude expressed to West Indian players receiving financially rewarding contracts from Packer to play in the World Series. See, Appendix Six.

In *The Castle of My Skin* (1953) Lamming testifies to the significance of intercolonial cricket tournaments for a regional consciousness and specifically the place of George Headley in that consciousness as the West Indies's first black heroic batsman:

There was a tradition of tournaments that had helped more than books, newspaper reports or history lessons at school to remind people in Barbados that there were people with similar habits and customs living in Trinidad [...]. Yet Jamaican cricket had captured the Barbadian's imagination. Every boy who felt his worth as a batsman called himself George Headley. In most cases the only knowledge most people might have had of Jamaica was the fact that George Headley was born there.¹⁰⁵

Later in this passage, Lamming registers the interconnection between cricket and Trinidadian social unrest suggesting the continuity between social, political and racial protest within and beyond the game. Lamming registers not only the collective imaginary caused by cricket but also political dimensions of the game and black regional heroes like Headley even for those 'who only cricket know'. James writes of Headley as a great batsman, if not the greatest, in *Beyond a Boundary*. Headley carried the batting of the West Indies throughout the 1930s, was largely responsible for the team's innings and, too often, the majority of their runs. Consequently, he earned the name 'Atlas'. He was also nicknamed the Black Bradman, a supposed term of praise but also of a racial hierarchy. As such, Headley can be read as Naipaul's cricketing counterpart to Black Wordsworth, *Miguel Street's* struggling poet and calypsonian who claims that he and his brother, the White Wordsworth, are two halves of a single poetic whole. In counterpoising Gomez and Headley, and, Headley and Wordsworth, Naipaul lays bare the two sides of Hat's identification with cricket and the pressure it exerts on his own sense of self. Hat's calypsonian performance of masculine bravado and self assurance is unsustainable when faced with the supremacy of, and his admiration for, 'white people' *en masse*. It is in the same sketch that we learn of how, through

¹⁰⁵ George Lamming, *In the Castle of my Skin*, intro. by David Williams (Essex: Longman, 1987), 92.

marriage, domestic violence and jail, Hat becomes another aged calypsonian whose mask shatters under its own weight causing Naipaul's narrator to distance himself from his last and most significant masculine hero. When Hat is arrested 'a great hush fell on Miguel Street [...]. No one played cricket' (163). Like Eph in *Moon*, the narrator continues to feel affection and sympathy for the older, now fallen man but when 'Hat went to jail, part of [him] had died' (165) and fearing for his own future he leaves Trinidad in search of a bigger life outside of the calypso island.

A similar scene at the Oval is depicted in *A House for Mr Biswas*. While Naipaul dedicated his first novel, *A Mystic Masseur* (1957), to 'the memory of his father', it was *A House for Mr Biswas* that captured his father's story in a fictionalized form as a perpetual search for a stable home and identity, with himself as the young Anand. In the novel a cricket pitch stands next to the Shorthills home of the Tulsi family and is repeatedly invaded or 'violated' by unwanted locals – villagers, mules and sheep – until it is destroyed.¹⁰⁶ Eventually the disappearance of the gospo tree and subsequent rain turn the pitch into 'a grass covered overhang which collapsed in a day or two and was carried off by the next downpour'.¹⁰⁷ The example is repeated in the description that opens *An Area of Darkness* of 'the deep hole', that should have been a well, next to the cricket pitch by his grandmother's home which 'remained in [his] imagination a standing nightmare peril to energetic fielders chasing a boundary hit'.¹⁰⁸ The hole/well had been dug by Babu, an Indian of Warrior caste who lived with Naipaul's grandmother as a labourer and who, after hitting rock and abandoning his digging, 'went away back into the void from which he had come'.¹⁰⁹ In these two examples instead of providing a life source or place of retreat, the cricket pitch becomes a derelict

¹⁰⁶ V. S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr Biswas* (London: Picador, 2003), 422.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 445.

¹⁰⁸ V. S. Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness* (London: Picador, 2002), 23.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

site, a left over from a past that has eroded until it is a dark cavern, a 'void' of colonial inheritance into which (mimic) men may fall and from which Babu, as an Indian, seems to have emerged.¹¹⁰ Thomas has suggested that the narrator of *In a Free State* (1971) has 'repressed his anger and humiliation at discrimination because to focus on this would be "opening up manholes" for him "to fall in"' where the metaphor of 'manholes' implies a castration anxiety.¹¹¹ The same can be said of Naipaul's presentation of the chasmal cricket pitch and cricket's general relation to Mr Biswas.

In a late chapter entitled 'The Void', Mr Biswas is so pleased with his new government job and pay rise that, like Hat, he embarks on a trip to the Oval:

It was the fashion at the time for men to appear on sporting occasions with a round tin of fifty English cigarettes [...]. Mr Biswas had the matches; he used half a day's subsistence allowance to buy the cigarettes. Not wishing to derange the hand of his jacket, he cycled to the Oval with the tin in his hand [...]. At last he came to his seat, dusted it with a handkerchief, stooping slightly in response to a request from someone behind. While he unbuttoned his jacket a burst of applause came from all. Absently casting a glance at the cricket field, Mr Biswas applauded. He sat down, hitched up his trousers, crossed his legs, operated the cutter on the lid of the cigarette tin, extracted a cigarette and lit it. There was a tremendous burst of applause. Everyone in the stand stood up. Chairs scraped backwards, some overturned. What crowd there was had advanced on the field; the cricketers were racing away, flitting blobs of white. The stumps had disappeared; the umpires, separated by the crowd, were walking sedately to the pavilion. The match was over. Mr Biswas did not inspect the pitch. He went outside, unlocked his bicycle and cycled home, holding the tin of cigarettes in his hand.¹¹²

Indicative of Naipaul's humour and Mr Biswas's farcical life course, his attempt to establish a masculine image and connect with the local population quickly collapses. His cool manly posture, as indicated by the cigarettes, is hollow and soon annihilated by the bathos of the game's abrupt end. It is reminiscent of Hat's pose shattering. Mr

¹¹⁰ Omeron has drawn attention to Naipaul's repeated use of derelict landscapes of which the cricket pitch is another example. See, David Omeron, 'In a Derelict Land: The Novels of V. S. Naipaul', *Contemporary Literature*, 9:1 (1968), 74-90.

¹¹¹ Thomas, 'V. S. Naipaul' in *West Indian Intellectuals*, 231.

¹¹² Naipaul, *A House for Mr Biswas*, 537-8.

Biswas finds himself applauded only to (re)discover his anonymity and displacement, his exclusion from the crowd he has only recently attempted to join. His inability to participate in the celebrations and 'inspect the pitch' marks his physical and emotional distance from the victory. As he returns home he retreats into an emasculated self that continues to stand as an East Indian beside but separate from the cricketing masses. The incident enacts the same sense of failed initiation and subsequent isolation that Anand endures during the botched trip to the cinema in the previous chapter where, as Bardolph shows, the son is destined to repeat the same emasculating mistakes and humiliation as his father.¹¹³ Instead of cricket separating fathers and sons as in *Miguel Street*, it unites them as an Indo-Caribbean pair distinct from what they see as the Caribbean crowd or masses. The episode is a quiet expression of Naipaul's view of the racial and communal separateness that shaped his father, himself and their writing, where watching West Indian cricket, or missing it, speaks of difference and non-participation rather than a creolized collectivity moving toward independence.

Lovelace takes up these issues in *Salt* when, like Naipaul, he links the question of Indo-Caribbean integration with cricket through the batting of Sonan Lochan. Where Kennos was a 'thin Indian boy who had proven before that he could neither bat nor bowl nor field and who didn't care either' (31), the young Sonan 'was passionate about cricket' (228) and his talent would have secured victory for the Hindu School against their Government School rivals for the first time but for a lack of support from his team. Sensing possible victory the following year the entire Hindu school community, including parents, came to see Sonan perform.

¹¹³ Jaqueline Bardolph, 'Son, Father, and Writing: A Commentary', *Commonwealth: Essays and Studies*, 9:1 (1986), 82-90 (83-6).

Sonan who everybody depended upon was a failure. He had looked good at the beginning, but he turned out to be mediocre, and that was how he continued through the years in Hindu School and later in Naparima College, doing well at practice, but when the big game was played his legs wouldn't move, he couldn't keep his eyes on the ball, his mind wandered. He heard it being said that he couldn't play fast bowling. He heard it said that the big occasion overawed him. None of that was correct. Sonan knew he could bat. What he came to realize was that batting for himself, he was all right, but faced with the hopes of Hindu School or Naparima, he was batting no longer for himself but for them. He was not just a batsman, he was an Indian. That was the burden that weighed him down. Other people had bigger problems. Sonan's one problem in life was that he couldn't find a way to bat up to his potential.

Despite his talent the explicitly racial investment in Sonan's batting causes a pressurizing paralysis which dissipates into failure. One cannot help but be reminded of James's description of the investment in Wilton St Hill whose followers watched him play 'as nationalist crowds go to hear their political leaders'.¹¹⁴ To James, St Hill's batting 'was a demonstration that atoned for a pervading humiliation, and nourished pride and hope'.¹¹⁵ But when St Hill toured England in 1928 he was 'an incredible failure'.¹¹⁶ Lazarus explains that 'St Hill failed because no one person could have succeeded, at that time, in doing what he was asked to do [...] to perform uncolonizability'.¹¹⁷ Sonan's story offers an adapted Indo-Caribbean schoolboy version of this example. He is asked to carry the weight of the Indian community's social expectations, their 'pride' and future 'hope' and their desire to assert themselves against the Afro-Caribbeans during the nationalist upsurge but, like St Hill, he cannot carry the hopes and ambitions of his entire community.

It is through this cricketing pressure that Sonan comes to view himself as 'Indian' and feel the oppressive responsibility of representing his community. His cricket experience is a schoolboy version of the political division between the African National Party and

¹¹⁴ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 89.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹¹⁷ Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, 165-6.

the Indian Democratic Party. As an adult, Sonan initially identifies with the new racially mixed political 'Group' that Alford and Kennos organize and stands as a creolized subject, outside of his Indian identity (291) believing, like Kennos, that Indian participation in Carnival is a positive step toward full communal and national collaboration. As Vishnudas Singh argues, both these Indian characters are seen to have been 'salted', creolized and rooted, by their locality and so recognize the value of a common national project.¹¹⁸ When Alford's departure to the Nationals pushes Sonan to become an Indian Democrat he nonetheless attempts to broaden the interests of his party by turning to his cricketing experience, by establishing his need to independently play for what is best and biggest, to 'bat for batting. Because [...] no man is an island' (234). However, Sonan 'could feel their pride, their desire to win, to be respected. And he was the one to make the difference' (242), just as on the cricket pitch. Finally, when he reveals his political vision at a rally potentially destroying his future and the election results of the Democrats, his voice is drowned out by the cheering crowds as the popular call for an Indian hero subsumes his idea of a creolized community. Meek argues that Lovelace's vision of liberation and equality is undercut by an 'Afro-Caribbean bias'.¹¹⁹ She points out that as the grandson of Moon, Sonan's election is a reminder that Bango discovered that Moon had been allowed to buy five acres of land, instead of 40, where he, Bango, had not. In this example, and the similar case between Jojo and Ferose, the Indian is seen to have that which has been denied the African characters – land (283), the chief aspect of Lovelace's plan for reparation. Meek observes that Lovelace 'paints the Indian community as separatist' and suggests that racial awareness is an impediment to both individual and national liberation except where this is an African-identified awareness because the novel privileges 'Afro-

¹¹⁸ Vishnudas Singh, 'Earl Lovelace's "Unsalted" Indians', *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, 4:2 (2006).

¹¹⁹ Sandra Meek, 'The "Penitential Island" – The Question of Liberation in Earl Lovelace's *Salt*', *Journal of Caribbean Studies*, 15:3 (2001), 273–297 (273).

Trinidadian culture' as 'more indigenous'.¹²⁰ Meek has a strong argument, particularly considering Lovelace's depiction of the racial 'burden' felt by Sonan. Yet, the 'burden' of racial and communal responsibility, of the over investment in a single individual is a primary concern for Lovelace which repeated in his treatment of the main Afro-Caribbean characters, Alford and Bango, their interaction and their relation to cricket.

Umpire

Cricket in *Salt* is a game of boyhood (the only reason the narrator's brother Michael goes to school), a source of 'blind support' for a local team, and a space of male retreat from the intoxicating smells of the marital home (49). At the centre of the text, it is also a cause of conversational dispute between Constable Stephen Aguilera, the local law enforcer, and Fats Alexis, a local black umpire, which marks the transitional period of independence that Lovelace is working around. 'Fats was saying that it was time for them to make Frank Worrell captain of the West Indies cricket team, and Aguilera talking about a Jamaican fella they call Alexander' (135). In the 1960 contest for a captaincy which had been tied to the selection of 'whites', it was this opposition between Gerry Alexander – a white, inexperienced wicketkeeper batsman and Cambridge blue – and, Frank Worrell – a black, experienced and world class batsman and player – that sparked James's insistence that 'there was not the slightest shadow of justification for Alexander to be captain of a side in which Frank Worrell was playing'.¹²¹ The appointment of Worrell brought the ascension of a meritocracy to the West Indies captaincy and was accompanied by and a part of the drive for independence and the rise of black political leadership. Moving from the power of the cricket bat to the question of communal authority and national leadership, this closing section draws

¹²⁰ Ibid., 289-92.

¹²¹ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 233.

attention to the role of the 'umpire' in *Salt* as a metaphor for the difficulties of negotiating between power and responsible leadership in the context of national independence through the intersecting cricketing and political struggles of Bango and Alford. For Alford, cricket is about an adolescent acceptance and ascertaining a route to power and public performance which takes precedence over participation and responsibility. For Bango the game is about participatory leadership and communal responsibility, about solidifying a group of adults into collective action on and off the pitch. In both cases, cricket is part of their quest for greater self expression and social unity but it is only by understanding the potentiality represented by Bango – a generational predecessor and surrogate father who links past and present – that Alford, a type of surrogate son, can build a new personal and national future that really seeks to start 'Seeing ourselves afresh' (122), as Lovelace puts it.

Alford's first engagement with cricket is described in Chapter Three, entitled 'Umpire', which conveys his sense of boyhood alienation alongside his move into adult mimicry. Having arrived late to school Alford is a giant among his classmates and too big and cumbersome for their games but too physically shy and incompetent to play with boys his own age. He is universally rejected because he can not play or be carefree in his own incompetence and wants, all too desperately, to succeed. Alford begins to set up the wickets and bring bats and balls to games. The care and attention he takes over the cricketing equipment suggest his need for inclusion and approval. 'Occasionally, he produced a tennis ball which he taped over and polished until it bounced and looked nearly like a real cricket ball.' (31) When the departure of Kennos means Alford is again not picked, he walks away hoping he will be permitted to play because the equipment is his.¹²² Finally, the boys allow him to umpire in a moment that transforms

¹²² *The Red Ball* by Ismith Khan similarly describes how cricket allows Bolan to enter the company of the local boys as he buys a new red ball to play with them and soon becomes their best bowler. Yet having

his life trajectory. 'Later, it would be forgotten by everyone but himself that he had any other ambition.' (32)

It was here, in this role, that for the first time in his life he had a taste of the exercise of power. [F]or a time he tried his best to please. He wanted to be fair, to give correct decisions. And in the beginning, what errors he made stemmed from this concern, but then he discovered that he was the power, that his was the final authority. He established his control by his recitation of the rules which nobody else had read and by an inflexibility of will. All timidity left him. He penalized for the most minor infringements, delivering his judgements not as an upholder of the law but as an angel of vengeance victoriously punishing sin [...].

He worked himself into the drama of the game, signalling boundaries with the elegance of a dancer, redrawing the bowling crease, calling no-balls, turning down appeals, making a theatre of his adjudication until he became as much of an attraction as the star batsman or bowler at school. He so impressed that captains of adult clubs asked him to stand in their games; and the schoolmaster, delighted to have in his school a young man with such a sense of force, invited him at sixteen to become a pupil teacher. It was this apprenticeship that would begin his career as a school teacher and allow him to place another firm foot on the steps of the world. (32-3)

This is the moment of Alford's entrance into power, where authority leads to personal position and theatrical public performances which corrupt his initially good intentions. Having first only wanted to participate as an equal he is unexpectedly separated from his peers and invested with an aura of authority that he indulges in. He falls from making fair and concerned mistakes, from being the 'upholder of the law' (the laws of the game), to becoming 'an angel of vengeance' in a process of self-aggrandizement that is opposed to the sociability of the team ethos he had hoped to join. His sense of 'victory' comes at the expense of those performers he scrutinizes and punishes. He becomes separate, distinct and powerful but remains alone and isolated. In the same way that Sonan's schoolboy cricketing experiences pre-empt his political adulthood, the contamination of Alford's sporting innocence is a parallel of the political innocence that has been tainted by the post independence push for government that he later joins.

stolen the money from home his father beats him when he finds out. Later, when his father is calmer, he lays next to him and explains that 'is for you we doin' all this'. See, Ismith Khan, *A Day in the Country and Other Stories* (Leeds: Peepal Press, 1994), 7-17.

Control, rigidity and attention seeking are the marks of his weak character which he has to work through before he can become an effective leader. There is, however, also a sense in which the sporting participants and spectators want and allow him to develop into this forceful character without checking or questioning his behaviour and this lack of collective social responsibility is part of Lovelace's critique. Fortunately, there is a degree of conscious professionalism about Alford, an attitude of thoroughness and engagement which are the redeeming features his power play and present a hope for his future. There is no indication that he is biased or genuinely corrupt only that he is young, fussy and conceited. In *The Dragon Can't Dance*, a Judge is described in similar terms as 'the presiding umpire at the Queen's Park Oval in a cricket test-match between West Indies and England, knowing that he was a black man and that he was there to interpret the law; and he would show them that he knew the law' and instead of judging society or changing men his only mission is to uphold the existing Law.¹²³ In both cases 'the Law' – of legal administration and cricket – is derived from the remnants of the colonial system and the demonstration of knowledge and power by a black official is directed against the invisible force of a colonial judgement of inferiority and at the locals in order to indicate a level of superiority. For the Judge and Alford, their roles as 'umpires', as decision makers and adjudicators, point to their desire to prove themselves within the existing socio-cultural system and are indicative of the pattern of mimicry that upholds the cultural and racial hierarchies in which they continue to operate. As such figures they embody Brathwaite's linguistic slip from 'umpire' to 'empire' in 'Rites'. They are understood as seemingly important but impotent figures, ignoring the social judgement and transformation required of them in order to concentrate on proving their knowledge and demonstrating their authority.

¹²³ Lovelace, *The Dragon Can't Dance*, 173.

As with Naipaul's example of Man-man, Alford's cricket experience is linked to literacy and education, to the chance of finding a way into language, into the Standard English (SE) of education, as the 'sirness' of his character, so clearly displayed as an umpire, leads to his securing a place as a trainee teacher. Attempting to raise himself and his linguistic ability to match this new position, Alford begins sifting through the dictionary, practising his elocution and attempting to articulate himself in a language that fails to relate to the environment around him or his upbringing and actually inhibits his inability to communicate. As with Naipaul's Titus Hoyt, Alford is a teacher whose credentials reside in an overblown vocabulary that sits uncomfortably alongside a lack of knowledge, particularly self knowledge. As a young teacher he sees himself at the start of an educated journey out into the wider world, a journey he also wants to introduce to the pupils studying for the island scholarships. Later, despite having uncovered the absurdity and injustice of the success of so few school children, he returns to his school as a politician to offer up prizes for the school cricket team and especially the 'best umpire' because he believes that they should 'train those who have to control the game' (131). Yet, his individualizing patronage seems misdirected, supporting those who control and dictate without encouraging greater participation or collective action and achievement.

As a teacher bound for 'bigger' and better things, Alford is finally able to become a cricketer, joining Wanderers Cricket Club. In his usual mode of pride and performance he enjoys walking through town in his whites but his keenness is out of step with the team as he was 'the first man to be there once again' (36). He is chosen to be vice-captain despite his lack of talent or skill. He believes that this is because of his plan to soon depart, but Vera reveals to him that he was more than this to them and that 'they saw him as not so much as leaving them as taking them with him' (36). This is the

glory obtained from leaving, from moving out to find a place in the world and representing the locals left behind; a pattern repeated in the hopes of Charlie, Eph and Naipaul's young narrator. This future journey grants Alford local fame but his decision to remain on the island and give up this dream transforms him into a heroic martyr. He is repeatedly described as 'a hero', (61) for staying, for being a teacher (81) and for returning to teaching after his hunger strike (88). Each time, however, Alford's celebrity status traps him between his own good intentions – educational, social and political – and the call of publicity and popularity. In a conversation with the PM, Tannis explains that Alford 'really wanted to be a hero' (193) rather than working for genuine political change.

