

World Cricket as a Postcolonial International Society: IR Meets the Sociology of Sport

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This paper brings together the English School literature, postcolonial approaches to culture, the historical sociology of sport, and IR's own tentative engagement with sport to argue that world cricket constitutes a *sui generis* postcolonial international society in the sporting sector. The international society tradition within IR has been criticized for its failure to take sufficient note of the history of imperialism, and contributions from postcolonial scholarship can provide a necessary corrective here. However, the adoption of cricket in colonial societies involved a complex mixture of acceptance of and resistance to elements of British imperial culture, as has been documented in the work of some historical sociologists of sport and of philosophers of cricket such as C.L.R. James and Ashis Nandy. Contemporary world cricket is an arena in which the former imperial centre and a number of postcolonial states compete with each other within a framework of quasi-legal provisions (the Laws of cricket), associated normative expectations ('The Spirit of Cricket'), and an international/transnational sporting organization (the International Cricket Council). The concept of a geographically (but not regionally) limited, historically specific, and sectoral international society therefore still has some purchase here. Cricket, like any sport, cannot be separated from the political world beyond the boundary, but there is also a sense in which it constitutes an autonomous sphere of activity. World cricket can thus be characterized as a sphere of non-violent sporting competition which may, perhaps, function as a source of international civility in relations between regions of the world influenced by British imperialism.

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Comments welcome

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‘In my own way, I would like to think that I carried my bat for the liberation of African and other oppressed people everywhere.’

Viv Richards, Foreword to H. Beckles and B. Stoddart, *Liberation cricket*

‘the sublime waste of an entire day on something with no redeeming purpose whatsoever’

Mike Marqusee, *Anyone but England*

1. Introduction

Recent years have seen an increasing number of attempts to cross existing disciplinary boundaries in the area where International Relations (IR) meets the study of sport. Academic publishers have launched series under the rubrics of ‘Sport in the Global Society’ (Cass/Routledge) and ‘Global Sport Cultures’ (Berg). Within IR itself, panels on sport have been organized at a number of recent conferences, and a volume on *Sport and International Relations*, edited by Roger Levermore and Adrian Budd, was published in 2004.¹ If one combs political science and IR journals carefully enough one will find further material on various forms of sport. To some extent, therefore, the ground for this paper has been prepared. Up until now, though, both at conferences and in publications, football (soccer) and (to a lesser extent) athletics have dominated proceedings. In Levermore and Budd’s volume cricket manages a grand total of six references in the index, which is the same number as Margaret Thatcher and just one more than each of Adolf Hitler and Karl Marx. There is, therefore, something of an imbalance to be redressed.² Cricket has been rather more prominent in the

¹ Roger Levermore and Adrian Budd (eds), *Sport and International Relations: An Emerging Relationship*, London & New York: Routledge, 2004. In their introduction to this volume, Levermore and Budd usefully document the (English-language) literature on sport and IR published between 1978 and 2002.

² I had not originally intended to include any explanation of cricket for readers unfamiliar with the game, assuming the paper would be read only by the initiated. However, I have received numerous requests from colleagues from less fortunate regions of the globe to explain how cricket works, and am able to offer them a succinct answer to the question ‘What is cricket?’ which has been provided for the last few years by *Wisden*:

Cricket is a game played by two teams, generally of 11 members each. In essence, it is single combat, in which an individual batsman does battle against an individual bowler, who has helpers known as fielders. The bowler propels the ball with a straight arm from one end of the 22-yard pitch in an attempt to dismiss the batsman by hitting a target known as the wicket at the other end, or by causing the batsman to hit the ball into the air into a fielder’s grasp, or by inducing one of a number of other indiscretions. The batsman attempts to defend the wicket with the bat and to score runs – the currency of the game – by striking the ball to the field boundary, or far enough from the fielders to allow the batsman to run to the other end of the pitch before the ball can be returned. At least two bowlers must take turns, from alternating ends; also, there are always two batsmen on the field, each to take a turn as required. When all but one of the batting team have been dismissed – or after an agreed period – the

growing literature on postcolonialism and IR, and this paper is in part an attempt to consolidate an emerging cross-fertilization between IR, postcolonial scholarship, and more conventional writing on the history, sociology, and philosophy of sport. Some narrowing of focus is involved here, since cricket is clearly not a global pursuit in the sense in which the adjective could be applied to football or athletics.³

In order to establish the framework within which this cross-fertilization might develop, I start from the concept of international society as employed by the English School (ES) of IR scholarship. In terms of IR's disciplinary history and sociology, the ES is rather a strange beast. For some scholars it seems to have acquired the status of plucky British, or at least non-American, competitor in the global IR theory steeplechase. At the same time, this tradition has been criticized for its failure to deal adequately with the phenomenon of imperialism in world history, and it is noticeable that even the contemporary advocates of a revival of the School have not sought to defend it very strongly against this particular charge. This weakness does indeed limit the general value of the ES approach. However, when we look at world cricket we find a discrete sphere of international sporting competition decisively shaped by the history of the British Empire and now functioning within a framework of quasi-legal provisions (the Laws of cricket), associated normative expectations ('The Spirit of Cricket'), and an international/transnational sporting organization (the International Cricket Council), all of whose full members were formerly part of that empire. The concept of a geographically (but not regionally) limited, historically specific, and sectoral international society therefore still has some purchase here. If we want to do justice to the imperial and post-imperial history that has shaped contemporary world cricket, we can turn to contributions to postcolonial scholarship with its examination of the interplay between imperial and local cultures and the hybrid cultural legacies left behind after the formal end of colonial rule. However, postcolonial scholarship is also to some degree unsatisfactory, partly because it has not in fact paid much attention to sport and partly because its focus on resistance to imperial culture is of only limited relevance to cricket. Although the use of cricket as an instrument of resistance was an important part of the history of the adoption of cricket in, for example, the West Indies

teams' roles are reversed. After all the players required to bat on both sides have done so either once or twice (which can take from a few hours to five days) the total number of runs accumulated determines the winner. But sometimes there isn't one.

Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 2007, ed. Matthew Engel (Alton: John Wisden & Co. Ltd., 2007), p. 1440. (No author identified for this contribution, but whoever wrote it deserves a medal.)

³ The term 'world cricket' is most frequently used to mean international cricket, as played by no more than nine or ten Test-playing countries (twelve for purposes of one-day internationals). However, the term is to some degree ambiguous, in the sense that cricket is also played and followed elsewhere; thus a match between expatriate West Indians living in the USA, or a game played in Italy between an English club side on tour and a local team (made up perhaps of expats plus some locals), will be governed by the same basic set of laws as an India v. Pakistan Test match.

and India, postcolonial theory struggles to explain adequately the enthusiasm with which cricket was adopted in parts of the empire (in other words, why *cricket?*), the fact that ex-colonies are still playing the game 40 or 50 years after independence, and the routinization of world cricket that we can observe in the early 21st century.

Help is at hand, though, in the sociology of sport and in cricket's own literature. Both of these fields cover a wide spectrum, and not all of the sociology of sport has given cricket the attention it deserves. Some of the more academic literature on cricket, particularly work on the history of 'the imperial game', and 'liberation cricket', is already indebted to work on colonial and postcolonial relationships. However, the rich literature of cricket also contains works that stand on their own as philosophies of the game and to which the distinction between academic and non-academic writing scarcely applies; I am thinking here in particular of classic works by C.L.R. James (from Trinidad) and Ashis Nandy (from India). This paper, like the larger project of which it is part, seeks to bring these diverse literatures together and to bring out their complementarities, their conflicting and contradictory elements and, where appropriate, the questions they leave unanswered. Section 2 provides an introductory account of the potential place of cricket within IR, with particular reference to the English School, and within postcolonial scholarship. Section 3 is the core of the paper, and introduces work from the historical sociology of sport and from cricket's own literature. This section incorporates a kind of intellectual history of writing about cricket, and sets up a four-way conversation between James's *Beyond a Boundary*, Nandy's *The Tao of Cricket*, more recent contributions from Caribbean and Indian writers, and what I call a social democratic philosophy of the game that can be identified within English cricket. In section 4 I move on to an (inevitably compressed) account of the current state of world cricket, looking at some of the crises and tensions that have affected the game in recent years and arguing that, despite these tensions, cricket has managed to preserve itself as a sphere of competition and civility within contemporary world politics.

It is conceivable that this argument could be applied to other forms of sport, but comparisons with other sports are not my major concern here. My main focus throughout is on the curious and specific cultural phenomenon of world cricket, rather than any general thesis about sport and politics, an evaluation of the English School, or any overall assessment of postcolonial theory as applied within IR.⁴ The paper argues that cricket matters (as Viv

⁴ Although I would not describe myself in general terms as a pragmatist, this way of proceeding seems to be consistent with the way in which some IR scholars have advocated or employed a pragmatist approach to world politics: scholarship starts from a particular issue or problem rather than from any preconceived theoretical position, and may draw on a range of intellectual traditions as it seeks to illuminate that issue. It should be clear, though, that I do not regard cricket as any kind of 'problem'.

Richards says), but it also suggests that it does not, in fact, matter a great deal (as Mike Marqusee says), and that this is one of the things that makes the game valuable.

2. Sport, international politics, and postcolonialism

Levermore and Budd's *Sport and International Relations*, while (as already noted) giving cricket pretty short shrift, is to a considerable extent structured around the contrast between sport's role in constructing and sustaining national loyalties, and hence a state-centred view of world politics, and other factors which tend to undermine state-centrism. These include the potential of sport as a vehicle for resistance, the role of non-state international sporting organizations, the significance of international regimes such as anti-doping measures, and the commercialization of sport as evidenced by sponsorship deals concluded with companies like Nike. Levermore and Budd themselves are troubled by sport's tendency to strengthen state-centrism, and see their own engagement with the subject as a potential way of challenging this tendency. Without wishing to dismiss this normative preference, I would like to proceed more cautiously by considering the relevance to world cricket of a small selection of social-scientific and IR concepts: international society, world society, and postcolonialism.

The basic ES definitions may be familiar, but they need to be recorded as a starting point. In his 1977 book *The Anarchical Society*, Hedley Bull proposed a distinction between an international system, in which states interact in a world of conflict without any shared interests, bound only by rules of prudence and expediency, and an international society, in which conflict is limited by the functioning of common rules and institutions.⁵ Bull's definition is as follows:

‘A *society of states* (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, forms a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.’⁶

Critics of the ES tradition and of the attempt to ‘reconvene’ it have argued that it is at heart realist, conceptually Eurocentric, and historically a product of late imperial ideology. Chris Brown argues that, in spite of appearances, there is no significant difference between

⁵ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977, especially chapter 2, ‘Does Order Exist in World Politics?’.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13, emphasis in original.

the ES and traditional realism.⁷ Edward Keene has reconstructed the tradition of thought on international society and argued that it has failed to distinguish between a European order based on sovereignty and toleration, and an extra-European order where sovereignty was frequently divided as colonial and imperial powers sought to bring the benefits of ‘civilization’ to non-European peoples.⁸ An equally forthright attack on the ‘reconvening’ project has come from William A. Callahan, who argues that the ES authors never challenged the rules of European imperialism, using ‘standards of civilisation’ to ‘differentiate between aristocratic member states of the club of International Society, and lower class colonies outside Europe’.⁹ Roland Bleiker argues that the School demonstrates a preference for a Western, masculine, and state-centric conception of order and never stops to ask itself whether disorder may in some circumstances be of value.¹⁰

As I have already explained, I am more concerned to see what use can be made of different intellectual traditions in the analysis of world cricket than to offer any judgement on the overall validity of those traditions. Nonetheless, the criticisms of the ES’s treatment of European colonialism seem to me to be generally well-founded. Paradoxically, however, this means that the School is more rather than less useful as a tool for the investigation of cricket, the ‘imperial game’. The contributions which have gone furthest in acknowledging the justice of the colonialism critique while remaining fundamentally loyal to the School are those by Jacinta O’Hagan and Barry Buzan. O’Hagan moves from her endorsement of the critique to the conclusion that we therefore need to engage with the question of inter-cultural dialogue and how it may be possible; this could be connected with sport, though O’Hagan does not make the connection herself.¹¹ Buzan’s revision of the tradition, in his 2004 book *From International to World Society?*, makes a direct contribution to the encounter between IR and sport, partly because of the conceptual reformulations it offers and partly because it uses sport on a number of occasions for purposes of illustration.