In his role as popular politician, Alford bathes in the attention directed at him (128). He is invited to the annual 'Bachelors v Married Men' fete match, bowling the first ball and playing for both sides (131). His vanity and self importance grow as his political profile increases: 'it was his little weakness and he went all about where people were gathered' (128). Eventually, his superficial public performances are exposed and laid bare to him when he is stopped by a stranger who informs him that he is the 'biggest pappyshow in town' (129). He is being made 'an arse', controlled and made to talk 'just like them' (129). This has been the case throughout Alford's development, particularly as displayed through his cricketing encounters. He had performed to a crowd who had indulged him without connecting to him, without allowing him to see the reality of his performance and its lack of productive purpose. Thanking the stranger, rather than knocking him down, Alford realizes that he has drifted away from his political 'mission' to 'become part of the tapestry of pretence at power' (130) that separates political leaders from the people they claim to represent. It was the pretence that prevented independence providing or working toward individual and communal

freedom and had characterized his own father's insistence on collecting bricks to build a future house on the land he did not yet own. This is the realization that marks the dawning of Alford's (re)emergence as a communal hero who takes on the important lessons of social responsibility, emancipation and integration he learns from the story of Emmanuel Durity, known as Bango. For, as Rahim records, 'in the creation of Bango's character, Lovelace seems to have compressed the best of his heroes' with Bee's non-violence, the stickfighting strength of Bolo and 'Aldrick's fidelity to the liberating power of the Carnival'.¹²⁴

Bango's story is mainly told through other narrative voices until, at the close, he meets Alford face to face to make his land claim. Bango's heroic credentials and intense sense of social responsibility are chiefly conveyed through Myrtle. In fact, Myrtle allows her own life story to be subsumed by a narrative of Bango's 'mission' (147). In 'Masculinity, National Identity and the Feminine Voice in *The Wine of Astonishment*', Shetty argues that Eva's narrative voice is recruited, even 'held hostage', to legitimize a programme of masculine and muscular nationalism', that the female voice works both as a strategy for 'narrating political and cultural emasculation' and to 'urge its own re-masculinization'. It reveals the crisis of masculinity just as it 'evokes a sense of awe at male physical strength and beauty, and an overvaluation of what is referred to as "manness"'.¹²⁵ We can see that Myrtle's voice functions in the same fashion as her narrative of Bango exposes his emasculated social and landless position while it also glorifies his manly persistence and commitment, his strength of character and will, even his manly cricketing performances. She tells of their youth together after Bango invited her to watch a cricket match as their first date (138) and relates the sense of pride and

¹²⁴ Jennifer Rahim, 'The "Limbo" Imagination and New World Reformation in Earl Lovelace's *Salt*', *Small Axe*, 5 (1999), 151-160 (158).

¹²⁵ Shandhya Shetty, 'Masculinity, National Identity, and the Feminine Voice in *The Wine of Astonishment*', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 29:1 (1994), 65-79, (67-77).

passion he had in himself as 'a man owned nothing but himself' (136). She sees in him the same sign of forceful certainty that the young narrator saw in the 'brawling parrot-toed sure-footed walk with which [he] had seen [Bango] step on to the cricket field and into the stickfighting ring' (2) where both cricket and stickfighting are the manly communal sports of a local hero. Myrtle's sister warns her that Bango's Cascuda community is poor and proud having nothing but 'a cricket team and a steel band and this Durity is the captain of both of them' (139). But it is not until Myrtle eventually goes to join Bango that she sees the extent of the important communal role he has taken on and which she will support.

From the day she arrived in his house and see the bats and pads and other implements of Cascadu cricket club, Myrtle understood that she had to share Bango with the team and the village. Shirley was right. His life was not just his own. He was captain of the cricket team and that alone was not just authority, it was responsibility. He was the man to conduct the practice, to roll the cricket pitch before the match, to buy the cricket ball and pick the cricket team and find an umpire if Fats Alexis wasn't there, to get somebody to keep score; and when they had to play outside the village to make arrangements for the transportation of players. Everything. Nothing was done without him.

But it was worth it. She would feel tears just watching him on a Saturday afternoon lead the Cascadu team on to the field, all of them in baptismal white, leisurely like princes dismounted from horses, throwing the ball and catching it and flinging it backwards and flinging it high into the air, time belonging to them, time to check the direction of the wind, the hardness of the pitch to be concerned whether it suited pace or spin, time for tea [...] this space and stage creating out of the estate labourers and watchmen on government projects, cutlassmen and stonebreakers, knights of the weekend.

She would feel full full to see him set the field, the players shifting into their positions like kites in the sky of the field moved by the invisible strings that he was holding to crouch like hunters around the batsman, this huge gloved and padded medieval beast himself waiting with his own breathlessness for their attack. Things wasn't all right but it was all right. (143-4)

Where cricket equipment had helped Alford gain authority, in Bango's world it is about responsibility and the sharing of his life, his life space, with those men around him who play alongside him. In Bango's world the umpire is the humorous know-all figure of Fats Alexis whose physical and jovial manner stands out against Alford's example of

stern umpirical authority. Unlike Alford's performance as umpire, Bango's role as captain, as leader, is a responsibility that he performs to the best of his ability for the benefit of his team and community regardless of the sacrifice it makes of his own life. Indeed, like his carnival efforts, he does not perceive it to be a sacrifice at all but part of the necessary work of collectivity.

Through Myrtle's adoring eyes we see Bango re-membered as the man who does everything for his community, whose good nature and sense of common purpose means that he works for the good of everyone without recognition or assistance (except for Myrtle). He becomes the self sacrificing martyr that Alford was proclaimed to be. In her nostalgic recollection Myrtle rationalizes this sacrifice with Bango's Saturday appearance, with the self command and manliness he exhibits on match days. For Bango and his team mates 'time belong[s] to them' on the cricket pitch. Away from work, persecution and responsibility they have time to touch the land and make their own assessment of the world and their playing conditions. The opportunity of the match makes them 'knights of the weekend'. However, this admission of the temporal nature of such glorified leisure is also an admission of their weekday toil and the restrictions placed upon their sense of masculinity and selfhood at all other times. Myrtle's rationalization is that 'Things wasn't all right but it was all right'. Although nothing is 'all right' for them, the weekend appearance of men at play seems to provide a small opportunity for imagined recompense, for the rebuilding and performance of manliness and freedom. Unfortunately, this does not last and men move away from the efforts Bango continues to make for them all. Myrtle's contention is that it 'woulda been all right if people pull together and share the responsibility; but like the knowledge that he was there leave them free to do as they please [...], the weakness of others demanded from him greater strength' (147). With Bango's efforts wasted, unwanted

and unsupported, he begins to withdraw. Finally, Myrtle comes to the point of her visit to Alford and asks him to reject Bango's invitation to accept his Independence march in order to stop Bango from killing himself, and her, over it each year and for Alford to help Bango receive the land he has always wanted but never achieved. These are the two critical points of Lovelace's exploration of independence: first, that reparation must be made to the Afro-Trinidadians by a public readjustment of the land settlement plan; and second, in Myrtle's words, that 'it is not right for him to believe that he is the only man responsible for this community' (162). These two points are brought together for Alford when he discovers the value of Bango's efforts and the validity of his claim to the island as his land.

When Alford, Lochan, Kennos and Carabon are determining who should 'welcome' people to the first 'grand' meeting of 'The Group', their multiracial political collective, they identify Bango as an appropriate community figure and 'victim' (106) who annually arranges a march with all the island's races represented by a group of children for Carnival. Yet Florence, who had brought Bango to their attention, rejects this superficial gesture, infuriated that they cannot ask Bango 'to welcome people when he is the one that needs welcome?' (104). At first this was beyond Alford's understanding but after Myrtle's story and his introduction to Bango in the PM's office he appreciates her argument. When Bango presents his own story to Alford he articulates Lovelace's vision of heroism, responsibility and the value that should be placed in an equality of humanity. He says: 'I ain't come here to make the Whiteman the devil [...] I come to call him to account, as a brother, to ask him to take responsibility for his humanness, just as I have to take responsibility for mine. And if you think it is easy for either one of us, then you making an error' (167). Throughout the novel, Lovelace has reiterated how society must move away from the black 'secondclassness' (188) and general

‘victimhood’, from the way ‘everybody feel he is a victim’ (93), in an ‘equality of victims’ (190), from its resignation to isolated heroes and self sacrificing martyrs working for all those who stand by the wayside. Bango relinquishes his right to victimhood in order to claim what is fairly and equally his and can be given to him by the nation. When Alford decides to resign from parliament and the NP rather than abort the issue of Bango’s land, Florence knows that he had ‘arrived at a self’ (254). In the final moments of the novel, as Bango’s march begins Alford recognizes all that had previously eluded him: ‘And all at once it hit him: Bango had kept the self that he, Alford, had lost. Bango had crossed the chasm into that past to link up with JoJo, to carry still his sense of violation after the granting of the Emancipation that neither acknowledged his injury nor addressed his loss’ (257). According to Rahim, ‘Bango, as the myth bearer, is the personified ‘gateway’ into the metaspace of the ancestral and ‘native’ imagination. Harris dubs this space the ‘limbo imagination’ where, he argues, the reassembly of the dismembered collective of the New World psyche begins’.¹²⁶ Finally, the novel’s question of ‘how to set people at liberty’ (7) is answered with communal, humanitarian solidarity, by Alford ‘find[ing] his way back to the people from whom he had stood part from the beginning’ (257-8). Yet Lovelace still prioritizes the male characters and their sense of achievement, of independence, of social importance, and places Myrtle beside them as a female assistant, a voice of maternal wisdom and admiration. Consequently, the ‘postcolonial task of reconstruction’ (152) ends with a renewed male beginning, with a small but collective and multi racial national unit as Alford joins Bango march and the narrator gets ‘in beside them’ (260).

¹²⁶ Rahim, ‘The “Limbo” Imagination and New World Reformation in Earl Lovelace’s *Salt*’, 153.

CHAPTER FOUR

CLYDE, VIV, BRIAN AND JANIE:

CARIBBEAN CRICKET HEROES IN POETIC FORM

We ought not to cultivate the exceptional or to seek for a hero, who is another form of leader. We ought to uplift the people; we must develop their brains, fill them with ideas, change them and make them into human beings.

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967).

Only the following of cricket heroes transcends national, ideological and generation boundaries. This reality provides a unique terrain for artists and intellectuals to speak to the region as one about itself as a unified cultural space.

Hilary Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1* (1998).

Concerned at the prominence given to sport in newly independent and developing African nations, which can also be extended to the African diaspora, Fanon warns against the cultivation of the sports hero, a substitute leader, who may quickly stand above or outside their social group and whose exceptional success may detract from the political realities and needs of their country and its people. He expresses strong fears about promoting a capitalist mode of sporting professionalism which removes sport from the community and glorifies the heroic individual instead of providing games as one aspect of a rich socio-political agenda made to 'uplift' the masses.¹ In contrast, in *The Development of West Indies: Vol. 1* Beckles recognizes the success and unifying value of Caribbean cricket heroes and their place in the collective imagination and cultural analysis of the region; a region, with a regional cricket team, often damaged by inter-island jealousies and self interest. He emphasizes their role in exposing inequality and injustice and their politicized engagement with the game, particularly in representing the nationalist and unificatory project of regional collaboration. However,

¹ See, Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* preface by Jean-Paul Satre, trans. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 158.

in volume two of this history, Beckles also underscores the difficulties of collaboration, sporting and political, and the troubles encountered by the past hero who was cast aside without financial security but still expected to toe a political line in order to receive financial support and to behave in a way fit for public patronage. Such expectations meant that 'relations between "star" and state were often sour and unhealthy, and indicative of the hollowness of public acclamation'.² This, he suggests, is part of the reason why heroes of the third paradigm of West Indies cricket, of Lara's globalized age, have distanced themselves from the traditional role of West Indies cricket heroes.

In light of these readings, this chapter examines a series of poetic representations of Caribbean cricket heroes, specifically those who bat, in order to explore their negotiation between the individual hero and communal responsibility, between heroic cricketing performances and the popular investment in these performances as a means of historical compensation, social escapism and political hope. The first section examines Kamau Brathwaite's 'Rites' and its depiction of the failure of Clyde Walcott as a metaphor for the region's inability to find leaders capable of withstanding the political tests of the post war period. The second views Ian MacDonald's 'Massa Day Done' and the fearsome batting strength of Viv Richards in the 1970s and 80s as a shift toward black power, self belief and freedom that is expected to heal the communal wounds of slavery. The third presents a selection of poems dedicated to Brian Lara through the literary framing devices of T. S. Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and Brathwaite's conception of 'mwe' to highlight the tension surrounding Lara's dual position as batsman/hero and captain/leader. Finally, the chapter moves to briefly address a hero of difference with the female cricketer, Jane Joseph, in the poetry of Joan Anim-Addo. The discussion contends that as the relationship between the

² Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1*, 16.

cricket hero and their community is a reflection of the Caribbean's ongoing negotiation between the one and the many, attempts to probe this relationship are valuable exercises in re-examining the investment in the male cricketing hero, their responsibility to the community and the community's responsibility for their collective future.

The 'Rites' of Brathwaite's Walcott

To begin with Kamau Brathwaite's 'Rites' is to start with perhaps the most critically acclaimed of all Caribbean cricket poems, but one that portrays failure and collapse.³ It unites the language of Afro-Caribbean religiosity and memory with the language of protest and an affirmation of self-entitlement (rights) but does so within a tale of 'indiscipline and irresponsibility'.⁴ The piece was first published in Andrew Salkey's *Caribbean Prose* (1967) as a short story entitled 'Cricket'. Rohlehr perceives its poetic transformation as part of Brathwaite's project of increasing the 'fluidity of genres'.⁵ By changing the title from 'Cricket' to 'Rites', Brathwaite reinforced Patterson's sense of Caribbean cricket as ritual, highlighted the metaphorical/political level of the game and emphasized 'the whole act of reliving through performance and word-in-fluid motion, past joys and disasters'.⁶ 'Rites' is centrally positioned in *Islands*, the third poetic movement of *The Arrivants* (1973) trilogy:⁷ a trilogy that Brathwaite has described as being loosely based upon a 'thesis-antithesis-resolution' structure that reflects his journey back to Africa in *Rights of Passage* (1967), out of Africa in *Masks* (1968) and

³ Morris deems it the Caribbean's 'quintessential cricket poem'. See, Mervyn Morris, 'Overlapping Journeys: *The Arrivants*', in *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite* ed. by Stewart Brown (Bridgend: seren, 1995), 117-131 (127).

⁴ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1*, 107.

⁵ Gordon Rohlehr, *Pathfinder: black awakening in The Arrivants of Edward Kamau Brathwaite* (Trinidad: G. Rohlehr, 1981), 232. There are actually relatively few points of difference between the two versions but the move to a poetic form develops the performative strength and open allusions of the piece. See, Brathwaite, 'Cricket', in *Caribbean Prose: An Anthology for Secondary Schools* ed. by Andrew Salkey (London: Evans Brothers, 1967), 61-67.

⁶ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 233.

⁷ Kamau Brathwaite, 'Rites', in *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 197-203. All citations from the poem are taken from these pages.

then within the Caribbean in *Islands* (1969).⁸ Situated in the space of a Caribbean resolution yet to begin, 'Rites' is located in the 'Limbo' moment of the mid-twentieth century shift from 'subjugation to rebellion'⁹ with the poem presenting cricket, its heroes and their followers as caught between the inescapable past of slavery and oppression and the not yet achieved freedom represented by a black batsman's strength of play. This is the 'Limbo' space of 'initial uncertainty when challenging their imperial masters', those of the M.C.C./Inglan' but also those local whites/mulattoes like Gullstone.¹⁰ To Birbalsingh, it is the 'Rise and Fall' brought about by the mid-century 'inconsistency or fickleness' of the people, the West Indies team and the politics of the islands.¹¹ Brathwaite presents this sense of failure through the demise of a team in a beach match acting as the prelude to the hurtful destruction of Clyde Walcott and the West Indies, with both narratives being relayed by the performative and politically pertinent storytelling of a Barbadian tailor in vibrant creole/nation language.

The tailor's metaphorical function is to suggest the process of creativity, of making something new and whole from various pieces of material, of sewing together a fresh garment of coverage and protection. When faced with the cricketing ignorance of his nameless visitor/listener, he pricks his finger in surprise and tailoring 'haste'. This self-inflicted wound is the pain of stitching these pieces together which leaves a small hole in the flesh of the unifying and cricket-orientated body that is hurriedly trying to complete its work. Birbalsingh has conveyed the status of the tailor's shop, the poetic scene, as a 'democratic forum' for local conversation and exchange, casual and colloquial, between and across races and classes akin to the barber shop, rum shop or

⁸ See Nathaniel Mackey, 'An Interview with Kamau Brathwaite', in *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, 13-32 (13-14).

⁹ Rohlehr sees the issue of 'how to move from subjugation to rebellion' as central to *The Arrivants* and *X/Self*. See, Gordon Rohlehr, 'The Rehumanization of History: Regeneration of Spirit: Apocalypse and Revolution in Brathwaite's *The Arrivants* and *X/Self*', in *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, 163-207 (175).

¹⁰ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 227.

¹¹ Birbalsingh, *The Rise of Westindian Cricket*, 221.

street corner, 'illustrating the educational, democratizing and nation-building function of Westindian cricket through its promotion of discussion'.¹² The democratic atmosphere, however, is compromised by the dominating voice of the tailor whose flow is only twice briefly interrupted by the listener. The tailor's stories work to enforce the importance of cricket as well as the need for caution and forbearance, but his over insistence and repetitiousness, not to mention the failures he describes, imply that he may be ironically overstating the case to make a political point. Notably, his is the voice of the Caribbean folk, an exemplar of nation language, of local wisdom and witticism drawing upon verbal word play, allegory, irony and humorous warmth. His repetition of short statements like 'dis is cricket' and 'watch de ball' are examples of what Merle Collins has termed 'speaking in headlines', a 'way of encapsulating a whole philosophy of life in a single proverb',¹³ so that watching the ball becomes shorthand for the political vigilance, concentration and effort required in the battle for freedom, similar to the African-American phrase 'keep your eyes on the prize'. Such commonsensical, dogmatic epithets, however, may also indicate the superficiality of his knowledge, his reliance on ready made stock phrases and his over confidence in the face of an innocent/ignorant audience. He certainly benefits from a large dose of hindsight and self righteousness and perhaps his 'moral unctuousness is simply the other side of self-doubt and impotence'.¹⁴

The tailor begins by describing a local game on Brown's beach in which Hop-a-long-Cass gets an over confident Lambert out, caught in the slips for a duck. He then manages to quickly remove Gullstone, a white batsman who fears his bowling but nonetheless ignores the tailor's advice to 'watch/be ball like it hook to you eye'; a

¹² Ibid., 222.

¹³ Brenda Berrian, "'We Speak Because We Dream": Conversations with Merle Collins', in *Moving Beyond Boundaries: Vol. 2, Black Women's Diaspora* ed. by Carole Boyce Davies (London: Pluto, 1995), 31-42 (39).

¹⁴ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 232.

statement playing upon the tailor's vocational use of 'hooks' and 'eyes' and the forceful 'hook' shot. The result of these dismissals is calamitous and leaves the tailor uttering his rueful poetic refrain: 'murder start an' *bruggalungdung!* //you cahn fine a man to hole up de side'. Cass, the 'big-able' black bowler is the speed, strength and cricketing source of the winds of political change, the god-like 'hurricane father' who reminds us that 'the hurricane does not roar in pentameter'.¹⁵ Yet his cricketing identity is quite distinct from his government job. As a 'water policeman' he is employed to 'uphold the *status quo*' through 'brute force and ignorance'.¹⁶ As 'Harbour Patrol' he is a water-based gatekeeper protecting what exists inland from a tidal infiltration of water/people/ideas, from an influx of what Bridget Jones sees in Brathwaite's poetry as the unifying force of the Caribbean Sea and its oceanic links back to Africa.¹⁷ According to the listener, Cass has a deformed leg caused by a cow kicking his pregnant mother and this congenital disability lays over his policing role a sense of imbalance, an unevenness hindering daily forward momentum (though seemingly not prohibiting his bowling). It also links him to Legba, the war veteran and Haitian 'god of the gateway' who mediates between men and gods and whose celebrants take on an 'aged, limping form',¹⁸ as well as to the crippled and crippling local politicians. Additionally, his 'Hop-a-long' name derives from the region's affection for 1940s Hollywood Westerns. As Rohlehr argues, this male fantasy of glamorous American cinema links him with the opposing but similarly 'West Indian' figure of Gullstone as 'two sides of the same make-believe world, equally clowns of the [new] American Empire',¹⁹ performing against each other in the sporting space of the old British Empire.

¹⁵ Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* (London: New Beacon, 1995), 10.

¹⁶ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 229

¹⁷ Bridget Jones, "'The Unity is submarine": aspects of a pan-Caribbean consciousness in the work of Kamau Brathwaite', in *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, 86-100.

¹⁸ Kamau Brathwaite, Glossary to *The Arrivants*, 273.

¹⁹ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 229.

Rohlehr's reading explains that Gullstone is a young white Barbadian 'saga boy' mimicking the style of Black urban Trinidad which itself came from Black be-bop America. Alongside Cass and the tailor's need to make 'zoot-suits' for Christmas, he is an indicator of how the 'Harlem hipster revolution has helped shape the sensibility of a whole new generation, for whom style is a substitute for genuine self confidence'.²⁰ Unpacking the name 'Gullstone', Rohlehr draws out the connotations of 'gallstone' – as a painful growth that blocks the expulsion of intestinal waste – and of 'Gull' – as the 'Fool of Shakespearean drama' and the 'white seafaring scavenger bird. He also links 'stone' with the poem 'Pebbles' that immediately precedes 'Rites' with its suggestion of the Caribbean's incapacity for growth, development and (re)birth. He surmises that:

The white West Indian of the late Crown Colony era, then, is presented as one of the Trinculos of the Great White Tradition, is degraded to fool-figure whose most outstanding roles in the colonies have been those of exploiter and scavenger, and who has consequently become an impediment in the viscera of nationhood.²¹

By 'whitenin'/under he tan' as he goes out to face Cass, Gullstone shows and retreats into his colour-based identity. His anxiety takes physical form in his jittery movements ('bat tapin'', 'feet walkin'') making the amused tailor wonder 'if he ever play cricket on Brown's beach before'. The question is pertinent. Uncomfortable and afraid, Gullstone has been promoted above his (batting) position to save his side but is entirely out of place on the beach and he is soon beached ('fishin'', 'missin'', 'swishin'') by Cass's bowling. Brathwaite makes the sunny terrain of southern Barbados, of the 'proudest place' of respectable houses and people,²² the death ground for the white batsman who can only catch 'a cole' as the name of the beach (Brown's) is redirected to allude to

²⁰ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 229.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

²² Kamau Brathwaite, 'Son', in *Sun Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 6.

black occupation and land ownership.²³ It seems that Cass has emerged from the sea, via Brathwaite's poetic 'house on Brown's beach [...] the sea's/BACKDOOR', to control a space of cricketing participation and domination.²⁴ Out of place and out of his depth, Gullstone is 'deaf' to the tailor's message of caution, with his deafness being the same the 'stone deafness of Caribbean politicians out of touch with their societies',²⁵ leaving the tailor to gloat and lament over his demise.

It is the motif of irresponsibility leading to failure which triggers the tailor's recollection of the previous week's game at Kensington Oval, as Birbalsingh remarks, but it is also the equalizing sense of communal trepidation and fear. The tailor says it 'is always the same trouble wid we/too fraid and too frighten'. Although he finds Gullstone's anxiety amusing he recognizes it as the emasculating and paralyzing terror weighing upon the locals and their cricketing heroes alike; the 'we' playing against England. The tailor berates the listener for his ignorant intrusion and casual appearance ('like a touris'), seizing the opportunity to imply that he should feel ashamed at not knowing something of such importance as playing 'de MCC'. The use of 'M-C-C', with its 'technical look',²⁶ is set to convey the tailor's expertise, as does his emphatic appreciation of the tension-filled dot balls Walcott faces. It also works to convey the West Indian encounter with the authority of cricket 'from Ingran' as the game becomes a

²³ In his autobiography Clyde Walcott describes how 'the beaches were open to everyone, whatever his colour' and how, when a beach club tried to restrict the area they retaliated by running up and down 'making exhibitions' of themselves. See, Clyde Walcott, *Sixty Years on the Backfoot: The Cricketing Life of Sir Clyde Walcott* with Brian Scovell (London: Victor Gollancz, 1999), 4-5. Stewart Brown has noted that in *Sun Poem* Brathwaite draws a distinction between 'real "beach boys" who lived there and the "land boys" who only played on the beach', with himself somewhere in-between. See, Stewart Brown, 'Sun Poem: The Rainbow Sing?', in *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, 152-162 (162). Gullstone appears to be outside both groups.

²⁴ Kamau Brathwaite, *Barabajan poems 1492-1992* (Kingston: Savacou North, 1994), 283. Anna Reckin uses the same citation to draw attention to the place of Brown's beach as 'part of one of the book's large-scale tidalectic gestures' and that when Brathwaite's mother 'was growing up on Brown's Beach, the sea was much further out' meaning that the 'text and physical landscape alike are subject to the sway of the ocean, the ultimate tidalectic sound-space'. See Anna Reckin, 'Tidal Lectures: Kamau Brathwaite's Prose/Poetry as Soundscape', *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, 1:1 (2003).

²⁵ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 230

²⁶ Birbalsingh, *The Rise of Westindian Cricket*, 225

representative confrontation with the oppressive force of cricket's institutional authoritarianism, with its colonial code and order, as well as a contest between 'national' teams. The representative nature of the battle is reinforced by the anonymity of the tailor and his listener and the relatively ahistorical or generic match portrayed.

Despite Birbalsingh and Rohlehr both insisting on the representative quality of the game described they also both highlight its historical background because this adds to the poem's cricketing context and political import. However, where Birbalsingh claims that the cricketing basis is the Second Test between West Indies and England at Kensington in 1954, Rohlehr identifies the source match as the First Test at Kensington during the England Tour of 1948. Rohlehr's case is supported by the similarity of the first innings score but also by Brathwaite's admission that he used this game because he was present as a youth of seventeen helping with the scoreboard.²⁷ In this match, Walcott and Laker were both on debut (i.e. facing their 'First Test'), as were another ten players enabling the teams to stand for the new post war generation. Brathwaite's poetic license sees 'Tae Frank Worrell' appear though he would only make his debut in the following Test and has Weekes batting above Walcott when in fact a young twenty two year old Walcott opened the batting, out of his usual position, and Weekes came in at three. In this game Walcott only scored 8 and 16. One could argue that Brathwaite does him something of a disservice by resting the entire hopes of the team and the West Indies on his shoulders and by portraying such a collapse when the match was drawn and the series won 2-0. This type of over investment in the hero, even the young hero, however, is part of Brathwaite's project, part of his insistence on the crowd's misplaced belief in freedom deriving from a fleeting moment of heroic cricketing success, the

²⁷ In 1948 the fall of the third wicket occurred at 185, thereby allowing for the 197 for three which the tailor quotes (and did not occur in 1954, as Birbalsingh recognizes). Also, the reference to Brathwaite working the scoreboard comes from a conversation with the author following his delivery of the Judith E. Wilson Memorial Lecture at Cambridge University on 26th April 2006.

passing of which destroys the crowd just as it ends Walcott's innings. His portrait of the Three W's is not about the dominance they will come to exert (or do by 1954) but the transference from cricket to political resistance and leadership.²⁸ Rohlehr has written that Brathwaite is not interested in the 'real gigantic status of Walcott [...] but in the game as a metaphor for the post-World War II encounter between the colonies and the "Mother Country" on the field of political exchange'.²⁹ Yet it is precisely Walcott's size and strength that Brathwaite is concerned with because it is onto this large body and reputation that he inscribes Caribbean (political) failure and if we compare the depictions of Walcott offered by Brathwaite and C. L. R. James we can see Brathwaite's project more clearly.

In *Beyond a Boundary*'s chapter 'What is Art?' James claims that cricket is an 'art', a 'dramatic spectacle' of the order of all 'good drama'.³⁰ He also addresses the representative quality of the opposing sides as embodied in the confrontation between batsman and bowler in which 'two individuals are pitted against each other in a conflict that is strictly personal but no less strictly representative of a social group'.³¹ James is unifying his two central arguments: one, that cricket is a space for the symbolic (re)enactment of the socio-political dynamics and history of the Caribbean; and, two, that it is a 'visual art' recognized as such by the knowledgeable masses who 'see and feel' this quality, particularly as repeated in the 'style' of great players.³² To James's mind the aesthetics of cricketing performance can operate politically as acts of individual self creation and expression. In short, he develops a theory of cricket's

²⁸ For a poetic depiction of the Three W's and their respective quality and their combined unity see, Bruce St John poem 'Cricket' in *Bimbatuk 1* (Barbados: Cedar, 1982), which renders them a Holy Trinity, the inverted trinity provided by the three stumps. For a comparison of the batting of the Three W's see, Keith A. P. Sandiford and Arjun Tan, *The Three W's of West Indian Cricket: A Comparative Batting Analysis* (Indiana: Authorhouse, 2002).

²⁹ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 230.

³⁰ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 196.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

³² See, James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 196-204.

political aesthetics which contends that cricketing performances are physical gestures of independence for the individual and their community. James concludes his crucial chapter with the following:

We may someday be able to answer Tolstoy's exasperated question: What is art? – but only when we learn to integrate our vision of Walcott on the back foot through the covers with the outstretched arm of the Olympic Apollo.³³

We may be critical of James's recourse to seemingly elitist/imperialist classical mythology, but we should first appreciate the appropriateness of his comparison. On one side, Apollo stands for classical art and the image of him with an 'outstretched arm' is the imaged recollection of the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The powerful figure of Apollo combines music and poetry with athletics and archery – high art with popular culture. He is also the God of the Sun, colonization and medicine/healing. On the other side, Walcott was the embodiment of powerful batting, famous for his back-foot cover drive and ferocious ball striking strength. As a large (6ft2"), heavy-set batsman he provides a huge physical canvas on which to project but one where size and strength in front of the stumps as a batsman were met with athletic agility behind the stumps as a wicket keeper (see Appendix Four for pictures of Walcott). James's response to the question of art he inscribes Walcott's powerful 'style' with beauty and elegance, with the political aesthetics of self and communal expression. He claims that the fullest and most meaningful understanding of art must come through the integration of classical Apollo with popular, physical forms of aesthetic expression embodied by the massive figure of Clyde Walcott as a modern Apollo, a cricketing colossus who may also be a Caribbean God of the Sun, (de)colonization and healing. Where James expresses the aesthetics of Walcott's stroke play, however, Brathwaite focuses exclusively on his power and undermines its value as

³³ Ibid., 211.

an expression of communal freedom by showing its instability and political impotence and its metaphorical ability to stand for the region's post war political failures.

In 'Rites' Walcott 'is de GIANT to come!' with the capitalization visualizing his gargantuan status. The preceding poem 'Pebbles' has cautioned that the island 'will slay/giants' and though the pieces vary considerably in tone and imagery both convey the danger of giants being slain by the barren, stone-like qualities of their land.³⁴ As a consequence, Walcott's brief period of attack is always shrouded in doubt and circumspection. On coming to the crease Walcott encounters the 'sweet, sweet, slow-medium syrup' of Wardle with the soft, comforting quality of the alliteration and open vowel sounds matching the lulling, easy nature of the bowling. 'This moment symbolizes on the political level, one of those illusory periods of apparent respite, when the colonizer seems to ease up [on] the colonized – Emancipation say'.³⁵ After passing two dot balls in absolute control, with cautionary calls of 'N...o...o...' to his batting partner another of Wardle's sugary treats gets what it deserves, just as everyone expects:

Clyde back pun he back
Foot an' *prax!*
Is through extra cover an' four red runs all de way.

'You see dat shot?' the people was shoutin';
'Jesus Chrise, man, wanna see dat shot?'
All over de groun' fellers shakin' hands wid each other

as if was *they* wheelin de willow
as if was *them* had the power;

The onomatopoeic quality of '*prax!*' captures the crack of Walcott's bat in an aural reversal of Lambert's '*snick*' to slip that seems to almost revive and reverse the historical sound of the crack of Massa's whip. Brathwaite imagines a giant whose

³⁴ Brathwaite, 'Pebbles', in *The Arrivants*, 196.

³⁵ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 230.

power invokes postcolonial violence, a blood-red shot of a fleeting rebellious force as this signature shot makes the ball and English hearts bleed all the way to the boundary with the rolling r-sounds of its 'red runs'. This symbol of 'blood, fire and revolution' racing past existing boundaries ignites the crowd. Their sense of awe, of congratulatory adulation, quickly becomes a feeling of empowerment as if the ball, and through it Walcott's strength, has passed over the boundary and into them, though they are not 'wheelin' de willow'. The conditional 'as if' makes this clear and marks the oncoming disaster. The tailor's shift from an earlier 'we' to 'they'/'them' indicates his separation from their over exuberance, from their false sense of achievement and glory.

In the midst of this jubilation 'one man run out pun de field and wid a red fowl cock' as a sacrificial gift for the batsman as a hero/god, but he is stopped by 'a police' as the local/ancient religious 'rites are arrested by the law' where 'red in Afro-Caribbean Shango red is the colour of Ogun, Shango and Osain, the gods of war and iron, thunder and lightning, and fire respectively, hence the title "Rites"'.³⁶ Rohlehr suggests that the critical tone which follows is a negative comment on the 'charismatic basis' of 1940s politics and the links with grass roots religion some politicians claimed. He also writes that this comical incident actually occurred in a 1944 game between Trinidad and Barbados when the batsman being worshipped was actually Worrell and that Brathwaite substitutes Walcott for Worrell because the issue is only about power and Worrell was the symbol of batting elegance, not to mention the future, significant and inspirational black leadership that is missing from the scene.³⁷ Again, this is further evidence of Brathwaite rejecting the aesthetics of cricketing performance in order to concentrate on

³⁶ Ibid., 230.

³⁷ In his *Sixty Years on the Back Foot*, Walcott himself refers to Worrell as 'all elegance and style' (14) and writes that Frank Worrell's premature death at the age of 42 in 1967 after he had become a Senator in Jamaica meant the passing of 'a hero whose real work was about to begin' (19), whose credentials as a cricket leader were about to be transferred to the political domain. There is a strong sense in West Indies cricket culture that Worrell remains the supreme captain and leader, the man whose potential to capture the public imagination via political leadership never came to fruition.

the interplay between power and representation, between performance and failed political leadership, between the single moment of individual success and the difficulty of sustained, oppositional pressure. Still, in this single moment 'Black Power is electrifying' and seems to possess the crowd, 'akin to spirit possession', transforming them into a celebratory mob baying for more violence in order to compensate for their historical deprivation and recuperate their own sense of masculine self worth. The body of Walcott becomes their canvas on which to project a new, restored, self image. One 'crazy' 'sceptic' who had been trapped in his post office 'cage' for twenty five years points to Wardle and calls for Walcott to bring him 'B...L...O...O...D' in a textual response to the earlier and later (seemingly deathly) calls of 'N...o...o...'. His tongue is usually stuck to the government 'gloy' of stamps and officialdom (which one may read as similar to the 'glue of life' that 'exudes a sticky death' in 'Pebbles'). At this moment, however, it unfurls in a revolutionary call to arms expressing the depth of passion that has been lying dormant and is only brought out by Walcott's shot. Cricket, but specifically the jubilation of this single shot, is offered up as compensation for the decades of restriction and emasculation. Even here, though, his call for blood is accompanied by his praise of Walcott as a 'B...I...G B...O...Y' inadvertently making him an over sized juvenile similar to the men in Errol John's *Moon*.

The moment of celebration passes as the lull of Wardle's over ends and the tailor repeats his warning as a portent for the future. Laker comes on with a 'quiet', 'no fuss' manner, bowling his cunning off breaks at the GIANT as the triplication of the three deliveries he faces are negatively replayed. Its '*bap!*' on the pad first ball as Clyde's 'firm' forward play is misguided. Then next ball he's 'stretchin'' out, reaching out 'in de dark' as he becomes lost in the confusion and uncertainty of his previously forceful play. He attempts to 'kill' the ball before letting out an elongated, and this time

pressurizing, call of ‘N...O...O...O’ for a second dot ball. But the mob, even its ‘schoolboys’ (academics in Rohlehr’s reading), are calling on him to return to his aggressive form, to ‘hit it, hit it’ for their sake. Then, for the third ball, Laker wraps up a neat ‘package’, not a gift, as with the cock, but a hidden, masked and unknown Trojan-horse of spinning deception that ‘MAKE CLYDE WALCOTT LOOK FOOLISH’. Like Gullstone, the potential batsman/hero is turned ‘fool’ and the move from the affectionately familiar ‘Clyde’ to the full and capitalized ‘CLYDE WALCOTT’ marks the shift from folk hero to formal fool just as it also signifies the ‘colossal scale of destruction’³⁸ brought about by the fall of the previously capitalized ‘GIANT’. The tension means that where there had been a cacophony of joy now silence reigns so, says the tailor, you ‘could’a hear/if de empire fart’. This expulsion of rotten, foul and even explosive air from the centre of authority and judgment highlights how the ‘apparent wind of change is little more than the stale, stink broken wind of empire’.³⁹ It also demonstrates that there is no time for bodily control or polite niceties. As Mackey says, the ‘umpire/empire’ rendering, as does much of Brathwaite’s linguistic play, underscores the centrality of slavery, the plantation system and colonialism to the history and predicaments of the region’.⁴⁰

In the passage between this foolish shot and the next deadly delivery ‘blue murder start’ and the crowd renews its violent shrieks demanding Clyde ‘Kill one o’ dem’, ‘knock he skull off’ and use his feet against the ‘leg trap’. With ‘Ev’ry blabber mout’ talkin’’ the crowd attempts to convey its solidarity with the batsman but really exposes its reliance on Walcott, its own unhelpful instruction and its diminutive and dependent state. The tailor reveals the truth of their nervous agitation: ‘we so frighten now [...] we could piss

³⁸ Birbalsingh, *The Rise of Westindian Cricket*, 226.

³⁹ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 232.

⁴⁰ Nathaniel Mackey, ‘An Interview with Kamau Brathwaite’, in *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, 134.

in we pants' so trapped are they in 'common impotence'⁴¹ and verbal incontinence. Then, with the shout of '*Swing de bat*' Clyde follows the stupid, ill-considered advice and '*biff*' – LBW. In effect the crowd has pushed the hero on to his downfall. The batsman could not think beyond their shouts, could not express himself against Laker's sporting intelligence or assert himself against the cunning of de M-C-C/Inglan. He lacked patience, determination, thoughtfulness and caution, in short, discipline. Beckles draws a comparison between Brathwaite's presentation of indiscipline and collapse and Naipaul's 1963 assertion in 'Test' that the West Indies had 'no damn discipline'.⁴² Here, as the 'umpire/empire' raises he 'han in de air' he reiterates that power still lies with the seat of imperial (umpirical) authority. Stunned to silence, 'Ev'ry mout' loss'. Empty, broken and mournful, their freedom, their power, their 'wheelin de willow' was never real, Clyde's dominance was fleeting or illusionary and the listener is left with the tailor's knowing, sarcastic, hurtful and bitter lament:

When things goin' good, you cahn touch
we; but leh murder start
an' ol man, you cahn fine a man to hole up de side...

The violence of having to stand against 'murder' is historically cutting and the criticism that follows painfully strong. The 'hole', which is not a 'whole' but a 'hold' that no one can maintain, is painfully ironic linking the tailor's self inflicted injury and the failure of regional unity. The tailor's belief that 'we' can not collectivize, concentrate or survive in a mode of heroic opposition is played out by Clive, as it was with Gullstone. Brathwaite's depiction seems to be a harsh assessment of Clyde Walcott and the West Indies team who would go on to defeat England in 1950, stage some miraculous comebacks in matches in the 1960s and become world champions by the time Brathwaite is writing. Yet, there had been an image of collapse and fickleness

⁴¹ Rohlehr, *Pathfinder*, 232.

⁴² Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1*, 107-8.

surrounding the team since the 1930s which had continued into the 50s, particularly with the change of fortunes between the 1950 and '57 tours of England. Brathwaite is drawing upon this historical image and also writing after the break up or down of the Federation meaning that despite subsequent cricketing success his point is that independence, freedom and political reformation are not brought about by single heroes, by their worship or through single cricketing moments without a sustained programme of opposition, reform and reconstruction.

Viv's 'Massa Day Done'

Turning away from 'Rites', this section reads Ian McDonald's 'Massa Day Done', supported by the examples of 'Viv' by Faustin Charles and 'Conquest' by Howard Fergus, to explore the investment in Viv Richards's ferocious batting style and also to suggest that these examples relate to Paul Gilroy's notion of the slave sublime.⁴³ The section makes a generational shift forward to the late 1970s and 80s, into what Beckles categorizes as the 'second paradigm' of West Indies cricket,⁴⁴ as Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards, the Antiguan and West Indies legend, played Test cricket at the height of West Indian world dominance, between 1974 and 1991, and became one of the world's greatest batsmen. Taking over from Clive Lloyd in 1980, he also became the only captain never to lose a Test series. Consequently, this is also a shift toward more positive expressions of black confidence and achievement with success often seen as

⁴³ All citations to these three poems can be found in: 'Massa Day Done' in Ian McDonald, *Between Silence and Silence* (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2003), 87-88; 'Viv' in Faustin Charles, *Days and Nights in the Magic Forest* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1986), 43; and, 'Conquest' in Howard Fergus, *Volcano Verses* (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2003), 59-60.