Although Buzan does not express himself as harshly as Keene, Callahan, or Bleiker, he endorses the central criticisms levelled at the ES for failing to address colonialism.¹²

⁷ Chris Brown, ‘World Society and the English School: An “International Society” Perspective on World Society’, *European Journal of International Relations* 7:4, 2001, pp. 423-441.

⁸ Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

⁹ William A. Callahan, ‘Nationalising International Theory: Race, Class and the English School’, *Global Society* 18:4, 2004, pp. 305-323, quotation from p. 305.

¹⁰ Roland Bleiker, ‘Order and Disorder in World Politics’, in Alex J. Bellamy (ed.), *International Society and its Critics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 179-192.

¹¹ Jacinta O’Hagan, ‘The Question of Culture’, in Bellamy, *International Society and its Critics*, op. cit., pp. 209-228.

¹² Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Another recent contribution to the ‘reconvening’

Buzan criticizes Bull and others for seeing decolonization as process that weakened international society by bringing a number of weak states into it, and says that the tradition as a whole fails to appreciate the ‘gigantic progressive step in twentieth-century international history’ represented by decolonization.¹³ He argues that world society has been neglected within ES writing, removes the distinction between international system and international society on the grounds that the social element is almost always present, and reformulates the idea of world society so that it excludes state actors but includes both transnational actors and individuals. Buzan arrives eventually at a pie-chart in which the original triad, International System – International Society – World Society, has been replaced by a division into three domains: Interstate Societies, Interhuman Societies, and Transnational Societies.¹⁴

The pragmatic value of Buzan’s argument for my own purposes can be illustrated by showing how sporting organizations and relationships fit into the slices of the neo-English School pie. In the interhuman societies segment of the pie, loyalty to national, religious, or civilizational identities can either be quite strongly geographically concentrated or more thinly spread across the globe, and fairly shallow we-feelings can give rise to global communities bringing together ‘the worldwide fandom of Manchester United or Elvis Presley’.¹⁵ In the third domain, transnational societies, Buzan locates a variety of non-state transnational actors: firms, interest groups, trade unions, environmentalists and anti-globalization networks, ‘the network of scholars interested in the English school’,¹⁶ and sporting networks such as FIFA (football) and FIDE, the International Chess Federation.

As my summary shows, Buzan’s brief but suggestive mentions of individual sporting loyalties and collective sporting bodies place them in the interhuman and transnational domains. Curiously, though, he makes no mention of the place of sport in the interstate domain. As Levermore and Budd point out (and deplore), it is international fixtures that set the tone of the sporting world and which are conventionally taken to represent the pinnacle of individual achievement and collective competitive excellence, thereby reenacting and strengthening national identities. International sport, though, is not anarchy: competition takes place in accordance with strictly laid down rules drawn up by bodies recognized as competent, and these rules are applied on the spot by neutral umpires or referees. Take away the umpires, and this looks like an international society with common rules and institutions.

project is Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, but these authors seem less willing to confront the full force of the objection.

¹³ Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, op. cit., p. 216.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 210.

Both Buzan and Nicholas Wheeler mention an analogy first used by C.A.W. Manning: ‘the ongoing diplomatic process is indeed like a game, and like any other game, it has to have its rules, and compliance with those rules.’¹⁷ And yet: international fixtures comprise only a tiny proportion of the total number of games of cricket (football, etc.) played worldwide in a given year. Even most fixtures between professional teams are not internationals. Buzan comes closest to systems theory’s idea of world society as a conglomeration of functional systems of coded communication when he mentions the phenomenon of transnational cooperation between sports clubs on standards or in the organization of competitions.¹⁸ Throughout the cricketing world, both amateur and professional players are adhering (or not) to the same set of laws, drawn up to be used in cricket matches and for no other purpose. And cricket followers who do not play can feed their addiction electronically, through radio, television, and the internet, thus participating in and sustaining an imagined community that is more than national, but something less than global.

The upshot of these considerations is that world cricket can in some respects be slotted quite nicely into the neo-English School project. Buzan does not want to abandon the term ‘international society’ altogether, and we can retain it in the sporting arena for cricket as a game played between representative national teams.¹⁹ In order to capture the sense in which world cricket is simultaneously a distinct social sphere for which interstate boundaries are of no great relevance, we can retain elements of systems theory. The concept of a geographically (but not regionally) limited, historically specific, and sectoral international society therefore still has some purchase here. One aspect, though, has not yet been satisfactorily accounted for, the fact that the group of states for which cricket is most significant is singled out not by geography, but by history – the history of British imperialism. Here again, though, the ES tradition is at least relevant. And even if the critics of the School are right when they say that

¹⁷ The quotation is from Manning’s *The Nature of International Society*, mentioned by Buzan in *ibid.*, p. 178, and quoted in full by Wheeler in *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 22.