⁴⁴ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 13. Where the first paradigm or rising is associated with the 'Worrell-Sobers axis' between 1960 and 68 (xviii), Beckles describes the Lloyd-Richards era as the key nationalist period of the second paradigm in West Indies cricket which most forcefully and successfully represented the notion of regional collectivity as a nationalist cause. He describes it as the Caribbean's 'greatest single achievement' (28). He also suggests that the nationalist sentiment they represented and understood themselves as representing is in retreat and is now being overtaken in the face of globalization and the disintegration of any unified socio-economic agenda.

running contrary to traditional form, as embodied by Richards. Indeed, his first autobiography *Hitting Across the Line* (1991) captures his aggressive, (positive) risk taking approach to batting and functions as his 'Captain's Manifesto'⁴⁵ on asserting oneself against traditional and prejudicial restrictions, cricketing and otherwise.⁴⁶ An elderly James saw Richards as a 'super batsman', one of an elite who can 'dominate all kinds of attacks under diverse circumstances', suggesting that Richards 'can be ranked with great batsmen of any time'.⁴⁷ It is as the 'super batsman', even superman, that Richards is portrayed in these three praise poems all of which view him as a warrior, a conqueror in battle violently defeating England and overturning the imperial, racial order of cricket. Where Short Shirt's calypso entitled 'Vivian Richards' (1976) praises Richards's intense all-round contribution, these poems focus on Richards as 'batsman-hero', as Charles names him, and reflect Rohlehr's understanding of Richards as the 'revitalized Hero' of batsmanship taking on 'the mantle of Weekes, Walcott, Kanhai and Sobers'⁴⁸ in order to explode the oppressive bind of the region's history of slavery.

Invoking Eric Williams's famous Woodford Square Speech of 1961, 'Massa Day Done' lays this call for independence and political consciousness over the batting brilliance of Richards to suggest that his cricketing work is of the same importance and purpose, that his bodily actions are the physical expression of these sentiments a generation after they have been confused or abused in political practice. Articulating his own sense of political cricketing performance, Richards has written that although he has attempted to

⁴⁵ Richard, *Hitting Across the Line*, 141.

⁴⁶ The importance of such autobiographies, including the political links between Constantine's *Cricket and I* (1933) and Richards's text, have been noted by Beckles who reasons that 'in the West Indies the cricketer's autobiography represents the principal literary form of working class male expression' and so constitutes a 'unique literary form'. He also draws parallels between *Hitting Across the Line* and Walter Rodney's *Groundings with My brother* (1970) suggesting that they both emerge from the same matrix of political 'anxieties and expectations' facing the Caribbean. See, Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. I*, 89-91.

⁴⁷ Hilary Beckles, 'Viv', in *A Spirit of Dominance: Cricket and Nationalism in West Indies Cricket – Essays in Honour of 'Viv' Richards on the 21st Anniversary of his First Debut* ed. by Hilary Beckles (Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 1998), 2.

⁴⁸ Rohlehr, 'Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values', in *An Area of Conquest*, 88.

steer clear of party politics 'you cannot evade the point that playing cricket is in itself a political action'.⁴⁹ In 'Massa' he executes the overthrowing of the imperial master, of deference and subjugation on behalf of the Caribbean and the Caribbean people are able to live out such rebellious freedoms by watching him bat. The poem offers a strong sense of the immediacy of Richards's impact, of the long 'day' of Massa being challenged in a present moment, a 'morning' of new beginnings with 'today' (repeated twice) being a 'holy' time that needs to be 'Remember[ed] long' as a turning point in the history of the region: the time, it seems, is right for the rebellion that Richards enacts.⁵⁰ England or the England team are not explicitly named as Richards's opposition and though this is the assumption we must make from the poem's title and content such anonymity means that, as in Brathwaite, the enemy is the 'Mother Country' and all other masters, new and old, local and distant. This non-naming also works to concentrate attention on Richards, leaving him alone on the stage of cricketing action to occupy the centre that was once denied. Like Brathwaite, McDonald uses the familiar 'Viv' to establish an affectionate tie between the batsman and his public, to position him as both their brother and folk hero, and to suggest a rapport between the poetic voice and the cricketer. Where Charles entitles his poem 'Viv' to similar effect, Fergus adopts the formal, even commanding, surname 'Richards' to make his demand for English supplication all the more imposing after the 'blackwash' of 1986 in the Caribbean, which itself compounded that of 1984 in England. In naming or identifying 'Viv', McDonald also repeats 'he' to reinforce the singularity of the man and his manliness, as with 'a man' or 'this man', and so makes Richards 'the man' in a play on his 'cool' persona. This stands in opposition to the manner of address directed at the 'you' of the reader/listener/audience as McDonald demands that attention and respect be paid to Richards and his achievements. Where Fergus uses 'you' to address Richards

⁴⁹ Richards, *Hitting Across the Line*, 186.

⁵⁰ We may wish to recall that although Richards failed on his debut, the First Test in India on the 1974 tour scoring only 4 and 3, his impact was felt in the following match when he top scored with 192 not out.

himself, McDonald often uses it as an instructional device ('I tell you' or 'You ever see') and as part of the performative flow where, as in 'Rites', gestures of inclusion or discussion are railroaded by the poetic monologue, revealing the verbal wit and repartee of the speaking voice.

Often this 'you' is told to 'see' or witness Richards, to behold his presence and admire 'how' he operates. As in 'Rites' the theme of seeing, watching and witnessing repeatedly appears in 'Viv' and 'Massa'. In the first case 'the player springs into the eye' irrepressibly making an energetic appearance and imprinting his image on the eye of the crowd and the reader's mind. Later, 'eyes water' as his batting inspires love, adoration and jubilation, drawing forth a life giving element from the individual and collective eye of spectatorship. In 'Massa' the eye motif works on two levels. On one level, it functions to direct attention toward Richards with 'Look how' (three times), 'You see how' (followed by six other 'how's), 'You ever see' (four times), 'see him' and 'you could see', prompting the listener/imagined onlooker to bear witness to Viv's cricketing methodology and exceptionalism. The sheer sight of Viv in the opening line, 'you only have to watch', is enough to cause one to recognise his excellence and importance as the poetic voice seeks to show off his own knowledge and make the onlooker/listener agree. The second level at which this eye theme is used is in relation to Richards's sight or vision. Ian Botham famously said that he did not take part in the 1986 rebel tour of South Africa during Apartheid because he would not have been able to look Richards, his long-standing friend and colleague who took up a strong anti-apartheid stance, 'in the eye'.⁵¹ Similarly, McDonald makes the force of Viv's gaze tangible and politically effective. In 'Massa' Viv 'stare down the wicket, spear in he eye' seeing straight ahead without fear or hesitation. He not only glares 'down the

⁵¹ On meeting Richards, Hugh McIlvanney remembers this and feels that Botham could have been speaking 'literally' given the force of Richards's gaze. See, Hugh McIlvanney, 'Black is Bountiful (1985)', in *The Picador Book of Cricket*, 201-207 (202).

wicket' but also 'down' upon the enemy. This focused, forward looking concentration was exactly what Brathwaite's tailor had demanded. The spear makes Richards's line of vision rigidly straight and narrow as it is directed forward by a violent physical intrusion. In fact, he is assaulted by the need for sight, the difficulty of seeing and the pain of vision.

This has some personal relevance for Richards who explains in his second autobiography, *Sir Vivian* (2001), that he, like Lara, suffered from pterygium, a condition where there is a small growth on the eye causing the eyes to get inflamed and irritated by dust and grit as well as sun exposure. He also describes how instead of running the risk of an operation during his career he took a Jamaican herbalist's advice to drink 'Bush Tea' made with marijuana.⁵² This is just one example of Richards's links with Rastafarianism, an association that he used to mark on the pitch by wearing the Rasta colours. Richards claims that he was negatively viewed by the cricketing establishment for such connections which they saw as another sign of his 'dangerous' character and an impediment to his career.⁵³ Still, in poetic terms the 'spear' and 'eye' illustrate his self-belief and his tunnel vision while also suggesting his sense of historical and political vision, the agony caused by his refusal to be blind. Further, on his way to the crease, Richards 'look up at the sun' for a guiding and inspiring life force that feeds his greatness. He is himself a 'Sun King'⁵⁴ who, in Charles's world, is the 'sun rising' and 'setting' whose mere appearance 'lights the world with fires' and who, through his play, is 'Lighting the day with runs'. In all three poems his god-like presence is repeatedly seen through these associations with the natural elements (Sun, Fire, Lightning, and Thunder) reinforcing his connections with Ogun and Shango.

⁵² Viv Richards, *Sir Vivian: The Definitive Autobiography* with Bob Harris (London: Penguin Books, 2000) 253-5.

⁵³ See, Richards, *Hitting Across the Line*, for his reading of cricket's fear and rejection of Rastafarianism, particularly 148.

⁵⁴ Rohlehr, 'Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values', in *An Area of Conquest*, 90.

Having looked to the sun he then ‘look around like a lord’ surveying his own land, his kingdom, owning the field/stage he will perform upon and perhaps reminding us of John Arlott’s 1976 description of him as the ‘Lord of Lord’s’⁵⁵ (see Appendix Four for pictures of Viv in 1976). Taking in the wider perspective, especially the positions of the fielders and opposition, he is creating a plan of attack. Hence, his sight, especially of the political cricketing field, is balanced between close, focused concentration on individual performance and a wider regional and historical perspective which, together, ready him to destroy the enemy.

Notably, McDonald’s poem challenges Richards’s reputation, particularly in the English media, of arrogance by supporting Richards’s sense of his own worth while also playing upon the idea of his masculine bravado.⁵⁶ Richards opens *Sir Vivian* by accepting charges of being ‘single-minded and obstinate’,⁵⁷ but both his autobiographies are clear about his sense of pride rather than arrogance, about his understanding the need for strong performances and leadership. He believes that this determination came directly from the discipline that ruled his familial home through religion and his father’s job as a prison warden. The fact that the island prison overlooks St John’s in Antigua spatially represents Richards’s idea of the disciplinary shadow that hangs over his cricket. Instead of arrogance, all three poems reflect Richards’s right to express himself forcibly as a black man. In *Hitting Across the Line* Richards writes: ‘coming as I do from the West Indies at the very end of colonialism [...] I believe very strongly in the black man asserting himself in this world and over the years I have leaned toward many

⁵⁵ Beckles also draws attention to Arlott’s phrase in *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1*, 87.

⁵⁶ Beckles makes this point abundantly clear by citing the views of Robin Marlar, of the *Sunday Times*, who claimed that West Indies cricket was ‘founded on vengeance and violence and is fringed by arrogance’, and David Firth, former editor of *Wisden Cricketer*, who described Richards as ‘a sick man. He poisons the minds of black children and tells them to hate white people’. See, Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 95.

⁵⁷ Viv Richards, *Sir Vivian*, 1.

movements that follow this basic cause'.⁵⁸ Associated with Rastafarianism, Black Power and Caribbean cricketing dominance, in these poems Richards stands for a pan-African self belief and Caribbean freedom and unity, along with the rebellious will of a man – one who must fight and who understands himself as a fighter. When McDonald asks if 'such mastery' has ever been seen 'in this world?' his question highlights that even the old Massa did not command as Richards does as his mere presence is that of 'an emperor'. Yet it is the rebellious force of Richards's rule that made the cricketing establishment nervous. Richards is adamant that upon the retirement of Clive Lloyd the board did not want to give him the captaincy that was rightfully his and that after his retirement they selected Richie Richardson as a calmer, less independent and therefore less troublesome captain.⁵⁹ His profile may also have made it more difficult to enter and maintain a place within the world of coaching and administration.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, in 'Massa' a balance between the concentrated warrior and the relaxed, confident participant is seen in Richards's distinctive walk to the wicket, his 'coming in' with a confident 'swagger'. 'Viv did not walk onto the cricket field in search of himself', states Beckles.⁶¹ He came knowing who he was, where he was from and what he was going to do. In 'Massa' he carries himself and the weight of public expectation comfortably, with his 'shoulder relax', and exhibits a youthful enjoyment of his work. Fergus's poem suggests that Richards's 'temper on the turf/echoed the pitch of childhood' reflecting the passion and improvisation of boyhood cricket. Similarly, McDonald describes how he 'swing the bat, swing', suggesting that signature Richards windmill whirl of the arm, with the extra 'swing' offering a musical note of playful confidence. Beckles has written that in 1976, the year that the West Indies turned

⁵⁸ Richards, *Hitting Across the Line*, 188.

⁵⁹ See, Richards, *Hitting Across the Line*, 146-149.

⁶⁰ Richards was Chairman of Selectors for WICB for two years, May 2002-June 2004, but has since worked for the BBC despite his obvious desire to see West Indies cricket improve.

⁶¹ Beckles, 'Viv', in *A Spirit of Dominance*, 5.

Tony's Greig's 'grovel' statement back upon England, watching Viv reminded him of his own grandfather's 'slow graceful walk to the canefield, the rolling of the sleeve, and the precise but unpredictable swinging of the cutlass'.⁶² This is the dual purpose of Richards's poetic entrance in 'Massa', it gestures back to the humanity and resistance of men fighting for survival in the past and to a present/future in which black men, Caribbean men, are consciously articulating pride in their colour, heritage and freedom. The two are connected by the image of the warrior coming out to do daily battle. When Richards walks out in 'Massa' he takes a 'breath deep' with 'he chest expan'', filling up and out as he takes on the physical presence of a pumped up warrior ready for combat. A warrior who combines the forceful onward stubbornness of the 'bull rhino'⁶³ with the 'sleek, quick grace of a gazelle' in Charles's imaginary and who, in McDonald's poetic idiom, smiles and 'gleam' like a 'jaguar', fit, fast and threatening as Africa is called upon to convey the sharp, fearsome, elegant figure Richards cuts on the field.

McDonald also addresses the issue of Richards not wearing a helmet, of the warrior not protecting himself in battle. He contrasts how 'they say he too proud an' foolish' when really 'he know he worth' and amusingly 'the bowler should wear helmet'. 'They' identifies those dissenting voices who castigate Richards but McDonald insists that the absence of the helmet is a sign of Richards's courageous self assurance. Richards may hold 'he head cock an' high' but for good reason. The humorous reversal of attack, of the bowler needing cover, mimics the combative posture of Richards's intimidatory style and the batonnier quality of the man-to-man contest. The lack of a helmet is something of a generational issue but Richards has explained how it was also part of his cricketing 'philosophy' and comes from the street cricket tradition that taught a batsman

⁶² Beckles, 'Viv', in *A Spirit of Dominance*, 3.

⁶³ McIlvanney notes that Richards was also known as 'THE BULL' when he played football because of his strong, hard hitting tactics as a defender. See, McIlvanney, 'Black is Bountiful (1985)', in *The Picador Book of Cricket*, 201-207 (204).

a 'sense of survival'.⁶⁴ He feels that he must be comfortable at the crease, free to move naturally and that a heavy helmet is only inhibiting. He also notes that with a helmet 'the batsman is allowed to feel braver than he naturally is', to get into bad positions and then get hit.⁶⁵ In *Sir Vivian* Richards describes the incident when he got hit in the head by Australian fast bowler Rodney Hogg at Melbourne in the Test series of 1979-80. The blow shook him, causing him to spit blood, but he 'wanted to hang tough' and get back 'to business' quickly in order to feel better. He reveals that though he stood up and hooked the next ball for six it was really a top edge and that where everyone saw the 'typically Macho Viv Richards response' he realizes it was a 'lucky shot'.⁶⁶ He positions his and the crowd's sense of masculine performance against his own knowledge of bravado and luck hinting perhaps at a link back to the calypsonian's mask of heroic masculine performance.

Importantly, the physically violent nature of Richards's batting is at the centre of these three poems. Signs of his physicality abound with the accumulation of body parts ('jaw', 'eye', 'shoulder', 'chest' and 'head') and his aggressive intention is noted from the outset in 'Massa' with his 'back-lift big'. His 'grinding' jaw reminds us of Richards's gum chewing just as it works to highlight his bone crunching, devouring determination which is also reinforced by his 'stabbing the pitch' in a gesture of penetrating and striking preparation. His start, his impact, is expected to be 'sudden, violent, a thunder shock', an assault on those who dare oppose him. The sound of a 'thunderous roar' is repeated by Charles as he and McDonald both celebrate Richards in a god-like pose akin to Shango. This is extended in 'Massa' with Richard 'holding the bat' like an 'axe' when the axe is the symbol of possession by Shango. This bat/axe is

⁶⁴ Richards, *Hitting Across the Line*, 20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 72. Tim Hector similarly suggests that the use of the helmet has made modern batsman like Lara 'inept at [playing] the short ball on the body'. See, Tim Hector, 'Lara in Cricket Time and Social Place', *Fan the Flame*, 9th April 1999.

⁶⁶ Richards, *Sir Vivian*, 223-4.

used to cut down the enemy. In 'Massa' cutting is first mentioned when the poetic voice calls for the 'mightiest man' because 'Viv husk he', saving his 'best fo' the best'. The m-sound alliteration emphasizes the masculinity of the bowler, in contrast to the 'flight finery' being bowled, and also underlines the ironic consequences of the emasculation Richards will discharge with the metaphorical harvesting, cutting down and back to the core, of this challenger in what was a man-to-man contest but will soon become a lesson between master-and-pupil as Richards proves himself more than equal to any test of warrior batsmanship. This motif of cutting returns in the penultimate stanza to build a picture of the rapid ferocity of Richards shot making as 'he pound', 'he slash', 'he pull', 'he hook' and 'he blast a way through the cover'. At the height of Richards's attack of 'butchery', 'bat spill blood/and he cut like he cutting hog on a block'. The brutality of cricket's heritage in the Caribbean is here being reversed and Massa's blood being spilt. The alliteration of butchery/bat/blood builds the burbling sound of the liquid of life and death which flows over onto the next line until the strong, short sounds of 'cut', 'hog' and 'block' bring it to an abrupt end. The chopping block replaces the 'altar' of the morning as Richards's batting becomes a scene of swift, clean, murderous sacrifice. With 'the warrior thrusts a majestic cut', Charles also repeats this sense of penetrating, slicing through resistant flesh,⁶⁷ and again as in 'Massa' the 'covers' become both the area of the field and the blanket of suppression that is shredded as Richards is slicing through the past by levelling his cricketing enemy.

From the outset of 'Massa' Richards's performance is seen to have a transformative influence on the crowd. The anticipation of his 'innings' is palpable and the belief that it 'could make life good' underscores the sense that his play can compensate for or

⁶⁷ Charles writes of Gordon Greenidge in similar terms in the poem 'Greenidge' which follows 'Viv' describing his as 'Blading the landscape with an all-conquering sweep' with his 'sword-bat'. The emphasis on cutting through and down is set to reinforce the postcolonial violence offered by Greenidge, as with Richards. See, 'Greenidge', in Charles, *Days and Night in the Magic Forest*, 44.

rejuvenate ordinary 'life' regardless of the realities of existence outside. This is why watching his batting is a 'holy' experience, a blessed and sacred sight. The religiosity is reinforced by the 'Almighty love' directed at Richards from the people and seemingly also from god. McDonald articulates the intense sense that 'he one o' we' as they claim him as their boy. Here McDonald shifts from 'you' to 'we' as he aligns the poetic voice with the people, aligning it with the need for purposeful communal and political unity with this catchphrase of collectivity that nevertheless continues to worship a single man. Richards himself cautioned against such hero worship when he wrote: 'I don't want hero worship from these youngsters [young cricketers]. I hope they can glean more from me than that [....]. Some of them, perhaps, might grasp the true meaning of this phrase "hitting across the line" [...]. It is about self belief'.⁶⁸ He also saw that investment in the individual, in a single man or island, was insufficient to secure the future of the Caribbean and understood his job as one of promoting the politics of regional collectivity. He states: 'There is too much island nationalism [...]. Together, we can be world champions. When we are separate, we are nothing'.⁶⁹ Yet in 'Massa' the poetic voice contends that Viv alone could stop slavery.