¹⁸ Buzan, *From International to World Society?* *op cit.*, p. 126. For treatments of sport within systems theory, see Uwe Schimank, ‘Die Entwicklung des Sports zum gesellschaftlichen Teilsystem’, in Renate Mayntz, Bernd Rosewitz, Uwe Schimank, and Rudolf Stichweh (eds), *Differenzierung und Verselbständigung. Zur Entwicklung gesellschaftlicher Teilsysteme*, Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 1988, pp. 181-232, and Niklas Luhmann, ‘Ethik als Reflexionstheorie der Moral’, in *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik. Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft. Band 3*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989, pp. 358-447, comments on sport at pp. 431-3. Luhmann is the Mushtaq Ahmed of social theory – very difficult to read. For the presence of sport in a quite different sociological tradition, Pierre Bourdieu’s work, see Bourdieu’s *La distinction: Critique social du jugement*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979, especially pp. 231-246, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Cambridge: Polity, 1996 [1989], and ‘programme pour une sociologie du sport’, in *Choses dites*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1987, pp. 203-216. Cricket makes occasional appearances here as a consequence of Bourdieu’s interest in English public schools’ role in forming an imperial-military elite.

¹⁹ For Buzan’s retention of the terms ‘international society’ and ‘world society’ for specific purposes, see *From International to World Society?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-3.

the idea of an international society cannot escape from its European and Eurocentric origins, we need intellectual tools that will help us to address precisely these imperial aspects of the global history of cricket. The next step, therefore, is to build on this by introducing some ideas from postcolonial scholarship.

The intellectual project of postcolonial studies can be (briefly) summarized as the attempt to reintegrate the history of imperialism, and the analysis of cultural practices from the postcolonial era, into a range of disciplines in the humanities and, to some extent, the social sciences.²⁰ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin suggest a straightforward characterization of the field: ‘Post-colonialism (or often postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies.’²¹ For the era of formal colonialism, this often involves tracing the production of imperial knowledge via the explicit and implicit expressions of racial and cultural superiority located both in the obvious sources (e.g. the texts of imperial administrators and anthropologists) and in less obvious ones (fictional texts, especially the western literary canon). (The continuing literary concerns of much postcolonial scholarship reflect the fact that the field emerged to a considerable extent from the study of what used to be known as Commonwealth literature.) The cultural forms taken by anti-colonial resistance are also examined. For the era since formal independence, the analysis frequently looks at the ways in which authors and artists (theorists, novelists, film-makers) in the former colonies have addressed and explored the legacy of colonialism – the hybrid identities it left behind, the ambivalent feelings of those educated under colonial regimes towards the English language (or the French, but postcolonial scholarship is predominantly an Anglophone affair), and the forms taken by resistance in this new era.²²

Some direct quotations from practitioners may add flavour to my summary. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman put it as follows: ‘Colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theory are thus critiques of the process of production of knowledge about the Other. As such, they produce forms of knowledge themselves, but other knowledge, better knowledge it is hoped [...]’²³ For Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin the field is centrally concerned with the historical developments whereby ‘the immensely prestigious and powerful imperial culture

²⁰ This summary is designed to provide a basis on which the author, as a newcomer to the field, can proceed. It is not intended to tell specialists anything they do not already know.

²¹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge, 2000, p. 186.

²² Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, New York etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London & New York: Routledge, 1995; Padmini Mongia (ed.), *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, London etc.: Arnold, 1996.

²³ ‘Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: An Introduction’, in Williams and Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse*, op. cit., p. 8.

found itself appropriated in projects of counter-colonial resistance which drew upon the many different indigenous local and hybrid *processes* of self-determination to defy, erode and sometimes supplant the prodigious power of imperial cultural knowledge.’²⁴ By way of contrast, Padmini Mongia warns her readers against the very attempt to delineate postcolonial theory’s object of study, suggesting that it will be more fruitful to attend instead to ‘the powerful contending forces and disputes which swirl around the term and its uses’.²⁵

There is certainly no shortage of controversial issues within postcolonial studies. The field does have something like a canon of seminal texts, and has been extensively influenced by Frantz Fanon’s writings from the 1950s and 60s and by Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, first published in 1978.²⁶ *Orientalism*, with its central contention that ‘neither the term Orient nor the concept of the West has any ontological stability’, is often considered to mark the beginning of postcolonial theory proper (though the book itself does not contain the term ‘postcolonialism’), with writers such as Fanon classified as part of an earlier, anti-colonialist period.²⁷ The concept of hybridity, used to refer to ‘the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zones produced by colonization’, is ‘[o]ne of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory’ and can be traced back to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (who has the additional distinction of being IR’s literary theorist of choice).²⁸ Somewhat alarmingly for the neophyte, virtually all aspects of the field seem to be matters of dispute. Can former white dominions such as Canada and Australia be said to belong to the postcolonial world in the same way as a country like India? How do the Marxist tradition and poststructuralism relate to each other in the context of postcolonial debates, and does the western academy still exercise intellectual hegemony? Has postcolonial scholarship prioritized the cultural over the material? Was Said guilty of homogenizing ‘the West’, just as he accused others of homogenizing the Orient? Has the field fallen victim to the star system within American academia? How, indeed, does one *spell* the word, post-colonialism or postcolonialism?

It is not my intention to attempt to resolve these questions here. For my immediate purposes, the point to stress is that one would expect to find cricket, or even sport more

²⁴ ‘General Introduction’, in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, op. cit, p. 1.

²⁵ ‘Introduction’, in Mongia, *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, op. cit, p. 1.

²⁶ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, 2003 [1978].

²⁷ The quotation is Said’s own gloss from his Preface to the 2003 edition, p. xii.