Massa opens with 'Viv in a mood' presenting a dark omen for the opposition and when he's batting 'danger is all around'. Initially the mood is a personalized mode of batting aggression, but soon the 'torment today' takes on wider significance as he 'don't know forbearance/he don't know surrender or forgive,/he lash the ball like something anger him'. He cannot escape this anger, the 'mood hold he, it bite he', devouring him as it takes pieces from his flesh. Relentless, 'nobody could stop he in that mood' because no single body can counteract the historic and political momentum that he is drawing upon and is pushing him forward. The mood is caused by his feeling of the past which he

⁶⁸ Richards, *Hitting Across the Line*, 233.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

carries into the present and his desire for a different and free future. Here there is a strong sense of Gilroy's 'slave sublime', of the unspeakable terrors of slavery being articulated in the violently aesthetic batting of Richards. Although Gilroy explores the primary example of music as the mode in which there is a 'centrality of terror in stimulating black creativity and cultural production',⁷⁰ we can transpose this onto the physical articulation of this terrorizing performance in cricket, especially given its loaded imperial legacy and postcolonial backlash which reached its peak in Richards. Poetic representations of black batsman often mobilize this idiom of anti-colonial and postcolonial violence which attempts to utter and redress the unspeakableness of the past, as seen in the poetry of Charles, Fergus, McDonald and others who use similar motifs, especially of cutting, lashing and emasculating to manipulate and even reverse their loaded historical meanings. Further, 'Massa' is included in McDonald's collection of poetry entitled *Between Silence and Silence* (2003). This is the position of the slave sublime as Richards performs it where his aesthetic and powerful batsmanship comes between the silence of the past, of Gilroy's 'unspeakable terrors' of the past, and the silence of a present which is trapped within a 'desire to forget the unforgettable' and an inability to speak the unspeakable. In this light, Richards is cast as the prophet of transformation, expressing and combating the brutalities of the past through his cricketing performance. This is shown as McDonald builds to a climatic end that claims Richards's vast political and healing power: 'Something hurt he bad you could see,/as if heself alone could end we slavery!'. Richards may be able to end the collective pain of the Caribbean alone, end their long enslavement and oppression by defeating or overturning the colonial cricketing order. He represents the rebellious spirit of protest of his time and enacts Fanon's sense of the violence of decolonization. But there is a seeming confusion of history in that Emancipation and Independence have been

⁷⁰ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 2000), 131.

achieved, or granted, yet it is up to Richards to cut the people free from their hold and end slavery, to end the so far unending oppression of the region. However, from the outset there is a feeling of the underlying conditionality of this possibility, that Richards's innings 'could' change life but, by implication, may not and this opens the potential of individual and collective failure or of his individual failure leading to the people's collective demise. This is reinforced by the conditionality of Richards's ability to 'end slavery', the 'could' works at a number of levels: implying that he could have ended slavery if he had been present in that period; that he believes that his cricketing performance can end the on going slavery of present social conditions; or that his pain is caused by their slavery and his belief that he can end it though in reality this may not be the case. Consequently, in Gilroy's terms, Richards is a messiah of the 'politics of fulfilment', he is both the future fulfilment that previous generations left unaccomplished and a sign that there is still much to do for and by the people.⁷¹

In all three poems Richards is waging a war for his people, 'sent in to do battle by the villagers'⁷² and admired by them for his warrior-like conduct. He brings to earth their hopes and aspirations as both Charles and Fergus emphasize. Charles describes how the crowd live through Richards as 'a million dreams, a million aspirations' are met and his success makes 'Bodies reel and tumble' and 'hearts move inside out'. When, climbing the skies, the batsman-hero 'strikes the earth-ball for six' the 'landscape rolls with the ecstasy of [Viv's] magic play' as the islands are seen laughing, moving to the force of his genius. Finally, his explosive presence causes a tectonic shift: 'The volcano erupts!/Blows the whole game apart'.⁷³ Breaking open the game, Richards inspires a

⁷¹ Ibid., 37.

⁷² Beckles, 'Viv', in *A Spirit of Dominance*, 5.

⁷³ Rohlehr makes the same point saying Richards is causing 'a volcanic eruption: that is, he participates in the primal founding impulse of energy which has created the Caribbean islands. Transmitting this energy for which he is a channel, he is shaman and magician, Ogun and Xango: and his impact on the game is seismic'. See, Rohlehr, 'Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values', in *An Area of Conquest*, 90.

new and old life force emerging from the landscape, a force which can trigger the mass revolt his performances inspire. In 'Conquest' Fergus writes that 'hitting for the skies' Richards 'brought to earth our dreams' and exceeded them. In the 'pitched battles/on placid English fields' he overturns the hierarchical order of play as the 'Children of Empire' disown their parental authority in victory to become the Empire's 'Orphans'. Dancing to celebrate the 1986 'black wash' over England, Fergus plays on the idea of washing as these victories also 'bathed us black with pride'. He writes of the understanding of tradition, of the West Indies articulating fairness, sportsmanship and how to be 'generous in glory' so that they will not be the 'lesser breeds without the law' that Kipling condemned. Instead they will rise above their former masters by being masterful, by adopting, transforming and enjoying the play of cricketing etiquette. In 1976 Beckles saw Richards was batting for all the black people who were watching and 'concluded that the survival for West Indians with respect to postcolonial England was being placed at a higher level'.⁷⁴ Fergus sees something similar with England's cricketing defeat being aligned with the 'levelling of Montgomery's England', with the victorious notion of England that emerged from World War Two being over turned by her defeat at the hands of their former colonies. Yet in all three poems the battle being waged is left unfinished. In 'Massa' the conditional closure of collective slavery suggests that it has not yet been achieved. In 'Viv' the eruption that explodes tradition brings a new life that has not yet been shaped and in 'Conquest' Fergus highlights the plague of Apartheid in South Africa as indicative of the need to fight on. In West Indies cricket this need, so personally felt and publicly performed by Richards, was taken forward by Richie Richardson but soon disintegrated under the new post nationalist pressures that were increasingly impacting upon his team and particularly Brian Lara.

⁷⁴ Beckles, 'Viv', in *A Spirit of Dominance*, 4.

To move from Richards to Lara is to make another generational shift forward to a career that began at the close of Richards's and has just reached an end with Lara's international retirement at the 2007 World Cup.⁷⁵ As is well known, in 1994, 'The Prince of Port of Spain' made 375 against England to surpass Sobers's 365* record for the highest Test score. Shortly afterward he amassed 501* for Warwickshire to secure his superstar status. Perhaps most impressively, almost a decade to the day after he first obtained the world record in Antigua, Lara regained his title by overtaking Hayden's 380 to become the first person to score 400 Test runs in a single innings. These feats, along with multiple other remarkable achievements, have ensured Lara's unique place in West Indies and world cricket; a position reflected by his unmatched financial success as a West Indies player which has not only set him apart from his team mates and history but has also seen the economic truths and dependencies of the region written into his pay cheques. Significantly, Lara linked the last days of the domination of West Indies in the early 1990s and their fall into what is at present, a sorry and embarrassing state of disillusion and uncertainty. His prodigious talent and record breaking feats have mostly been set against the decline of West Indies cricket and, as three times captain of the regional team, he has often been at the helm of their sinking ship. Notably, his batting heroics did not work to raise his team to success as the traditional paradigms of West Indies cricket demanded and his behaviour has often been viewed as running contrary to his team's best interests.⁷⁶ This created a potent and much

⁷⁵ Despite Lara's talent being recognized very early, including by Sobers himself, he experienced something of a false start to his international career. After appearing as 12th man in April 1989, he made his debut in the Third Test against Pakistan in Lahore in December 1990 but had to wait until April 1992 Test appearance, this time against South Africa. In *Beating the Field*, Lara writes of this as a faltering and frustrating start to his career, which included being injured during the tour of England in 1990, and how he felt that young players were not respected or given chances until older players retired. See, Brian Lara, *Beating the Field: My Own Story*, with Brian Scovell (London: Partridge, 1995), 33-42.

⁷⁶ Hilary Beckles, makes this point in 'Brian Lara: (Con)testing the Caribbean Imagination', in *Sport Stars: The cultural politics of sporting celebrity* ed. by David L. Andrews and Steven J. Jackson (London:

commented upon tension between the individual batting excellence of Lara, including the rewards it brought, and the predicament of the team, especially their representative status for a region moving away from the nationalist, collectivizing sentiments of previous generations in the face of financial and cultural globalizing intrusions.

Lara, as cricketer and iconic symbol, can be said to embody these regional and generational tensions and their cricketing consequences. Tim Hector has identified how Lara ‘was produced by the times’⁷⁷ and consequently, like many of his generation, is ‘trapped between the ways of his raising and the value-less, globalizing invasion which assails us all’.⁷⁸ Similarly, Beckles describes Lara as ‘(Con)testing the Caribbean imagination’ by occupying a key position within the paradigmatic shift caused by the age of globalization – Beckles’s third paradigm of West Indies cricket. The most positive aspects of Lara’s status within the Caribbean popular imagination have been captured in a cycle of Lara-based praise poems or songs.⁷⁹ Poetic examples by Jean Breeze, Howard Fergus, Paul Keens-Douglas and others, mostly concentrate on Lara’s record breaking batting yet some dimensions of these pieces also suggest the difficulties of team and regional collectivity surrounding Lara. Before turning to such examples, however, this discussion establishes two literary framing devices through which Lara can be understood. The first maps T. S. Eliot’s 1919 essay ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ onto the relationship between the traditions and traditional heroes of West Indies cricket, especially Sobers, and the individual talent of Lara, while the second relates Brathwaite’s ‘mwe’ formulation to Lara’s (mis)management of his dual position as batsman/hero and captain/leader.

Routledge, 2001), 243-256. No full length study of Lara currently exists but the work of Beckles has come closest and one can expect him to expand upon his writing following Lara’s retirement.

⁷⁷ Tim Hector, ‘There is much to cricket than cricket’, *Fan the Flame*, 20th December, 1996.

⁷⁸ Tim Hector, ‘Lara in Cricket Time and Social Place’, *Fan the Flame*, 9th April 1999.

⁷⁹ 1994 saw 33 calypsos about Lara for Carnival. See Appendix Six for three examples: ‘Lash Dem Lara’ by Alexander de Great; ‘Signal for Lara’ by Superblue and ‘Four Lara Four’ by de Fosto. Lara’s 400 record also inspired de Fosto’s sequel calypso ‘He Strikes Again’.

In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Eliot argues that what defines great poetry and thereby a great poet is not an ability to express their individuality through originality, that is their difference, nor is it recreating, repeating or mimicking past poetic masters or masterpieces. For Eliot, an artist never 'has complete meaning alone' but must, in fact, participate in and respond to tradition.⁸⁰ They need to engage with that past as a living and constantly altering entity which is itself changed by the insertion of new (but still traditional) greatness. Only then and with 'great labour' can a poet gain Eliot's 'historical sense' which 'involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence', that is, 'not of what is dead, but of what is already living'.⁸¹ If we approach cricket through Eliot's poetic frame, we can see that a great cricketer would have to know, understand and appreciate the living attributes of that which has come before him and recognize that his actions also impact upon this order of tradition. His cricketing individuality, his style and mannerisms, would have to be read in relation to the history and historical development of the game. Also, he should, in Eliot's terms, 'continue to develop this consciousness [of the past] throughout his career' and work through a 'process of depersonalisation' in order to ensure that his art is not about 'personality' as individuality but rather about new combinations of aesthetic feeling and its expression.

The cricketing application of much of Eliot's argument can be seen in the thinking of James who writes of Constantine's English league performances as articulating his 'West Indian heritage' and sees the same expression in the batting of Sobers, Collie Smith and Rohan Kanhai.⁸² Just as James describes crowds bringing the 'whole history' of the Caribbean with them to a match, so he argues that cricketers bring the

⁸⁰ T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* 3rd enlarged edn. (London: Faber, 1951), 13-17 (15).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸² James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 131.

same history with them onto the field. James's proximity to Eliot's position is most obvious in his assessment of Sobers. Though he identifies Sobers's 'individual style'⁸³ he rejects an English journalist's view of his individualism and instead writes of Sobers as 'the fruit of a great tradition'.⁸⁴ To James, Sobers's batting, bowling and fielding 'are a living embodiment of centuries of a tortured history' changing history and tradition as they are performed.⁸⁵ Kenneth Surin argues against James's assessment of Sobers by arguing against James's mobilization of Hegel's world-historical individual, great men whose individual passions coincide with the greater unconscious will or spirit of the people. Surin contends that no individual, even one as significant as Sobers, can express a fraction of the Caribbean's 'impulses and disposition' but this appears to be exactly what great cricketers of the region are able to do.⁸⁶ Kevin Frank also questions James's intense sense of hero-worship and is especially critical of James's admiration for Grace, but Frank confuses James's appreciation of Grace's influence with a nostalgic attachment to the subjugatory order of British imperialism though he does perceive the difficulty facing James's presentation of heroic individuals, particularly Toussaint L'Ouverture, and the issue of such heroes delivering measurable historical change.⁸⁷ Although James's aggrandizement of the male cricketing hero is restrictive in its gendered orientation, much can be said for his attempts to situate the hero in their historical and cultural context and to negotiate between the individual and the collective, on the emphasis he places on the communal bond between the hero and their nation, and the importance he gives to a knowing populace. These aspects of his thinking make the hero responsible to and part of his community rather than separate from them – a danger presently facing West Indies cricket.

⁸³ Ibid., 205.

⁸⁴ C. L. R. James, 'Garfield Sobers', in C. L. R. James, *The C. L. R. James Reader* ed. by Anna Grimshaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 379-389 (379-80).

⁸⁵ Ibid., 389.

⁸⁶ Kenneth Surin, 'C.L.R James' materialist aesthetic of cricket', in *Liberation Cricket*, 313-341 (318).

⁸⁷ Kevin Frank, 'Caught in the Slips: Boundaries of C. L. R. James' Imagination', *Journal of Caribbean Studies*, 15:3 (2000), 223-244 (230).

Beckles has suggested that Lara is the inheritor of the West Indies tradition James saw in Sobers and Sobers himself has described Lara as ‘a real West Indian batsman in the time-honoured tradition’.⁸⁸ Having watched Lara reach 375, Beckles reports that Lara possesses the ‘eye, technique and timing of Gary, the ideological contempt for foolishness of Viv, and the occasional display of Sir Frank’s grace and elegance’.⁸⁹ In examining Lara’s status, Beckles evokes terms that are similar to Eliot’s by writing of a ‘critical consciousness’ that meets with a ‘reorganization of information’ to be put into ‘exceptional social use by individuals at the edge of expectations’. He goes on: ‘With Lara we see flashes and we hear sounds of all those who have gone before’. He is the favoured pupil who claims that ‘*What has gone before is excellent, but must be improved*’.⁹⁰ That is, Lara is of tradition thanks to his inheritance, absorption, enactment and manipulation of greatness and his own entrance into a great cricket tradition. In addition, according to Beckles, Sobers not only helped prepare Lara mentally for his 375 record but had insisted that Lara focus on West Indies needing 45 more runs rather than himself.⁹¹ Beckles then argues that in cricket, particularly West Indies cricket, ‘supporting the “whole” motivates more than pleasing the “part”’, i.e. the individual.⁹² Sobers, he claims, had handed Lara the authority to surpass him and had done so through the power of a selfless belief in unity. Yet in recent years Lara has received constant criticism as a captain who has been sent to put himself and his own interests (often business related) above his cricket. Beckles identifies Lara as the example of sporting entrepreneurship that will set the way for a new generation.⁹³ Despite Lara’s more mature efforts to speak of himself with Eliot’s ‘historical sense’, to rebuild a West Indies team worthy of the name ‘team’ and to forge a purposeful role as

⁸⁸ Garry Sobers, *Garry Sobers: My Autobiography* with Bob Harris (London: Headline, 2002), 277.

⁸⁹ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 145.

⁹⁰ See Beckles, Appendix 2, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 150.

⁹¹ See Beckles, Appendix 1, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 146. Interestingly this information is not conveyed by either Sobers in *Garry Sobers* or Lara in *Beating the Field*, but Beckles records his first hand conversation with both legends to support his case.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 146.

⁹³ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 131.

a captain and leader responsive to community feelings and hopes, his efforts have remained largely unsuccessful. While his batting has positioned him as the inheritor and contributor to a great West Indies tradition his personal behaviour, including missing tours and claiming cricket was 'ruining' his life, as well as his business-like approach to the game have worked to separate him from the community and the political intersection of cricket, nationalism and unity of previous generations.

Eliot's essay and James's reading of Caribbean cricket heroes are both concerned with the relationship between the individual and their community. This concern is also shared by Brathwaite who has repeatedly made clear his interest in Eliot's use of the 'voice'.⁹⁴ Brathwaite captures a localized expression of the interaction between autobiography and history, between the history of the individual and their awareness of their own position within their locale and community, in his use of the word or phrase 'mwe'. Breiner has explained that in Haiti 'official orthography for Haitian creole programmatically works to make written creole look less like French' as when the expression 'for me' is written in creole as 'pou mwe' so to visually obscure its relation to the French 'pour moi' (though to the ear they are more similar).⁹⁵ As Breiner's example shows, 'pou mwe' works to remove the metropolitan influence as it localizes that very influence and inserts a communal 'we' into the singularity of 'me'. This relates to the appearance of 'mwe' in Brathwaite's poetry where it is the 'me' of the poet and the 'we' of his audience, community and people, where it evokes the 'me' of a single island and the 'we' of the islands holding the singular and collective together in a dialectic which speaks of their inseparable opportunities, their unity even in verbal/linguistic/visual difference. It also relates back to Breiner's 'Autobiography of

⁹⁴ In *History of the Voice* he presents 'the voice' as a technique for the expression, exploration and examination of individual and collective Caribbean identities through nation language.

⁹⁵ Laurence A. Breiner, 'Creole Language in the Poetry of Derek Walcott', *Callaloo*, 28:1 (2005), 29-41 (30).

the Tribe’, the story of the socio-historic group told through a single yet representative voice which is something of supreme importance to Brathwaite’s poetry and his view of himself as a communal poet. In Section VII of *Barabajan Poems* Brathwaite uses his largest typescript to convey the essence of the Caribbean ‘mwe’ across two full pages, using his video style to convey the size and significance of this individual and collective utterance and its relation to the Bajan landscape:

After this it
Became
possible – more
possible? – for
mwe/ for us
to begin to
enter/ repossess
our
Igbo
BaJan
landscape⁹⁶

Brathwaite’s uses the ‘mwe’ as a form of ‘us’, of, for and part of the possibility, the improved possibility, of individual and communal entrance and repossession, even reconnection to the god-like power of creation that is the land. Like Eliot, Brathwaite is interested in past and present but specifically in the individual present negotiating a way with the communal present in their common locality, as caused by their historical journey, toward a new beginning found and founded in unity, in what Tim Hector calls the Caribbean’s ‘long awaited becoming’.⁹⁷

Perceiving Brian Lara through the idiom of Brathwaite’s ‘mwe’ we can identify the ‘me’ of individual talent and the ‘we’ of tradition, as in Eliot, but also a more immediate ‘me’ of success/prosperity and ‘we’ of representation/responsibility that are united in his ‘mwe’ cricketing position as batsman/hero and leader/captain. Lara embodies a

⁹⁶ Brathwaite, *Barabajan Poems*, 204-205.

⁹⁷ Tim Hector, ‘Lara in Cricket Time and Social Place’, *Fan the Flame*, 9th April 1999.

'mwe' phenomenon in the same way that Beckles describes heroes as uniting Caribbean people in their appreciation of his play, but just as importantly such adoration can lead and has led to the down playing of other team performances and to an over reliance on individual heroic performances. This is pertinent to the reliance of the regional team upon Lara and to the difficulty of maintaining a conception of collectivity, of a team, against a backdrop of regional factionalism and socio-economic decline and self interest, especially with the structural readjustment packages dealt out to the islands. Indeed, as Beckles states, 'a "team" as mental construct, no longer is an easy concept' whether in cricketing or political terms.⁹⁸ For the West Indies team this notion has been all the more difficult given their over reliance on Lara. As Hector eloquently summarizes, the 'one-manism' of West Indies cricket meant the regional team were 'as dependent on Lara in the 90s as [they] were on Headley, as Atlas, in the 30s'.⁹⁹ Yet, where Hector sees history as repeating itself, we can identify a notable difference in the predicaments of Headley and Lara in that Headley's talents were set against the beginnings of regional nationalism while Lara's may have been cast against its demise. This struggle between the individual and the collective as a 'mwe' formulation, particularly in the negotiation between hero and team, is embedded within Lara praise poems even as they focus on his record breaking batting and heroic image.

Jean 'Binta' Breeze's 'Song for Lara'¹⁰⁰ is a dense performative piece that praises Lara and his 'young generation', who refuse to stand in 'awe of *Wisden*', to feel oppressed by cricketing tradition or English institutionalism. For Breeze, writing in the mid-1990s, the team comes from a legacy of victory and enjoys 'a fresh clean page' as 'de wicket holds no shadows'. Her poetic rendition is a musical ensemble of Caribbean rhythms as

⁹⁸ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 2*, 93.

⁹⁹ Tim Hector, 'Lara in Cricket Time and Social Place', *Fan the Flame*, 9th April 1999.

¹⁰⁰ 'Song for Lara', in Jean 'Binta' Breeze, *On the Edge of the Island* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1997), 67-9. All citations are taken from these pages.

she calls on pan, dance and kaiso to answer the cries of cricketing celebrations. Raising her pace to a frenzy to match Lara's strokes, she gambles everything. Yet she recalls and refutes the stereotype of uncontrolled, reckless, calypso cricket, drawing on David Rudder's 'Rally Round the West Indies' to identify the versatility of musical form, of the slow rhythmic play which the crowd can soon turn 'extempo'.¹⁰¹ By calling on Rudder, however, Breeze intertextually references the struggles facing the West Indies and Rudder's call for the region to stand behind their team in the face of defeat but she nevertheless concentrates on success brought about through Lara. She marks the individuality of Lara and his achievements but also the combination of physical pairings – eyes, legs and hands – he uses in order to remove the sense of isolated singularity from him. She then ends with her claim for his combination of self and selflessness:

an he playing hiself
he playing hiself
but he doan play all hiself yet

he playin hiself
he playin hiself
but he doan play all hiself

With a rhythmic overflowing of emotion, Breeze sees Lara as playing himself in, into his innings and into his place in history. He is playing for himself, to express himself, to obtain his own success but she insists, in repetition, that he does not play 'all hiself' as if he has not given all of himself yet, that he does not play alone but as one from a line of heroes, who plays with a team and draws on the power of the people as well. She views Lara's self and the collective Caribbean self as contained and maintained through his cricketing excellence.

¹⁰¹ For David Rudder's 'Rally Round the West Indies', see Appendix Six.