²⁸ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, p. 118. In Bakhtin’s original use of the term, ‘hybridization’ is a ‘mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance’, which can be either a deliberate device within a novel (as used, for, example, by Dickens to expose hypocrisy) or an unintentional mode in the development of all languages. See Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel’, in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 259-422, quotation from p. 358.

generally, among the natural concerns of the academic literature on postcolonialism. An imperial cultural phenomenon, adopted and adapted by both white settlers and the colonized, and surviving after decolonization; cricket is surely an example of (post)colonial hybridity at its most.....well, hybrid. But if one did expect this, one would be wrong. The relevant readers resolutely overlook the subject, as do the seminal texts. This does not mean that a fine-tooth-comb search will not turn up occasional references to the game, but these are few and far between (for example, one or two references by Said to James and cricket). Fortunately, there are signs that postcolonial scholarship's neglect of sport is coming to an end, and also that IR's own engagement with postcolonial issues and, rather more surprisingly, with postmodernism, has begun to turn its attention to sport. John Bale and Mike Cronin's (2003) volume on *Sport and Postcolonialism* breaks new ground by seeking to extend the reach of postcolonial studies into the sporting sphere, and includes a number of references to cricket and a chapter by Jack Williams on racial tensions in England-Pakistan cricket matches.²⁹ Arjun Appadurai's influential (1996) essay, 'Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket', has been cited several times by IR authors writing about cultural globalization.³⁰ The contribution most worthy of mention within IR may be a 1989 essay by Michael Shapiro on the sport/war intertext, in which Shapiro cites James's *Beyond a Boundary* as an analysis of the relationship between sport and social and political life.³¹ And in Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair's volume on *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations*, Sankaran Krishna looks at the Test debut of the Guyana and West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul as part of an examination of national identity in a postcolonial setting.³²

The combination of cricket, IR, and postcolonialism is not, therefore, as outlandish as it might appear at first glance.

²⁹ John Bale and Mike Cronin (eds), *Sport and Postcolonialism*, Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003, including Jack Williams, "'Paki Cheats!': Postcolonial Tensions in England-Pakistan Cricket', pp. 91-105.

³⁰ Arjun Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket', in Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 89-113.

³¹ Michael J. Shapiro, 'Representing World Politics: The Sport/War Intertext', in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1989, pp. 69-96.

³² Sankaran Krishna, 'In one innings: National identity in postcolonial times', in Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair (eds), *Postcolonialism and International Relations: Reading race, gender and class*, London & New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 170-183.

3. On the history, sociology, and philosophy of cricket

The seminal literature on the historical sociology of sport does not deal very centrally with cricket, but it does contain a number of themes that have been taken up and debated in more detailed work on the history of the game. Writing in the 1930s, the Dutch historian and anthropologist Johan Huizinga argued that the element of play had declined within contemporary culture and that sport had become increasingly professionalized, serious, and subject to restraint.³³ Norbert Elias and his student and later collaborator Eric Dunning argued, partly in response to Huizinga, that a more careful reconstruction of modern sports was needed. In Elias and Dunning's view, these first developed in England during the eighteenth century. These forms of sport were much more rule-governed and restrained than earlier, more violent versions, and this process was itself related to the pacification and parliamentarization of British political life in that period. As political life entered a phase in which two upper-class factions, Whigs and Tories, got used to the idea of the peaceful handover of government to their political opponents, so these landowners increasingly occupied themselves with the organization of non-violent sporting contests on their estates. These contests required the disciplining of existing 'folk games', and so restraint increased without the elimination of the element of play.³⁴ As Elias puts it: 'The "parliamentarization" of the landed classes of England had its counterpart in the "sportization" of their pastimes.'³⁵ In other words, modern sport was inconceivable without increasing self-restraint, which was itself part of a more general civilizing process.³⁶ As far as sport is concerned, the problem to be addressed is why human beings need such activities. Elias's historical sociology provides an account of the ways in which West European states (principally Britain, France and Germany) developed: 'changing from feudal through dynastic to nation-state forms, these societies grew increasingly pacified internally whilst engaging in increasingly violent and

³³ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens. Vom Ursprung der Kultur im Spiel*, Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1956 [originally published in Dutch 1938].

³⁴ See in particular Eric Dunning (ed.), *The Sociology of Sport: A Selection of Readings*, London: Frank Cass, 1971; Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986. The most important of Elias's essays in these volumes are 'The Genesis of Sport as a Sociological Problem', in *The Sociology of Sport*, and 'Introduction' and 'An Essay on Sport and Violence', in *Quest for Excitement*. For later contributions by Dunning, see: 'Sport in Space and Time: "Civilizing Processes"', *Trajectories of State-Formation and the Development of Modern Sport*, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29:4, 1994, pp. 331-344, *Sport Matters: Sociological studies of sport, violence and civilisation*, London & New York: Routledge, 1999, and Eric Dunning and Chris Rojek (eds), *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter-Critique*, London and Toronto: Macmillan and University of Toronto Press, 1992.

³⁵ Elias, 'Introduction', op. cit., p. 34.

³⁶ Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, Volume 1: *Wandlungen des Verhaltens in den weltlichen Oberschichten des Abendlandes*, Volume 2: *Wandlung der Gesellschaft. Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977, and *The Court Society*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

destructive warfare with each other.³⁷ As internal pacification proceeded, increasingly regulated forms of sport continued to arouse pleasurable emotions in both players and spectators without exposing them to the physical dangers involved in earlier pastimes:

Sport is, in fact, one of the great social inventions which human beings have made without planning to make them. It offers people the liberating excitement of a struggle involving physical exertion and skill while limiting to a minimum the chance that anyone will get seriously hurt in its course.³⁸

The most fundamental challenge to Elias and Dunning published during recent years has come from the Canadian feminist sociologist, Varda Burstyn, whose book *The Rites of Men* is an analysis of sport as, in the words of Michael Kaufmann and Michael Messner in the Foreword, the ‘great masculine secular religion of our era’.³⁹ Burstyn criticizes hypermasculinity, commercialization, and commodification in modern sport, and says: ‘I do not agree with those, such as Eric Dunning, who see in sport primarily a “civilising” impulse that “contains” physical violence. Rather, I see in the sport that emerged from the nineteenth century a *rationalization* of violence. And this is not the same as its attenuation.’⁴⁰ For my own immediate purposes, the main problem is that Elias and Dunning do not say much about cricket, and do not go into much detail about the way in which English and/or British sports later fanned out across the world. (Burstyn mentions this, but her main focus is on North American sports.) Subsequent scholarship has, nevertheless, developed Elias’s and Dunning’s argument about the restraint of violence as an important part of the standardization of cricket’s laws. This provides a corrective to the idea of early cricket as a peaceful rural idyll.⁴¹ The work that has extended Elias and Dunning’s approach most effectively in recent years, and has also done something to compensate for their neglect of cricket, is Joseph Maguire’s

³⁷ Dunning, *Sport Matters*, op cit., p. 40.

³⁸ Elias, ‘An Essay on Sport and Violence’, op. cit., p. 165. Dunning is at pains to point out that neither he nor Elias sees the civilizing process as having reached any kind of final destination in the contemporary West. The future remains uncertain, and later generations of historians may see us as no better than ‘late barbarians’ (Dunning in *Sport Matters*, p. 43, quoting from Elias’s 1991 book *The Society of Individuals*).

³⁹ Varda Burstyn, *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport*, Toronto etc.: University of Toronto Press, 1999, quotation from p. xi; see also John Harris and Barbara Humberstone, ‘Sport, gender and international relations’, in Levermore and Budd, *Sport and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 48-61, which has affinities with Burstyn’s work but does not cite it.

⁴⁰ Burstyn, *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴¹ See, for example, the exchange between Stokvis and Malcolm on violence in early cricket: Ruud Stokvis, ‘Sports and Civilization: Is Violence the Central problem?’, in Dunning and Rojek, *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, op. cit., pp. 121-136, and Dominic Malcolm, ‘Cricket and Civilizing Processes: A Response to Stokvis’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37:1, 2002, pp. 37-57. For general histories of English cricket, see Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, London: Aurum Press, 1999, and David Underdown, *Start of Play: Cricket and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, London: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 2000.

Global Sport.⁴² Maguire brings together Elias's sociology and the work of globalization theorists in order to analyse the 'sportization of the planet'.⁴³ He identifies ways in which originally western sports spread to the rest of the world, eventually becoming indigenized and hybridized as they did so, and notes that the idea of 'commingling' between western and non-western cultures was already present in Elias's work. One way in which this can now be observed, argues Maguire, is in the growth of oriental sporting influences in western societies. Maguire is, on this basis, able to integrate cricket more effectively into his analysis.

Even Maguire, though, does not examine the detailed history of how what Brian Stoddart and Keith Sandiford have called 'the imperial game' followed British colonizers (the army and navy, imperial educators and administrators, sugar plantation owners in the Caribbean) around the world.⁴⁴ The complexity of this history, and the different ways in which the game was adopted in different contexts, make any attempt at summary foolhardy.⁴⁵ There is also material on the reasons why cricket failed to take root in other parts of the empire.⁴⁶ In very general terms, one can say that while the imperial elite tried to educate some of their colonial subjects in the perceived virtues of cricket as a way of fostering a local elite and consolidating ties with Britain, they did not regard the majority of the (darker-skinned) colonized as worthy of such instruction or likely to be able to appreciate the finer points. All the more surprising, therefore, that large numbers of the colonized should have found that they rather liked the game. How much of this was acceptance of imperial values, and how much an attempt to subvert them by exploiting cricket as a way of, in an image that recurs throughout the literature, beating the colonial master at his own game?

I want to try to address this question by looking more closely at two works by (post)colonial authors which do not belong to the straightforwardly historical or sociological literature but can be seen, without much exaggeration, as philosophies of cricket in their own

⁴² Joseph Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Brian Stoddart and Keith A.P. Sandiford (eds), *The imperial game: Cricket, culture and society*, Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1998.

⁴⁵ Stoddart and Sandiford, *The imperial game*, op. cit.; Richard Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony and Indigenous Subversion?', in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, London: Frank Cass, 1988, pp. 258-272; J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, London etc.: Frank Cass, 2nd edition 1998; Michael Manley with Donna Symmonds, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, André Deutsch, London, Revised edition 2002; Hilary McD. Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: Vol. 1 – The Age of Nationalism, Vol. 2 – The Age of Globalization*, The Press, University of the West Indies/Pluto Press, Kingston & London 1998; Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket*, London: André Deutsch, Revised edition 2002; Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, London: Picador, 2003; Chris Harte with Bernard Whimpress, *A History of Australian Cricket*, London: André Deutsch, 2003; Bruce Murray and Christopher Merrett, *Caught Behind: Race and Politics in Springbok Cricket*, Johannesburg & Scottsville: Wits University Press/University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004.

⁴⁶ Jason Kaufman and Orlando Patterson, 'Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket', *American Sociological Review* 70:1, 2005, pp. 82-110.

right. C.L.R. James (1901-1989), Trinidadian novelist, historian, cricket correspondent, and general (Marxist) political intellectual, published *Beyond a Boundary* (the last of his major works to appear in his lifetime) in 1963.⁴⁷ The Indian scholar Ashis Nandy (b. 1937), probably best characterized as a political psychologist, published *The Tao of Cricket* in 1989 and has also written on development, colonial and postcolonial India, racism, science, Indian popular cinema, the philosophy of history, and just about every combination of these subjects.⁴⁸ Since both James and Nandy are prolific authors, there are interesting debates to be conducted about the place of their writings on cricket within their work as a whole; for the time being, though, I shall concentrate on the main tenets of their philosophies of cricket, the similarities between them, and some tensions that arise within these philosophies.

One of the reasons why James's *Beyond a Boundary* occupies such a central place in the literature of the game is that it was written at precisely the time when the individual Caribbean states, which already played Test cricket as a unit, were on the way to becoming independent and being recognized, at least formally, as the political equals of the former imperial centre. The book is a mixture of autobiography, beautifully written pen-portraits of the cricketers of James's time, social history, and political manifesto for an independent Caribbean. James's prefatory question, 'What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?', has become part of the intellectual folklore of the game. What James does in *Beyond a Boundary* is to relate the story of a middle-class Trinidad childhood governed by Puritanism, English and classical literature, and cricket's code of fair play, and to connect this with the author's gradual realization that entering the sporting arena did not mean leaving everyday existence behind. As James expounds the cricket ethic in the book's early chapters,

⁴⁷ C.L.R. James: *Beyond a Boundary*, London etc.: Stanley Paul, 1986 [1963]; *Cricket*, London: Allison & Busby, 1986; *The C.L.R. James Reader*, Edited and Introduced by Anna Grimshaw, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992; *Minty Alley*, London & Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1971 [first published 1936]; *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, New York: Vintage Books, second, revised edition 1963 [first published 1938]; *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1995 [1938, 1969]; *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The story of Herman Melville and the world we live in*, London & New York: Allison & Busby, 1985 [1953]; *American Civilization*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993. For biographies of James, see Paul Buhle, *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary*, London & New York: Verso, 1988, and Farrukh Dhondy, *CLR James: Cricket, the Caribbean, and World Revolution*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2001.