In a similar tone, the female Indo-Trinidadian poet Ramkisson-Chen writes of Lara's world record in 'On Lara's 375'¹⁰² as a moment of Caribbean carnival. The piece is an example of what Paula Morgan has noted as the poet's use of a trope of 'intentional hybridity' as a marker of Caribbean integration and unity.¹⁰³ Moving through the celebratory crowd Ramkisson-Chen sees the cricketing masses as being united in song and dance by the performance of their hero. They 'bowl fists of cheer their arms in line and length' in cricketing triumph as Lara becomes the object of their joy, the target of their affection and the cause of their party. Having established this Caribbean cauldron of cross-cultural amalgamation, the poem moves downward from the heights of triumph to Lara's physical presence on the pitch. In the same way that Breeze references Lara's humility, Ramkisson-Chen conveys how, 'Humbly like a hero/he bows to the wicket' and thereafter 'kisses the earth' (see Appendix Four for pictures). This action, one to be repeated a decade later, is an action of connection, of loyalty and locality being expressed to the soil and people of the region to show that he comes from them and belongs to them, that he gives thanks and praise to them and the islands 'instinctively'.¹⁰⁴ The 'me' of individual glory here performs Brathwaite's sense of entering/repossessing the landscape which has provided a tangible and immense source of life support and solidarity defending, in this instance, Lara's wicket and carrying him and his shots 'beyond the boundary', as Ramkisson-Chen says. The key to the poem becomes the emotional intensity felt and portrayed by Lara and its reflection in the crowd which coalesces in the wake of his success. Importantly, Lara becomes the body of achievement, the physical enactment of glory as 'He walks the victory sign', in that now famous posture with his arms and bat raised above his head (again, see Appendix Four). Standing as the warrior of the 'red [...] flash of runs', he is transfigured at this

¹⁰² 'On Lara's 375' in Ranjandaye Ramkisson-Chen, *Ancestry* (London: Hansib Caribbean, 1997), 101.

¹⁰³ Paula Morgan, 'With a Tassa Blending: Calypso and Cultural Identity in Indo-Caribbean Fiction', *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, 3:2 (2005), online.

¹⁰⁴ In *Beating the Field*, Lara claims that this was action was done 'quite instinctively' (100).

moment into the (young) father and protector of the region, standing with ‘arms that unite/beneath an uncertain sun’.

Embedded within this celebratory parade, however, are four less positive dimensions to Lara’s success. First, Chanderpaul is the nameless and juvenile ‘little partner’ of the scene despite the fact that Lara could not have made such a score without the batting support of his team mates, specifically Keith Arthurton and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, and has himself written of the maturity and encouragement provided by the young, nineteen year old, Chanderpaul at the time.¹⁰⁵ (Chanderpaul comes in for similar treatment in ‘Tanti Backin’ Lara’ by Keens-Douglas.) Although Chanderpaul’s belittling could be said to emerge from the poet’s loyalty to Trinidad (as he comes from Guyana) it is nonetheless indicative of the marginalization of other team mates that results from the focus upon Lara. Second, is the reference to Lara’s bubbling like the ‘unstoppered cola he advertises’. This reference captures the fizz of his emotional state and the out pouring or over-flowing of jubilation. It also registers the sizeable promotional sums Lara has attracted and marks, at this moment of triumph, his proximity to the globalizing force of the stream of wealth and advertising that would increase following this achievement.¹⁰⁶ Third, is the removal of Sobers from the scene whose hug, perhaps more than that of Chanderpaul, was the celebratory moment of Caribbean success and the moment of transference between the past and present generation of traditional greatness. Indeed, each of the poems describing this historic moment erase Sobers from the scene in order to concentrate on Lara in heroic isolation. Finally, there is the ‘uncertain sun’ under which Lara has united the Caribbean, with its

¹⁰⁵ See Brian Lara, *Beating the Field*, 97.

¹⁰⁶ For a pertinent but humorous view of the role of ‘De Sponsor’ in Caribbean cricket see Keens-Douglas’s poem of the same name in *Roll Call: Poetry and Short Stories by Paul Keens-Douglas* (Trinidad: Keensdee Productions, 1997), 10-12.

ambivalence over their collective cricketing future and the fate of the region. This uncertainty is echoed in Fergus's poem about the same event.

Howard Fergus has penned four poems about Lara and even entitled his 1997 collection which features three of these poems *Lara Rains and Colonial Rites*, reiterating the importance and connection between Lara's performances and the colonial history of the region.¹⁰⁷ Fergus traces the idea that Lara brings about historical and religious transformation in 'BC Lara', a poem which playfully praises his 501*. It is reminiscent of Alexander D. Great's calypso 'Lash dem Lara' which claims that there is a 're-writing of history with this one special man'.¹⁰⁸ Identifying 1994 as *Anno Lari*, in a play on Queen Elizabeth II's description of 1992 as *annus horribilis*, Fergus suggests that the arrival of Lara is the 'turning tide of history', a 'watershed' from which a 'New gospel' will be written. For Fergus, time will be divided between before Lara and after with the player's initials signifying the alteration 'BC BL', as the names Brian Charles and Brian Lara are written over the name of Christ: Lara's arrival is set to 'Eclipse old empires'. In his Christ-like role he is also the father 'Papa Lara' and children call his name, in adoration and as a humorous claim to parentage while middle age women are 'padding up' their bras in order to have a 500-1 shot of becoming Lara's wife. Fergus's poem quite clearly echoes Hector's optimistic sentiments about Lara's impact upon Caribbean social history when he said of the 375: 'I would want to think that Lara's innings put behind us the conditionalities of the IMF with its structural readjustments that has structured Caribbean people out of their own economy and history. They will return centre stage after Lara because Caribbean history can be divided into BL (Before Lara) and AL (After Lara)'.¹⁰⁹ We may say that after more than a decade, this has sadly

¹⁰⁷ 'Lara Rains', 'Lara Reach' and 'BC Lara' are all in Howard Fergus, *Lara Rains and Colonial Rites* (Leeds: Peepal, 1998), on pages 9, 10 & 11 respectively and all citation are taken from these pages.

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix Six for Alexander D. Great's track 'Lash dem Lara'.

¹⁰⁹ Tim Hector in the *Outlet* cited in Chris Searle, *The Pitch of Life*, 44-45.

not been the case for the region and if anything, the distance between the local population and the economy, particularly the cricketing economy, has only increased and was fully displayed by their general absence from World Cup venues.

Fergus's poem about the 375 record, 'Lara Rains', is the closest to the tone of the batting violence of Brathwaite's 'Rites' and the poetic brutality of Richards, as Fergus draws out a similar sense of the slave sublime to present the forceful stroke play of Lara. Fergus emphasizes the brutal death Lara inflicts upon England in a cricketing reversal of colonial domination. Cutting them, 'Over and over with a blunt willow', Lara bludgeons England to death until they are buried under a 'ruin of runs' in an 'Antiguan graveyard'. The 'graveyard' is reference to the setting provided by the Antigua Recreation Ground (ARG) that has St John's Catholic Cathedral on its west side. Fergus draws upon Catholic iconography to portray the umpires as priest-like 'ombudsman', dressed in 'black and white', counting with the remnants of a 'broken rosary' and calling 'over and out' as they perform the last 'rites' of England, on its cricketing and imperial position, following the team's decimation in the Third Test and Lara's ascension in the Fifth.¹¹⁰ It is Lara, though, who has dug 'their hell' as his batting presents the nightmare of colonial rebellion and defeat. As with Richards, this performance is a moment of historical readjustment as the last are now first and the first dead and buried. At this moment, as Lara again becomes 'the shape of victory', Fergus opens the window onto the future as the people kept faith 'For an uncertain resurrection/After 375 years of rain under Lara'. This 'rain' of Lara, as weather and monarchical reign is also the 'rein' that may be restricting, even worryingly suffocating and a note of concern with what or who is to follow him is valid, especially given that Lara went for two years without scoring a further test century after this record breaking

¹¹⁰ It's worth recalling that Lara's record came two games after Ambrose and Walsh had bowled England out for a mere 46, one of the all time lowest scores, in the second innings to secure a West Indies win and to clinch the series.

innings. However, like Hector and Rudder, Fergus remains optimistic, insisting ‘the sun will not set/On the united states of the West Indies/And rain will come again’.

Fergus writes of this ‘resurrection’ as having occurred on 15.12.2000 in his poem ‘Lara Again’ which captures the batting performance of Lara on the first days of the Third Test at Adelaide against Australia during the 2000-1 tour.¹¹¹ The West Indies were 2-0 down in the series. Three days after scoring 231 against Australia ‘A’, Lara came in at 52-2, was 136 overnight and went on to make 182 the following day. Despite their first innings total of 391 West Indies collapsed to 114 in the second, lost the match and endured a disastrous 5-0 series defeat. Nevertheless, focusing on the first day’s play, Fergus pays homage to Lara’s spectacularly commanding performance and his resurrection as a great batsman making a Christmas ‘gift’, like ‘Santa’, to his people. The idea of Christmas is reinforced by the examination of Lara as ‘The West Indies saviour’, resurrected, ‘born again’ and now the Christ-like talisman of a change of fortunes. Fergus does recognize the efforts of a young Marlon Samuels who stayed with Lara to support his innings but identifies his strength as the ability to ‘follow the beat of the master’, to act as his disciple. This is at once due praise to the elder, experienced, father in Lara but equally the type of following that some players may find difficult in the shadow of Lara’s status. Ironically, though praised here, it was Samuels who ran Lara out in his last ever international game and Viv Richards has commented that this error in judgment may have been an indicator of Samuels’s inability to give himself up for his captain even at this most historic moment and a sign of the team tension between players and their superstar captain.¹¹² Although Fergus praises Lara’s volcanic, eruptive qualities expressed via his repetitive boundaries (against ‘terrorists’ like Glen McGrath), he also recognizes that a volcano is unpredictable, we may say

¹¹¹ ‘Lara Again’, in Howard Fergus, *Volcano Verses*, 61.

¹¹² Viv Richards repeatedly made this point during his commentary periods on the BBC’s Test Match Special as the West Indies toured England immediately after the world cup.

unreliable. Although Fergus manoeuvres this ferocious uncertainty into a threat to the Australians it is, just as easily, an example of the uncertainty of cricket and the uncertainty of relying on a single man, however great. This stands in opposition to his presentation in 'Lara Reach' a poem in which the arrival of Lara at the wicket brings the certainty of a century, the certainty of greatness brings known and anticipated success. In the poem this is set against the ordinary hero-worshipping cricketer whose 'singles and dots' are soon ended when he is given out.

Paul Keens-Douglas also addresses the batting of Lara through the hero-worshipping of ordinary folk and his first engagement with Lara comes through his key female figure of 'Tanti Merle', who is at the centre of some of his best performance pieces about cricket, including his most celebrated cricket poem 'Tanti At De Oval' which introduced the strong, rambunctious, no-nonsense, aunt.¹¹³ Questrel has commented that 'Keens-Douglas more often than not, like Louise Bennett, uses the voice of the matriarchal figure'¹¹⁴ an old aunt or female relative as in 'Dark Nite People', 'Passport' and 'Tanti At De Oval'. Cynthia James claims that this is part of his re-deployment of enduring creole icons and that '[b]ringing Tanti, everybody's surrogate mother figure, back to the forefront of West Indians' minds established a socio-historical continuum'¹¹⁵ reconnecting Keens-Douglas and his audience with their cultural history. Additionally, Tanti's cricket attendance brings a female figure and voice into an otherwise male dominated space, noting the interaction of women and cricket, and compromises the pose of male freedom described. Markham's 'Mammie' is quite similar to Tanti and insists on the need to support the West Indies and offers her own critical reading of the

¹¹³ 'Tanti At De Oval' in Paul Keens-Douglas, *Tim Tim: The Dialect Poetry of Paul Keens-Douglas* (Trinidad: Keendsdee Productions, 1976) 26-32.

¹¹⁴ Victor Questrel, 'Introduction', in Paul Keens-Douglas, *When Moon Shine* (Trinidad: Keendsdee Productions, 1975), 5.

¹¹⁵ Cynthia James, 'From Orature to Literature in Jamaican and Trinidadian Children's Folk Traditions', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, (2005) 164-78 (169).

game and technique of Lara. In 'Conversations at Upton Park iii'¹¹⁶ Mammie is calling on people to perform Rudder's demand to 'Rally Round' as the losses of her own family are set against the fortunes of the cricket team. Despite her age, her arthritis and hip, she is 'ready to come in at No. 3' but what she really needs is someone to 'follow her instructions – like that boy Lara'. In 'For Brian Lara' a similar situation sees Mammie offering a critique of Lara's technique, particularly 'lifting the bat up too high'. Her observations are contradicted by Lara's century, but supported when he is nearly bowled by a straight ball. In both instances her love of the game is a humorous affection for a sport she cannot partake in but nonetheless carries the weight of her emotional connection to the Caribbean.

Keens-Douglas's Tanti Merle reappears in 'Tanti Backin' Lara', a short story celebrating Lara's 375.¹¹⁷ Discovering that Lara may surpass Sobers's 365 Tanti wants everybody 'to back de boy'. Tanti's notion of 'spiritual support' means everyone putting their hands on Blackie who then acts as 'aerial' with his hands on the tiny TV which is precariously balancing on a stool on a table. Before and during the game the viewers offer the usual, embarrassing, 'bad talk' criticizing everyone from the selectors to Tony Cozier to Lara's 'winjy' Guyanese batting partner, Chanderpaul. They support Lara with calls of 'Yesssss Lara, Nooooo Lara!' until he misses the ball and they cry out 'Oh Gooooooooood Lara!'. Then, with Lara needing only six runs, Tanti's curry goat starts to burn and as she heads off to save her dish taking the TV and its cable with her. By the time the TV has been resurrected Lara is standing triumphant with his bat in the air and they 'never see ah ting'. Again Tanti's calamitous engagement with cricket frames a historic moment to create an amusing story. We may go as far as to say that

¹¹⁶ 'Conversations at Upton Park iii' and 'For Brian Lara', in E. A. Markham, *Misapprehensions* (London: Anvil, 1995), pages 77 & 78 respectively. All citations are taken from these pages.

¹¹⁷ 'Tanti Backin' Lara', in Paul Keens-Douglas, *Roll Call: Poetry and Short Stories by Paul Keens-Douglas* (Trinidad: Keensdee Productions, 1997), 33-36. All citations are taken from these pages.

her personality seems to overwhelm or consume the cricketing occasion leaving a blind spot in the recollection of those caught-up in her adventure.

Keens-Douglas's other tribute, 'Lara Fans', offers a poetic critique not of Lara but of those 'die hard Lara' fan(atic)s.¹¹⁸ He complains that 'Dey eh askin' 'bout West Indies,/Or if de wicket takin' spin' but only want to know 'how much Lara make'. They believe 'Lara alone could win dis match!' and want him to be allowed to 'open' and 'bat twice'. When Lara makes a duck they are discussing luck, fatigue and Obeah not concentration, determination or shot selection. This is similar to Pires's experience at the Queen's Park Oval in 1998 when he attempted to unearth some criticism of Lara on his debut as captain only to discover that Lara was 'infallible in Trinidad' and that when he made a mistake 'everyone was immersed in a personal struggle to transform a dropped catch at a critical point into something positive, if not a sign of genius'.¹¹⁹ In his poem Keens-Douglas reveals his concern at this over investment in Lara and the problems it poses for the West Indies team and regional unity. The poem ends with Keens-Douglas's hope for West Indies cricket:

Ah hope West Indies start makin' runs,
For everybody sake,
Because ah tired hear dem askin',
"How much Lara make?"

This hope for cricket is also Keens-Douglas's hope for the Caribbean. Along with cricket's popularity, its relationship to England and the success of the West Indies, this hope is why he continues to write about the game.¹²⁰ As he has shown, cricket has language, humour, action, structure and beauty. It also supports the maintenance of

¹¹⁸ 'Lara Fans', *Ibid.*, 8-9. All citations are taken from these pages.

¹¹⁹ B. C. Pires, 'Emperor of Trinidad', in *The Picador Book of Cricket*, 215-6 (215).

¹²⁰ Keens-Douglas's best performance pieces about cricket are collected on his CD '*Crick... Crack... Cricket!!: A Humorous Look at Cricket*' which includes 'Tanti at de Oval', 'Fete Match', 'Tanti an' Lara', 'Lara Fans', 'Me an' Cricket' and 'Courtney Bowlin'.

both the individual and the collective in a medium that is known to and appreciated by the masses. Keens-Douglas hopes that the West Indies team, and the Caribbean more generally, can and will move beyond their over investment in the individual, cricketing or otherwise, and toward a new or renewed era of unity in purpose and action.

The tone of untainted praise that Keens-Douglas is critical of is reflected in the two poems of Eutrice Cowie-Hope which celebrate Lara's 400 namely, 'Lara the Brave'¹²¹ and 'Celebrating Brian Lara'.¹²² Cowie-Hope proclaims Lara 'A genius, a hero, a batting master', 'a super hero', 'a son of the soil' who would bat on if his people asked him and whose batting has already brought them to life. She even rejects the importance of a series defeat against England in favour of Lara's achievement, reiterating the view that it would have been a historically crippling moment for the West Indies to endure a 'white wash in 2004'. She also draws attention to the criticism that follows Lara – 'They accused him of indifference, lack of grit/No backbone, a man lacking leadership' – but condemns such criticism as unfair on a man who is too often 'given/Out for all the wrong reasons'. Her tone of unadulterated praise is indicative of what Fazeer called the 'misguided celebrations' at Lara's 400. That is, celebrations that minimized the team's lack of achievement and the predicament of cricket in the region. He does not wish to down play Lara's achievement but insists that it is capitalized upon in a socially productive fashion which instead of the 'same old platitudes' really 'means a record of success or at least consistent improvements at senior national team level. It means a measurable growth in the number of people playing the game and the attendant increase in the number of clubs and team'.¹²³ His voice of concern identifies the social value that must be made of cricketing success and collaboration, that the works of

¹²¹ Eutrice Cowie-Hope, 'Lara the Brave', Letters of the *Trinidad Guardian*, 26th April 2004.

¹²² Eutrice Cowie-Hope, 'Celebrating Brian Lara', *Trinidad Guardian*, 28th April 2004.

¹²³ Fazeer Mohammad, 'Of misguided celebrations and misplaced priorities', www.cricinfo.com, 30 November 2005.

heroes such as Lara needs to be used as part of a wider socio-political uprising, part of the improvement of the masses and their communal enjoyment of the game. His sense that hollow praise, wasted money and political self congratulations are hindering West Indies cricket and economic and political improvements for the region is a clear call to his community for them to build upon the legacy of their cricketing greats.

Janie, a hero of difference

This section briefly highlights a decentring of cricket and cricket heroism at the level of gender by drawing attention to the poems of Joan Anim-Addo depicting her cricketing mother and then Jean Breeze's woman-centred erotization of the crease. While several female Caribbean writers have used cricket in their work, as seen in the above examples as well as pieces by Lorna Goodison, Merle Collins, Beryl Gilroy and others,¹²⁴ most have concentrated on the game as the pursuit of men – as heroes, fathers, husbands, sons, etc. – and though they may have (re)situated the game within the female gaze few, if any, have offered up a female cricketing protagonist, as with Anim-Addo, or located the game within the realm of female sexuality and self articulation, as Breeze does. Consequently, these two poets have been selected to help us begin to identify the gendered place of cricketing women within the Caribbean and its literature.

The Grenadan born Anim-Addo has dedicated both her collections of poetry to her mother, Jane Joseph, with *Haunted by History* (1998) praising her as a 'Woman of

¹²⁴ In poetry we may think of Lorna Goodison's 'For My Mother (May I Inherit Half Her Strength)' in *Guinea Woman: New and Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2000), 25-28; Merle Collins's 'Quality Time' in *Lady In A Boat* (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2003), 13-14; and Delores McAnuff-Gauntlett's 'Cricket Boundaries' and 'Notes From A Novice' both from *The Caribbean Writer*, Vol. 10, 1997, online. In prose we can turn to Beryl Gilroy's 'Village Cricket' in *Sunlight on Sweet Water* (Leeds: Peepal, 1994), 101-104; and Jean Breeze's 'Sunday Cricket' in *On the Edge of an Island* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1997), 62-66. An analysis of the intersection of Caribbean womens' writing and cricket is worthy of greater examination but for reasons of space this section can only act as a prompt for future investigations.

Spirit,/Independence and Courage’ and the recent *Janie Cricketing Lady with Carnival and Hurricane Poems* (2006) proclaiming her ‘an “all rounder”/and much much more’. Jane Joseph was a keen cricketer as a child and young woman who went on to play for Grenada during the post war period when coloured men were only just making their force felt and women’s cricket lacked any recognized infrastructure of its own.¹²⁵ She was one of a few isolated heroes of cricketing difference who represented themselves and their gender on the pitch. ‘Thoughts From A Cricket Orphan’, the only cricket poem in *Haunted by History*, juxtaposes Janie’s cricket obsession with the feminine qualities expected of her as a woman and mother but also the poet’s sense of her mother’s cricketing absence when she was a child and her adult admiration for the courageous strength of this role model of womanly independence.¹²⁶ She counterposes her mother’s sight of the red leather ball with her bedtime view of ‘sunset reds/like layered hair ribbons’ as the separation between mother and daughter stretches into the night, prompting thoughts of the femininity of hair that could connect them but also of her mother’s ‘plaits awry’ in distant boyish pursuits. The poetic voice speaks of the loneliness and jealousy she feels as the act of waiting for her mother’s return becomes a perpetual yearning for an emotional union with a woman whose dissatisfaction with home life and immense passion for cricket keeps her away but does not undermine her love. Negotiating with her young self’s feelings of abandonment and her mature respect for her mother’s quest at ‘the crease’, ‘seeking the boundary’, Anim-Addo says ‘Mine remains a grudging sympathy. I’ll leave it be’ as she holds on to the view that her mother’s activities were ‘far from maidenly’, that is, traditionally unwomanly but certainly not without their own score.