⁴⁸ Ashis Nandy: *The Tao of Cricket: On games of destiny and the destiny of games*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1989]; *Bonfire of Creeds: The Essential Ashis Nandy*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004; *At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980; *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983; *Traditions, Tyranny, and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987; (with Merryl Wyn Davies and Ziauddin Sardar) *Barbaric Others: A Manifesto on Western Racism*, London & Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press, 1993; 'History's Forgotten Doubles', *History and Theory* Theme Issue 34, 1995, pp. 44-66; (ed.) *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema*, London: Zed Books, 1998; 'The invisible holocaust and the journey as an exodus: the poisoned village and the stranger city', *Postcolonial Studies* 2:3, 1999, pp. 305-329; 'The Beautiful, Expanding Future of Poverty: Popular Economics as a Psychological Defense', *International Studies Review* 4:2, 2002, pp. 107-121.

he seems to confirm Elias's characterization of sport as self-restraint: 'Along with restraint, not so much externally as in internal inhibitions, we learnt loyalty.'⁴⁹ The fast bowler George John explains to James that there is no point getting angry about a dropped catch: "'No," he continued, "you have to forget it at once, for if you don't it will stay inside and upset your bowling for the rest of the day."⁵⁰ This restraint was largely inculcated in the form of 'the public-school code' – accepting the umpire's decision, subordinating one's own interests to those of the team, and learning not to complain about bad luck.

It nevertheless became clear to James in the 1920s that racism was influencing the selection of West Indies representative sides, and he gradually woke up to the idea of political independence for the West Indies. In 1958, returning to Trinidad after extended stays in Britain and the USA, James began to campaign for the appointment of Frank Worrell, a black player, as West Indies captain; traditionally, the side had been captained by a white West Indian who was in some cases hardly worth his place in the side. When Worrell was appointed captain for the 1960-61 tour of Australia, James felt that justice had been done. Commenting in the book's Epilogue on the events at the end of that tour, when a quarter of a million people lined the streets of Melbourne to see the tourists off, he wrote: 'Clearing their way with bat and ball, West Indians at that moment had made a public entry into the comity of nations.'⁵¹ 'The comity of nations': a touch old-fashioned even in 1963, perhaps, but not a bad gloss on 'international society' and on the achievement of equality that James felt these events represented.

A further major theme of *Beyond a Boundary* is James's contention that cricket is a form of art. He argues: 'Cricket is first and foremost a dramatic spectacle. It belongs with the theatre, ballet, opera and the dance.'⁵² This is supported by references to Greek drama, with its confrontations between individuals representing different sides in a conflict, and to the relationship between individual event and total spectacle. In visual terms, says James, cricket's quality of style – on the part of batsman, bowler, or fielder – gives it as much right as sculpture to claim the status of fine art. This has prompted some sharp responses from, among others, Derek Birley, who argues that the intrusion of aesthetics into cricket is a category mistake: 'making ducks beautifully is not what cricket is about', though the chief perpetrator

⁴⁹ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 50.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 252. For an account of the Brisbane Test of this series, the first tied Test, see one of the best cricket books: J.H. Fingleton, *The Greatest Test of All*, London: Collins, 1961.

⁵² James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op cit, p. 192.

of this misconception is, in Birley's view, Neville Cardus rather than James.⁵³ Cardus and James have received support from an unexpected quarter, in the shape of Pierre Bourdieu's suggested analogy between a sport with its rules (and particular matches) and a musical work with its score (and particular performances).⁵⁴ However, as Birley points out, any generalized analogy on these lines will not work because innovation, i.e. breaking the existing rules, will often be valued in art, whereas the rules prevailing at any given moment in sport must be obeyed if the athlete's performance is to be worthwhile.

Even so, there are other grounds on which James's view might be defended. When he portrays cricketers as artists, James does so in, as Caryl Phillips once put it, 'prose of unparalleled precision and grace'.⁵⁵ Look at, for example, the 1938 retirement tribute to Frank Woolley, a 'supreme artist', first published in the *Glasgow Herald*.⁵⁶ Anyone who writes about cricket as well as James does is entitled to a bit of conceptual leeway. And Andrew Smith has defended James, convincingly I think, by arguing that his ultimate position on cricket is to conceptualize the game as an autonomous (though threatened) field of social activity, in much the same way as Bourdieu conceptualized and defended the idea of art as an autonomous sphere.⁵⁷ Note, though, that this is still an analogy rather than an argument that sport and art form a single field.

Nandy's *The Tao of Cricket* is less well known among cricket followers than *Beyond a Boundary*, though some of its admirers might argue that it deserves to be just as famous. The opening sentence of Nandy's first chapter is already pretty widely known, even if the rest of the book's argument is not: 'Cricket is an Indian game accidentally discovered by the English.'⁵⁸ On the basis of this sentence alone, Nandy has no reason to fear the comparison with James and with 'What do they know....?'.⁵⁹

The book not only provides another perspective on the spread of cricket throughout the British Empire but is also itself a kind of exposition of cricket as a mythic pursuit. In his preface, Nandy says: 'I have been guided by the belief that some arguments about colonial, neo-colonial, anti-colonial and post-colonial consciousness can be made better in the language

⁵³ Derek Birley, 'Cardus and the Aesthetic Fallacy', in *The Willow Wand: Some Cricket Myths Explored*, London: Aurum Press, 2000, pp. 195-208, quotation from p. 201.