¹²⁵ For a discussion of the development of the women’s game particularly its formal development in the 1970s as well as a consideration of the sexist coverage and difficulties of obtaining sponsorship the game faces see Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1*, Chapter Six, 117-144.

¹²⁶ ‘Thoughts From A Cricket Orphan’, in Joan Anim-Addo, *Haunted by History: Poetry by Joan Anim-Addo* (London: Mango, 1998), 51-52. All citations are taken from these pages.

The isolation of a cricket orphan is largely erased from 'Janie Cricketing Lady' though a generational tension or transition remains paramount as poet daughter attempts to imaginatively reconstruct and tell her mother's journey from a 'Tom Boy' child through to her own child-bearing womanhood, her life in England and her grandmotherly return to Grenada.¹²⁷ At the end of this long 'journey poem' or amalgamation of poems, Anim-Addo sets out her mother's instruction to remember their family tree, the familial relationships and information that are 'not marked on paper', in official history, but constitute their heritage (37-8). Such an act of preservation through poetic inscription is the nature of the entire piece as oral and physical history are inscribed into literary form which, though concerned with family and memory, is primarily set to tell the story of Janie – an unusual hero 'caught in the difference/between life and game' (22). As Anim-Addo explains in 'West Indies Greatest Cricketer' her examination of Janie is dedicated 'to memory, gender and our sporting pearl', to 'life, game and loss' (11). She admits that her recreated 'version' of Janie's tale (11) is both biography and fiction or fictionalized poetic biography, as she (re)captures and portrays her mother's performance of difference by casting womanhood and motherhood against a transgressive engagement with masculinized sport. Moving between a first-person reoccupation of Janie's imagined persona and a third-person reflection upon Janie's life that is coupled with a first-person engagement with her own, Anim-Addo identifies the generational gap between poet and mother subject that means she may speculate about Janie's past but knows that many of her secrets remain unknown. Which is to say, as she records her mother's cricketing narrative the tale may also be one 'of a woman caught behind the wicket' but 'We'll never know. She always kept it secret.' (33)

¹²⁷ Joan Anim-Addo, 'Janie Cricketing Lady' in *Janie Cricketing Lady with Carnival and Hurricane Poems* (London: Mango, 2006), 10-44. This is a long poetic cycle which is subdivided into historical periods and then individual poetic sections, even poems, with individual titles. Some of these titles are used here but all references are supported by pages numbers taken from this edition.

Crucial to this poem, and Anim-Addo's work more generally, is the nexus of remembering/forgetting, storytelling, gender and motherhood. In fact, though Janie's father is a supportive 'trunk of a man' (12) encouraging his daughter's cricketing play, the poem focuses on a layering of mothers as generations of the poet's female line are recalled – herself, her mother, her grandmother and mother England – in order to convey the complex 'herstory' of Janie. Throughout, mother and daughter relationships are filled with affection but not necessarily understanding. Janie's mother is continually exasperated by her daughter's boyish endeavours, her avoidance of tasks like cooking and sewing (unless to make a cricket costume for carnival) and her continuing athletic competencies. In 'Tom Boy' she crosses herself in the hope that 'the phase would quickly pass' while in 'Watch She' she bemoans 'what goin' become of' her daughter (13). Haunted by such disapproval, in 'Letter to Mammie' Anim-Addo offers a written request by Janie for her mother to appreciate her love of cricket, her need for the 'little space' she 'must find for [her] game/For [her]' (22). This reaching across female generations through the poetic word is repeated in Anim-Addo's own negotiation with Janie's mode of female resistance. Where Anim-Addo reads her mother's cricket playing as an act of socio-political dissent and an assertion of self determination, her mother's voice seems to insist that she had no means of interpreting herself or her actions in such a way. Hers was a path dictated by a love of '*anything boys did*' (original emphasis, 19) and a special adoration of cricket – 'The game was all' (23). In her mind, women of her time 'had no vocabulary of difference [...] /gender wore a midnight cloak of silence' and women simply '*did* silence' (original emphasis, 23). Yet Anim-Addo recognizes the political implications of this early 'female athlete, black/and the wrong class' (23). Her project is to represent and give voice to such women, traditionally caught in silence and historical obscurity, by locating the gaps of cricketing and other histories that omit them as she writes of women of action and participation,

playing a part, even a sporting part, in the life of the Caribbean. '[F]ramed by [her] time' (23), she takes her mother's story and infuses it with her own idiom of feminist transgression, social reclamation and political boundary crossings where gender carries 'no fixed lines' of restriction (23). Her project is an 'outing' (10), 'marking *difference*' (original emphasis, 11), a bringing into the light of all that has previously remained silent or marginalized, especially within the male realm of Caribbean cricket.

Anim-Addo has insisted that cricket holds little interest for her personally,¹²⁸ but she clearly uses her mother's choice to play the game to identify a quest for equality and excellence in the face of discrimination, to identify a women's body outside of its feminized, domestic roles and to see it in successful physical action elsewhere. From the outset she charts Janie's exclusion from, or difficulty within, the male cricketing domain. While her father guides and coaches his daughter, others, including local boys and her visiting cousin 'Dolphus boy' (15), are quick to mock this girl cricketer. With her young bowling talent defeating her cousin from Trinidad (15-16) and her mature batting determination leading Grenada's women to a win over Trinidad (26-28), her nick-name 'cricket lady' becomes the ironic redirection of the taunting she experienced from boys happy to poke fun at her sporting ambitions and undeveloped chest (15). Anim-Addo links this gendered prejudice to the structures of Caribbean cricket and women's institutional exclusion from the nationalist project of cricketing representation: 'blame is not in question/for petticoats or flannels in the net/reflect our boards vision of the pavilion' (10). She positions Janie as an innocent but loaded challenge to the post war climate: 'island girl handling bat like she born with it, heedless of political storm: black man hardly get foot in region competition' (18). Additionally, though she states that Janie's name is proclaimed across the islands she notes that she'll 'never get an

¹²⁸ She reiterated this point during the 'Writing the Other America: Comparative Approaches to Caribbean and Latin American Literature' Conference, University of Warwick, 25th February 2006.

OBE' or be written into cricket history as were the male heroes of the past – 'Three W's, Sirs Learie and Garfield [...] Clive and Viv' (10). Nevertheless, Anim-Addo is clear in her demand for the women's story to be told and upheld, and for their game to enter equally into the cricketing field. Using the metaphor of kaiso she claims that the rhythm is not 'sweet' without soprano alongside tenor (10-11) and so women must be included in the game.

Throughout Janie's life course cricket is set beside her entrance into womanhood, initially her sexual adolescent and later motherhood. As she develops from a 'potato-slip of a girlchild' (12) into a young cricketer she is also developing into a woman and her athletic physique becomes one of sexual attractiveness. This is something that takes her male playmates by surprise as they 'praised anew her long limbs' (25) and she became one 'of fine leg (any field)' (28). Recording her most important game against Trinidad, her 'special memory space' (27), in which her performances with bat and ball, secure her a small island victory, Anim-Addo holds these two sides of her womanly maturity together:

And how she lashed that red leather,
punching the ball off the offside
gravitating to her knees to make a sweep
and place the ball sweet between fielders.

Bowling at that steady, persistent pace,
she struck a lajablesse awe
pretty girl with she nice, nice hair
and that intensity of purpose. (27-8)

Anim-Addo sees nothing wrong with the combination of womanhood and sport, of sporting concentration and achievement and feminine physical attributes. Janie falls into a relationship with an 'overseer' who delights in plucking young 'fruit', before and after they unite. They have two daughters but she is not tamed by their arrangement or

his absence. Her resistance to traditional female roles is taken forward into her job as the first women bus driver of the island and eventually out into a life in cold, friendless England. Later, her return to Grenada as a grandmother is also a 'Return to Queens Park, Grenada' (39), sitting among colour and noise of the West Indies crowd and even at the age of eighty, she is seen bending over looking to fix her own car (44). Throughout, Janie is Anim-Addo's example of a woman seen to 'ever assault the boundary' (19) in cricketing and gendered terms.

Expanding upon this link between cricket and the sexualized female body, I wish to close with a reading of 'on cricket, sex and housework' by Jean Breeze, the Jamaican Dub poet whose repertoire and performative range is as diverse as that of Paul Keens-Douglas. In an interview Breeze described how *The Arrival of Brighteye and Other Poems* (2000), from which this piece is taken, had turned toward the explicit, playing upon overt sexual content and linguistic puns. She thought that this was a development of her distance from Jamaica, something she had come to via the freedoms of living away from home in England and so was 'definitely English' though its focus is on the experiences of Caribbean women.¹²⁹ Her growing interest in representing 'the sexual desires and sexual strengths of the Caribbean woman'¹³⁰ is keenly displayed in this poem which, due to its brevity, can be cited here in full.

I have never liked ironing

But there's something steamy here
That softens the crease
and although I play it straight
I fell
To your googly

I came out slightly crinkly

¹²⁹ See, Jenny Sharpe, 'Dub and Difference: A Conversation with Jean "Binta" Breeze', *Callaloo* 26:3 (2003), 607-613 (612).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* (613).

Perhaps it's the strange things
your fingers do
around my seams¹³¹

Breeze works to domesticate and eroticize cricket in order to explore female sexual pleasure. The act of ironing functions as a metaphor for sexual intercourse, that moving up and down as the physical motion of the pair, and is the feminized activity of domestic servitude against which love and passion are enacted. The poem works as the commentary to a sexual interruption during the daily grind of chores and as a meditation, the thoughts of a woman ironing the clothes, probably the cricket whites, of her lover. In both cases ironing up and down to smooth out creases soon becomes the stroke of sexual engagement. By condensing the clichés of 'playing the game' and 'a straight bat' Breeze references the cricketing traditions of Englishness but infuses them with an intense sexual motif, where cricket is replaced by the game of erotic ecstasy and the straight bat could be transformed into an erect penis. Here, to 'Play it straight' suggests honesty and integrity, even innocence, and carries a strong hetero-normative hint. Importantly, though, the gender of the lover is not revealed and while the cricketing motif suggests a male interest the lack of penetrative descriptions leaves the matter open and in fact, the identification of the 'googly' may imply that the unexpectedness was the sex of this sexual partner. Her attempts at chastity or resistance were thwarted by her own desire and the steam 'that softens the crease' also softens her, preparing her body to fall to that 'googly', that unexpected delivery that spins in the opposing direction to that which she anticipates. Her 'straight' playing has met deception, guile and cunning, as she is faced with an opponent/lover who is bringing something masked, hidden and difficult to read. Although this may imply that she has been fooled into bed or love, there is no regret or malice in her tone, only an

¹³¹ 'On cricket, sex and housework', in Jean 'Binta' Breeze, *The Arrival of Brighteye and Other Poems* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 2000), 50.

affectionate tone of post coital warmth as the slow, seductively nostalgic pace of the poem quickens slightly to suggest a lighter, brighter, more satisfied note.

Continuing with the cleaning metaphor, Breeze implies that she was washed by this encounter, cleaned and rejuvenated and ‘came out slightly crinkled’ – cleansed but altered, crinkled rather than damaged. The poem’s shifting of tense here is notable. She plays and continues to ‘play it straight’ but ‘fell’ in the past, however, the relationship continues in the present, her memory of the past extends into her own present, into their continuing relationship and her fond recollection seems tied to her sexual present: ‘Perhaps it’s the strange things/your fingers do/around my seams’. Where previously her lover had been the bowler of a googly, the poetic voice now understands her body as the ball around whose seams her lover’s fingers move. The mysteries of bowling, of delivering the googly, are repacked in favour of the lover’s (non-penetrative) technique and the unknown quality moves from potential deception to erotic mystery. The poem ends on an important point: the crease, as line, as a straight line has melted into a seam, but a seam that represents not only a line, a division between two spaces or territories, a line that, like the cricketing crease, is interchangeably a territory. The vaginal crease or seam is a marker of womanhood and a site of sexual pleasure. The crease is external to her vaginal opening but also the exciting and excitable edge of this internal space. In closing at this point Breeze chooses to end on a note of female pleasure. Her lover is secondary to the pleasure they give her and to which she willingly succumbs. She has, in essence, removed the masculine and phallic focus of cricketing action and sexual metaphor to exalt the territories of female sexual enjoyment. These are issues, specifically the notion of creases as lines and territories in relation to gender and race, which are expanded upon in the closing discussion that follows.

PART THREE

THE STRAIGHT WHITE LINE

I support a cricket team
whose players I shout when on de field
I bring me booze, forget de wife
I just wanna get tight
I'm a West Indian in Britain

J. D. Douglas, 'I'm a West Indian in Britain', *Caribbean Man's Blues* (1983), 12.

CHAPTER FIVE

CROSSING THE *STRAIGHT* WHITE LINE?

NATION, RACE AND GENDER IN THE CRICKET OF BRITISH CINEMA

This relatively brief discussion brings England and the Caribbean together at their point of intersection in post 1950s Britain, acting both as a conclusion to the current thesis and a prompt for further investigation. Set against Mercer's *Black Film, British Cinema* (1988) and the studies of Pines (1992) and Malik (2002) examining black British presence on television, this final exegesis highlights key representations of black Britons and cricket in three British films. Due to the focus upon cricket and for the purposes of clarity, 'black' and 'black British' are here restricted to refer only to those of Afro-Caribbean descent residing in Britain.¹ Returning to the notion of the crease outlined in the Introduction, the chapter works around the idea of the '*Straight* White Line', of the demarcation of the cricketing crease as both a line and a territory of identity construction and restraint, and its associations with occupation, transgression and crossing, as well as a play upon the 'straight', i.e. hetero-normative, values connected to male cricketing participation. It begins by raising the examples of national and racial territories and boundary crossings suggested in *Playing Away* (1987), written by Caryl Phillips and directed by Horace Ové, and *Wondrous Oblivion* (2003), written and directed by Paul Morrison, wherein black and white Britons are cast against each other while being held together through their cricketing interaction. Thereafter, it turns to concentrate on Neil Jordan's 1992 hit *The Crying Game* and its negotiations with nation, race and gender by reading the film through its mobilization of cricket and the

¹ For the purposes of this discussion about cricket this appears to be the most useful definitional boundary to draw to reflect the particular characters represented in the works discussed. However, it should not be read as a general reduction of all black or black British identities to those of British Afro-Caribbeans.

potentially transgressive cricketing body of the black subject. It argues that the film's cricketing dimensions illustrate the way that Jordan upsets simple binaries with complex triangulated relationships but nevertheless fails to destroy the territorial demarcations of nation, race and gender linked to England, empire and cricket, meaning that he also fails to allow his characters, especially Fergus, to consciously move beyond the straight white lines that confine their identities.

Contextual Crossings

The Atlantic crossing of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948 marked the beginning of a sizeable influx of Caribbean migrants coming to post war Britain. With their arrival Britain was faced with the colour of its imperial legacy and its own postcolonial, multicultural future. It was also the moment that the perceived black 'invasion' of England began. The transitional decade that followed was one of imperial break up, social upheaval and rising racial tensions. At its dawn, the victories of the West Indies in 1950 helped bolster the confidence of Caribbean immigrants, many of whom were contending with economic deprivation, unemployment and social exclusion. Towards its close, their frustrations and the inhospitable realities of white fear, revulsion and violence were expressed in the 1958 Notting Hill riots. Writing of the immigrant experience, Sam Selvon's 'The Cricket Match', part of his second novel *Ways of Sunlight* (1957) which was also published as a short story in *Boys Own Paper* in August 1957, comically explores the racial and national stereotypes of black/'West Indian' and white/English factory workers in Chiswick by bringing them together through cricket. Algernon, his protagonist, embellishes grand tales of his own cricketing excellence against the backdrop of the 1950 series and English assumptions that all Caribbean men must be good at cricket (if nothing else) – a stereotype contradicted by Algernon's

incompetence and railed against in the poetry of John Agard and J. D. Douglas.² When Charles, ‘a Englisher’ from the suburbs, invites Algernon to play his village team on their ‘Real English turf’, his black colleagues are forced to scrape together eight non-cricketing ‘West Indians’ who only escape embarrassment on the pitch because of the uncertain performances of the villagers and the eventual arrival of rain.³ Selvon assigns black and white landscapes or territories – black/city, white/country – demonstrating that cricket and Englishness are still understood as linked to the landscape of rural England which is a distant remove from the urbanized city occupied by the immigrants. Notably, Selvon also illustrates that crossing from one space into another is possible though not permanent, and that the two groups meet in the single, though still segmented, space of urban employment.

A generation after Selvon and against the immediate backdrop of Thatcherism and the Brixton riots of ’81 and ’85, *Playing Away* tells the story of the Brixton Conquistadors, a black London based cricket team, travelling out into the English countryside to play the Suffolk village of Sneddington as the climax to the village’s ‘African Famine Relief’ or ‘Third World Week’.⁴ Like Selvon, Phillips chose to make the black Londoners travel because they were the ‘team that had been playing away the longest’⁵ with dispossession, alienation, disconnection and relocation constituting intrinsic aspects of their ‘West Indian’ identity before and after they landed in Britain. Their Conquistador name references a past of colonial invasion and conquest so that their cricketing journey is linked to a history of imperialism, of crossing and recrossing

² See for example, John Agard, ‘Stereotype’, in *Mangoes & Bullets: Selected and new poems 1972-84* (London: Pluto, 1985), 38, and J. D. Douglas, ‘I’m a West Indian in Britain’, in *Caribbean Man’s Blues* (London: Akira, 1985), 12, which is cited at the section break for Part Three.

³ See, Sam Selvon, ‘The Cricket Match’, in *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories*, ed. by Stewart Brown and John Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 91-95.

⁴ It is noteworthy that not only are some of the Conquistador players unhappy about this charitable, African association, but that Marjory, the village’s chief ambassador, euphemizes the event’s name from ‘African Famine Relief’ to ‘Third World Week’ when greeting the visitors.

⁵ Caryl Phillips, ‘Introduction’, *Playing Away* (London: Faber, 1987), x. From here on all citations from this screenplay are taken from this edition and given as in text pages numbers.

landed boundaries and oceanic waterways, which is now being turned toward the heart of rural England – the mythic home of cricketing Englishness. It testifies to the sense of the invasion of England linked to black immigration but also the increasing confidence of black British cricketers in the 1980s when the West Indies were dominating the world and black players were representing England.⁶ Although Phillips was raised in Leeds and on football rather than cricket,⁷ he reverts to the sport of his father's generation, the first-arrival generation, to depict the cultural conflict and racial tensions between black/urban and white/rural establishing these identity forming locales as opposing ends of a spectrum of Britishness. Their head on collision, expressed in cricketing terms, culminates in the implosion of the village collective whose internal divisions, based on class, generation and gender, are exposed in the face of the post imperial 'Other' they have patronizingly invited and violently insulted.⁸ As the façade of village unity disintegrates they are defeated by their black guests who finally come together in victory. The tight, sharp script and Ové's direction lend a depth and emotional integrity to the film and its depiction of black experiences from a black perspective. Its humour remains pointed and layered throughout helping to move the film away from earlier 1970s sitcoms depicting race such as *Love Thy Neighbour* (1972-76) and prepare the way for the more rounded humour, characterization and plotlines of Trix Worrell's *Desmonds* (1989-94).⁹

⁶ It has been widely recorded that while black players of Afro-Caribbean origin were prominent in the 1980s and early 1990s, with players like Devon Malcolm, Chris Lewis and Gladstone Small representing England, and that in the ten to fifteen years, as the West Indies have fallen away and football has risen, their numbers have decreased considerably while the number of British Asian players has been rising.

⁷ See, Caryl Phillips, 'Leeds United, Life and Me', in *A New World Order: Selected Essays* (London: Vintage, 2002), 298-301.

⁸ The village team that Phillips depicts is very much like that in *Outside Edge*, Richard Harris' play that became a 1982 film directed by Ken Billington and then Nick Hurran's television series 1992-96 of the same name. In all these versions seeming tranquillity of village life is soon exposed as personal rivalries, class differences, age and sporting ability all cause open disagreements and constant disruption.

⁹ It is noteworthy that Norman Beaton and Ram John Holder have lead roles in both *Playing Away* and *Desmonds*. Ram John Holder also appeared in *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* when Eclipse Theatre Project toured in 2003.

Importantly, the sense of opposing territories and the movement between and across identity defining spaces, as with the cricketing crease, is pivotal to the entire film. During the long opening sequence, as Suffolk (green, peaceful and picturesque) and London (dark, grey and gloomy) are visually contrasted, the centrality and danger of crossing is immediately conveyed. At 'the traffic lights at the Atlantic Road crossroads' (4) Willie Boy (Norman Beaton), the Conquistador Captain, is almost run down by the deliberately reckless driving of Errol, the 'youth' his daughter Yvette is dating. At this busy, life-threatening juncture, the Atlantic and London, the land and the water, have been conflated as colonial past and postcolonial present meet in a British moment that sees black Britons, young and old, almost collide in open conflict. Later that night, after much drinking, Robbo (the Vice Captain) returns home with Willie Boy to confess that at twenty three he 'made the biggest decision of [his] life' as to whether to cross the Atlantic and now, nearly fifty, he is stuck 'trying to make the same decision again; the same frigging thing in reverse' (17). Here crossing and recrossing are seen as journeys of discovery in the perpetual search for life, security and opportunity within the imperial imaginary conducted across the Atlantic routes of the British Empire. While Robbo's wife does not want to return to the Caribbean, Willie Boy's wife, Mildred, already has, leaving her husband and daughter behind and it is only at the end of the film that they agree to go out to join her. Although this implies that a happy repatriation and reunion may be possible Robbo's inability to decide on his life course is testament to his belief that no-one can simply 'go back' because there is no 'reverse', no undoing of all that has been done. Moreover, the rest of the action is concerned with the difficulties involved in crossing between spaces, in any journey of territorial transference, and especially the movement between black urban living and white rural England for black Britons, serving to illustrate that neither Britain nor the Caribbean are the glorified, paradisaical, 'Island in the Sun' (28).

In his introduction to the screenplay, Phillips emphasizes the territorial distinctions between black Britons, typically coming from rural Caribbean communities into the 'industrial forests' of urban cities, and those white English subjects who reside within the Home Counties and are still closely connected to the rural idyll of Englishness constituting 'a society with a country gentry, and an agricultural class' (ix). Sarah Neal prefaces her study of 'Ruralism and Racism' with the example of *Playing Away*, identifying the two zones of space/race – black/urban, white/rural – and the manner in which the discourse of pastoral England that separates them relates back to the colonial idiom of the nineteenth century and continues to erase race from the countryside by insisting on its absence, refusing to 'recognise a race/rural relationship'.¹⁰ She explains how the English countryside, associated with Anglo-Saxon purity, has become a site of 'white safety', a location of regression, a place of retreat into a supposedly pre war sense of Englishness, uncontaminated by coloured arrivals and urbanization. Though Neal does not develop a reading of the film the substance of her argument is evident throughout, especially through the opinions of Derek, the Sneddington Captain. When Jeff tells him that he works in 'race relations' Derek sniggeringly jokes that 'there's not much call for that around here' (32) and later, when Jeff and Derek's wife Viv are becoming provocatively close, Viv explains that Derek believes that 'security' is one of the benefits of living in the country (39). The associations of the black visitors with racial 'trouble' and criminal 'danger' are here made explicit and are supported by numerous other remarks. It is this sense of cricket and England being sacredly preserved by the gentlemen of the countryside, along with their smug superiority and condescending racism which links their black guests with drugs, violence and rioting, that sharpens the sporting encounter. It causes Willie Boy to insist that his team disregard any sense of social order and deference as he calls for 'No gentleman shit out

¹⁰ Sarah Neal, 'Rural Landscapes, representation and racism: examining multicultural citizenship and policy making in the English countryside', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25:3 (2002), 442-461 (448).

there. We play, we win, and we gone. But most of all we win, you hear?' (57) Victory is a way to assert themselves in this foreign and alienating landscape but also to demonstrate their equal status. In victory, the Conquistadors learn that even the villagers have 'their own difficulties' (78) – drunkenness, familial break down, generational conflict and substantial gender restrictions – and in this knowledge they return to London, recrossing the landscape to re-establish the gap, geographical and otherwise, between themselves and the crumbling remnants of the conservative rural idyll of unchanging Englishness. An ideal John Major would offer up again in 1993 with his cycling nuns, warm beer and county cricket as a rallying call to the post-Thatcher nation.

Where *Playing Away* insists upon the distance between black and whites landscapes, Paul Morrison's 2004 film *Wondrous Oblivion* places them immediately alongside each other in the domesticated setting of urban terrace living. It was such a space of interracial urban living that was the premise for the popular sitcom *Love Thy Neighbour* (1972-76) in which Eddie Booth (Jack Smethurst), a white English trade unionist, exchanged racial insults (typically 'sambo' for 'honky') with his new black neighbour, the staunchly conservative Bill Reynolds (Rudolph Walker) as their wives attempted to keep the peace. The series played on the fear, expressed in and fuelled by Enoch Powell's 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech, that the intrusion of a black family into a white/English street signified the arrival of a darkened and dangerous element.¹¹ Although the comedy was rather flat and substantially predictable, Rudolph Walker saw

¹¹ In connection with the neighbourly intrusions of black Britons Malik has written that 'popular Black comedian Charlie Williams would joke in his thick Yorkshire accent, "Watch out, or I'll come and live next door to you".' Cited by Sarita Malik, in *Representing Black Britain: Black and Asian Images on Television* (London: Sage, 2002), 98. Similarly, Procter notes that in Caryl Phillip's first novel *The Final Passage* (1985), Leila, the central protagonist reads a London graffiti slogan: 'IF YOU WANT A NIGGER NEIGHBOUR VOTE LABOUR'. See, James Procter, 'General Introduction' in *Writing Black Britain 1948-1998: An interdisciplinary anthology* ed. by James Procter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2. Procter also sees that while Leila is observing this in 1950s London such a slogan was not reported to exist until 1964 in Smethwick.

his role as providing an example of the black man 'on a par' with his white neighbour in what was the seeming 'fair play' of mutual racism and insult.¹² Pines has written that while the sitcom was dominated by a white construction of Bill's supposed 'blackness' filtered through stereotypes (e.g. voodoo and limbo dancing) in order to 'explain' it to a largely white audience, 'many viewers are said to have enjoyed the racially-charged batting relationship between the two men, as they would a cricket match'.¹³ And in fact, the 1973 *Love Thy Neighbour* film stages their battle as a cricketing encounter in the factory yard. In this scene Bill's assault on Eddie's masculinity, on his performances of male self assurance and position, is again illustrated as Bill bowls to Eddie only to hit him in the crotch with his first delivery. The series and film work to domesticate racial proximity and suggest that black and white working class men are stuck alongside each other at work and home in the city.

Where *Love Thy Neighbour* offers a relatively simple binary of black/white, *Wondrous Oblivion* complicates this picture by placing a white immigrant Jewish family, alongside new Jamaican neighbours, the Samuels, as both families attempt to survive among the white working class inhabitants of a North London street in the early 1960s, as the post war conservatism of the 1950s is giving way to the more vibrant mood of the '60s.¹⁴ It centres upon David Wiseman's naïve but desperate desire to play cricket for his snooty public school despite his complete lack of talent. It is only with the coaching and friendship of Dennis Samuels and his daughter Judy that David realises his dream. On their arrival in the street the Samuels destroy their new garden with its English roses

¹² See Rudolph Walker in Jim Pines, ed., *Black and White in Colour: Black People in British Television Since 1936* (London: British Film Institute, 1992), 78.

¹³ Jim Pines, ed., *Black and White in Colour*, 13. Malik makes a similar point in *Representing Black Britain*, 97-98.

¹⁴ The date of the action is slightly ambiguous. The film sets the scene as the summer of 1960 (5) but this appears impossible as the West Indies are touring England, and footage from the 1963 series is used, Dennis Samuels owns a copy of *Beyond a Boundary*, first published in 1963, and the soundtrack uses Kitchener's 1963 calypso 'Cricket Champions' (as well as 'Victory Test Match') – see Appendix Six for these tracks.

in order to put up a cricket net to help Dennis re-establish his emotional ties with Judy (85). Looking on, Victor Wiseman informs his son that they ‘misunderstand the British values [because] the Englishman’s love of cricket only goes so far [...]. Which is not so far as the Englishwoman’s garden’ (57). The destruction of English turf, of English flowers and thereby the English landscape in miniature is seen as the discretion of all that the working class neighbours cherish. Indeed, the arrival of newcomers causes Mrs Wilson, the principle racist on the street, to insist that she and her family were ‘born on this street’ and will ‘defend what we’ve got. We didn’t fight the war for nothing’(45), as if defeating Hitler meant the preservation of an untainted, racially pure England. Such comments cause Ruth Wiseman to fear that England is not as dissimilar to Germany as she had thought. Regardless, caring only for cricket, David appears ready to play with his neighbours in his spotless whites, his uniform of cricketing incompetence which also represents his social and racial innocence. As the families draw closer together the precarious ‘white’ status of the Wisemans is compromised by their proximity to the Jamaican family. Initially the other neighbours attempted to lure Ruth Wiseman with the call to be ‘a good English woman’ (45) and resist any association with the coloured arrivals. Mrs Dunkley even insists that ‘not all immigrants are the same’ (94), implying that the category of Britishness, even Englishness, may be elastic enough to include those white immigrants such as the Wisemans but not those of a darker shade. When the street discovers that David has been playing cricket with the Samuels they spit at Ruth’s feet and write notes addressed to the only ‘Yids’ in street as part of a campaign of harassment designed to remove the Samuels. The racial aggravation escalates until a letter bomb almost destroys the Samuels’ home and Victor heroically rescues his black counterpart, Dennis, in order to efface his own prejudicial ignorance and fear.

Throughout the film it is David's act of boundary crossing, of scrambling over the garden fence with the help of Dennis, which begins to bring the families together. His crossing of this domestic divide is an act of transgression, going against the wishes of his family and the street. Although Ruth redraws a new line at going inside the house (89), this too is crossed as David and Judy start to move back and forth as part of their cultural exchange (e.g. bagels for mangoes). This system of crossing and recrossing binds the two immigrant families and sets them against the rest of the street. Soon Ruth and Dennis are also crossing their own territorial boundaries. It is Dennis who 'reached a hand over the fence' (88) and after he and Ruth have become closer, visiting each other at home, he escorts her and the children to a dance hall event where Gary Sobers and Frank Worrell are appearing. As their attraction increases an affair is only just avoided. However, such crossings do not integrate the two families or them into the wider street as black and white inhabitants continue to sit alongside each other without becoming a single collective. This is visually represented when David is invited by a school friend to go to Lords to watch England v West Indies and bumps into Dennis. In this cricketing space black and white Britons are still largely segmented, seated separately and socialising among their own group. This failure to offer a genuine integrated image of England is compounded by the sentimental close of the film. The families are playing in a 'West Indian' communal cricketing event where the children face the bowling of Gary Sobers and Victor is initiated into the game. In this utopian gesture the children are batting with each other as black and white leave their territorial creases to cross and recross, scoring runs and building a personal partnership as they go. At the same time the street pulls together to build a new cricket net for the Samuels as a gesture of compensation and apology. However, when Dennis comes home and stands looking at his new net, at this moment of recompense each of the neighbours stands in their own garden, within their own domestic territory, while the Wisemans are

preparing to move to a better area in North London to be among more Jewish families and move up the social ladder. Although David and Victor and Dennis and Judy enjoy playing in the net, their families are soon to be socially and geographically divided again. As with each of these contextual examples, each worthy of much greater consideration than can be provided here, the crossing of boundaries is elective but transitory as everyone returns to their own familial setting. Cricket is used to contradict the racism of Englishness with a clear, moral agenda, without the unification of black and white, without their actual coming together as a mixed race nation or community.

The Crying Game

The Crying Game tells the story of Fergus (Stephen Rea), an IRA volunteer, who helps kidnap Jody (Forest Whitaker), a black British soldier in Ireland, then goes to London and falls in love with Dil (Jaye Davidson), a black transsexual hairdresser who was the girlfriend of the now deceased soldier. The film moves between Ireland and England, man and woman, black and white, as Jordan appears to establish boundary lines that may be crossed by his hybrid characters. Yet, 'amazed at how difficult it is to cross boundaries in this white, supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal society',¹⁵ bell hooks argues that Jordan's film does little more than rearticulate the commodification and exoticization of blackness, particularly feminized blackness, and that although it 'seduces by suggesting that crossing boundaries, accepting difference, can be pleasurable, it does not disrupt conventional representations of subordination and domination'.¹⁶ Her position, that Jordan implies but does not deliver transgression, has been supported in the critical writing of Handler, James and Zilliax while Hill remains insistent that Jordan's vision is one which disrupts binary oppositions and thereby

¹⁵ bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

creates in-between spaces and identities of transgressive hybridity.¹⁷ These issues of national, racial and gender boundary crossings are raised here through the film's interest in cricket. For cricket not only opens and closes the action but also provides the metaphor of the film's (in)famous gender-based 'googly' and the central unifying image of the black body in cricket whites, initially Jody and then later Dil. As the game which brings England and the Caribbean together and writes their interrelated significance onto a single black body, cricket's place in the film is clearly used to indicate the imperial context in which British identities are constructed and reconstructed, suggesting a triangulated paradigm of England, Ireland and Britain/Empire rather than the binary opposition of England/Ireland. Other commentators including Giles, Hill and Zilliax, have drawn brief attention to cricket in the film but have not developed a reading of its importance to the issues of boundary crossing nor have they mobilized the useful motif of the cricketing crease which seems to directly apply to the positions of Jody as a bowler and Fergus as his opposing batsman. Consequently, this is a task that should be undertaken. By highlighting the principle cricketing moments here it is hoped that this stimulus can act as a springboard from which a more detailed analysis could be developed in the future.

The initial Irish section of the film is punctuated with three key cricketing episodes – the first opens the film, the second enables Fergus and Jody to bond and the third ends in Jody's death. Hence, within the space of Ireland, cricket is used to start, develop and then end the narrative of the black British soldier away from home, both England and the Caribbean, in the only country where he is called 'nigger' to his face. In the

¹⁷ See, Kristin Handler, 'Sexing *The Crying Game*: Difference, Identity, Ethics', *Film Quarterly*, 47:3 (1994), 31-42; John Hill, 'Crossing the Water: hybridity and ethics in *The Crying Game*', *Textual Practice*, 12:1 (1998), 89-100; Joy James, 'Black Femmes Fatales and Sexual Abuse in Progressive "White" Cinema: Neil Jordan's *Mona Lisa* and *The Crying Game*', *Camera Obscura*, 36 (1995), 22- 48; and, Amy Zilliax, 'The Scorpion and the Frog: Agency and Identity in Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*', *Camera Obscura*, 35 (1995), 25-52

opening scene at the fairground the first line of the film is ‘And that’s cricket, hon’ as Jody throws hoops over targets in order to win Jude, his IRA trap, a large pink bear. His gesture of sporting prowess immediately stands out against his physical form as Forest Whitaker’s oversized and unathletic mass seems as unsuited to cricket as it would be to soldiering (just as his accent is as unsuited to Tottenham as it would be to Antigua). The reference to cricket also links his playful performance with the imperial politics of conquest and resistance as his connections to England and the Caribbean become evident. Then, when Jody is taken captive he begins to form a friendship with Fergus in a type of Stockholm syndrome scenario. As their bond develops they discuss pubs, women and sport, including their own national sports of cricket (for Jody) and hurling (for Fergus), with each man claiming his sport as ‘the best in the world’. That this episode was also part of *The Soldier’s Wife*, Jordan’s original script that he pitched to Channel Four in 1982, testifies to its significance to the construction of these opposing but analogous characters. However, where Fergus can praise hurling as part of his Irish loyalty, Jody’s relationship with cricket is more complex, indicative of his own hybrid identity as both English, in coming from Tottenham, and Caribbean, in having been born in Antigua. To Jody cricket is a ‘toff’s game’ in England, a game of white Englishman from which he is excluded on the basis of both his race and class. In contrast, he nostalgically recalls how in Antigua cricket was ‘the black man’s game’, free and open to everyone. It was there that Jody acquired his skill as a spin bowler, learning from his father how to bowl googlies from the age of five. Fergus sees a picture of Jody in his cricket whites and it is this image, of Jody in whites as a bowler, that later haunts him (see Appendix Five). When the time comes for Fergus to shoot Jody the soldier makes a run for it, teasing his friend and captor that he should be able to catch him if hurling is ‘faster’ than cricket. At the end of their boyish chase through the woods Jody is killed, hit by the British Saracen that was supposed to free him. That

is, Jody is killed not by the anti-colonial violence of the IRA but the militaristic imposition of the British army, those who form the basis of his British identity and its historical relation to cricket.

Steeped in guilt for his part in Jody's death, Fergus goes 'across the water' to seek out Dil. It is during this second phase of the film that Fergus develops his connection to cricket. In *The Soldier's Wife* the first shot of the Louis/Fergus character in England was to be him watching England play West Indies, watching the two sides of Jody's identity contesting the very game that unites them but bears no relation to Fergus' Irish identity.¹⁸ In *The Crying Game* though this is altered as the first shot in England is of Fergus on a building site smashing his way through a brick wall to reveal a scene of cricket on the other side. In both cases cricket is shorthand for England, for his arrival at the imperial centre, and places him the position of external observer. The alteration of the scene is significant, however, as it moves Fergus away from Jody and into a solely white space of sporting participation at a communal level rather than that of the nation. It also enacts an aggressive sense of release, the destruction of a walled boundary and a chance to rebuild what has fallen away. His engagement with the game increases later when he is seen on the same building site standing and practising batting strokes as Dil makes her way across the pitch. His taking up the bat is taking up a stance against the bowler, against Jody. Fergus experiences dreams of Jody emerging out of the darkness to bowl at him (see Appendix Five) and this image is reinforced when he sees Jody's cricketing picture and whites displayed in Dil's flat. Additionally, when Fergus is fellated by Dil his vision of Jody appears before him as a waking dream, mixing his feelings of guilt with those of sexual gratification as he seems to substitute Jody for Dil or Dil for Jody. This becomes the triangulated relationship, between

¹⁸ Jane Giles, *The Crying Game* (London: British Film Institute, 1997), 20.

Fergus, Dil and the absent-presence of Jody that structures the rest of the action (see Appendix Five) and can be expressed in terms of their cricketing positions.

The film positions Jody, an experienced black bowler, against Fergus, a new white batsman. As a bowler we can suggest that Jody must remain within the bounds of the crease that define his identity, that the bowler's ability to place himself on the front line of the crease, breaking the straight line while not exceeding its bounds, seems to be an accurate description of the manner in which his identity works. He alludes to his 'different' kind of relationship with Dil but does not reveal its homosexual content and remains tied to a territory of masculine safety in his image as a heterosexual soldier that causes him to be caught by Jude, the only real woman of the film. As the opposing batsman we can say that Fergus is seeking to defend himself and his wicket from that which Jody is bowling at him. What Jody is bowling is a googly, a spinning delivery that turns off the pitch in the opposite direction to that which the batsman would usually expect and so becomes dangerous. In the film itself, the googly Jody appears to bowl Fergus is personified in the figure of Dil, and it is pertinent that Fergus takes up an imaginary bat as she comes toward him across the cricket field. Her transsexual identity is the opposite of what Fergus had anticipated (but probably could have been 'picked' by expert eyes). When he sees the truth of her biological identity, it turns his homophobic stomach. It seems that Jody has succeeded in bowling Fergus a googly that upsets the very wicket of masculine self knowledge. Following this moment of revelation, Fergus imagines Jody for the last time, tossing a cricket ball up in the air, pleased at the success of his own deceptive delivery. After this encounter, Fergus draws back from any sexual encounter with Dil. He saves her life and insists on going to jail for her but he no longer risks leaving the heterosexual crease of gender safety. As he sits in his glass cell at the end of the film his isolation as an IRA prisoner would seem to

secure his sexuality, to enclose him within a glass cage of celibacy. Hence, he does not get past the glass wall in front of him to consummate his relationship with Dil.

In the triangulated relationship between Jody, Fergus and Dil, Dil is positioned as the 'googly', as the cricket ball, and operates as the negotiator between the men. When Fergus attempts to save her from the IRA he remakes her in Jody's image, cutting her hair and dressing her in his whites. She senses his desire for Jody, his desire to make her 'into him', and emerging from the darkness after escaping from the safety of her hotel room Dil becomes the reincarnated figure of her dead lover (see Appendix Five). The following morning she ties Fergus up and kills Jude in a manic rage of retribution for Jody as she discovers that Jude's female physiology had been the cause of his demise. Dil is the hybrid – in terms of nation, race and gender – and the remade image of the black cricketer when she takes on Jody's appearance. Her black body in cricketing whites upsets all expected notions of cricketing masculinity and heroism. It is Dil who moves between the creases more than either of the male characters, she represents the third position, the space 'in-between' the territories of black and white men, the space represented by the bridge of the opening shot and the story of the water crossing of the frog and the scorpion. She is the in-between figure, the one whose body is most mobile and manipulated but who reclaims their own sense of performativity and agency. In the closing prison scene Dil has reverted back to being herself in her typically bright and overly flamboyant presentation of femininity. She adopts the role of caring and dutiful wife, as a role, while ironically inverting the film's 'Stand by Your Man' finale. She is the character who transcends the *straight* white line while her male lovers, old and new, have been confined by it.

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