⁵⁴ Bourdieu, 'programme pour une sociologie du sport', op. cit., on this point p. 211.

⁵⁵ Phillips is quoted on the front cover of the 1986 edition of James, *Cricket*, op. cit.

⁵⁶ 'Cricket is Losing a Supreme Artist', in *ibid.*, pp. 64-68.

⁵⁷ Andrew Smith, "'Beyond a Boundary'" (of a "Field of Cultural Production"): Reading C.L.R. James with Bourdieu', *Theory, Culture & Society* 23:4, 2006, pp. 95-112.

⁵⁸ Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, op. cit., p. 1.

⁵⁹ The definition of 'Tao' I find in my dictionary (*Chambers*) is as follows: '(in Taoism) the absolute entity which is the source of all existence and change; (in Confucianism and some other philosophies) the way to be followed, right and proper conduct.' It is presumably the second of these meanings that Nandy has in mind, though he never actually explains.

of international cricket than that of political economy.’⁶⁰ Nandy’s philosophy of cricket can be summed up by saying that he is equally critical of the damage caused by imperialist myth-making, which he illustrates with the help of psychological studies of Jardine and Ranjitsinhji, and of the commercialized postcolonial nationalism which, he argues, increasingly afflicted Indian (and world) cricket during the 1990s.⁶¹ At the core of the book is a distinction between traditional or non-modern and modern cricket. Nandy explains that he uses the term ‘non-modern’ in a cultural rather than a historical sense, to mean a form of cricket that is not in thrall to rational organization, competition, and marketability, and which is therefore by its very nature a kind of critique of modernity and industrialization. ‘[T]raditional English cricket’ reflected earlier social hierarchies but was also an unwitting criticism of values associated with modern industrialism; ‘modern cricket’ endorses or endorsed urban-industrial managerial culture and criticizes pre-industrial values; ‘imported cricket’ was the version exported by British imperialism to non-western societies, but which was then reconstructed by those societies to bring out its latent functions and serve as a critique of capitalism, colonialism, and modernity; and ‘new cricket’, which is what we can currently observe, is closely identified with the industrial-managerial ethos and so endorses the ruling culture of the contemporary world.⁶² It is from this basic idea that Nandy’s arguments about the affinity between cricket and aspects of Indian culture, and his strong views about what is undesirable in the contemporary game, emerge. There are affinities with James, whose work Nandy acknowledges at several points, and the argument is perhaps best understood as an updated and strongly stated version of Huizinga’s position: ‘play’ is being excluded from contemporary cricket, and with it all the game’s traditional virtues. Indeed, that should really read ‘has been excluded’; Nandy thinks the rot has gone so far that the game probably cannot be saved.

Nandy characterizes traditional cricket at one point as ‘pagan’. It involved a sense of fun, together with ‘under-socialized, non-productive action,a dependence on the elements’.⁶³ The Victorians sought to Christianize this pursuit and turn it into a sternly improving way of passing the time. Abstracted from this historical context, the components of traditional cricket valued by Nandy are more or less the same as those any traditionalist would swear by: play for the sake of play, courtesy to opponents, adherence to the uncodified

⁶⁰ Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, op. cit., p. vi.

⁶¹ On the 1990s, see the Preface to the 2000 edition of *The Tao of Cricket* (pp. xi-xxii), which must have been written just before the most devastating details about match-fixing in international cricket began to emerge in the middle of that year.

⁶² This summary follows very closely Nandy’s own, in the Preface to *The Tao of Cricket*, op cit, p. viii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

conventions known as the ‘spirit of the game’, and the eschewal of any idea that the goal is to win at all costs. Nandy adds to these an aspect captured by use of the word ‘destiny’ in his subtitle: the recognition that cricket is as much a game of fate as one of skill. The game is fundamentally unpredictable, he points out, and in many areas of it a given player’s skill can do little to affect the workings of chance – the state of the pitch, winning or losing the toss, a catch taken by a usually poor fielder or dropped by a usually good one, the umpires’ decisions: ‘It is a game of chance and skill which has to be played as if it was wholly a game of skill.’⁶⁴ (This emphasis on chance is one of the ways in which Nandy introduces a further argument to the effect that certain affinities between cricket and Indian civilization made it easier for the game to take root in India.) Nandy does not explicitly connect sport with art, but if one places *The Tao of Cricket* alongside his work on popular Indian cinema a parallel can be identified in the argument that this form of popular culture also has the capacity to resist modern civilization.⁶⁵

James’s and Nandy’s philosophies of cricket have a good deal in common. Each of them acknowledges the partial cultural success of British colonialism in spreading the imperial game, but they also show that the colonized and/or formerly enslaved subjects of the empire were able to appropriate it, to attach their own meanings to it, and to turn its implicitly utopian message of equality and fair play to their advantage. Here is Nandy again, temporarily adopting a biblical idiom: ‘To become cricket, a game must keep open the possibility of the meek inheriting the earth.’⁶⁶ Mark Kingwell, in an excellent comparative essay on James and Nandy, has summed up the common element in their philosophies: ‘the *culture of civility* embedded in cricket provides it with radical political possibilities missing in other team sports.’⁶⁷ The best way of beating the British, therefore, was not a determination to win at all costs but the maintenance of the values the colonizers themselves professed but only occasionally lived up to.

Although *Beyond a Boundary* continues to enjoy a reputation as the foremost historical-philosophical work in cricket’s literature, the book has come in for its share of criticism. As long ago as 1969, Orlando Patterson argued (without actually mentioning James) that for all the apparent West Indian love of cricket, ‘it is the game, deep down, which we

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁵ Nandy, *The Secret Politics of Our Desires*, op. cit. Nandy also comments at one point that ‘Cricket is a religion in South Asia’ (*The Tao of Cricket*, p. xvi), which seems to be intended as a sociological observation rather than a positive or negative judgment.

⁶⁶ Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, op. cit., p. 35.

⁶⁷ Mark Kingwell, ‘Keeping a Straight Bat: Cricket, Civility, and Postcolonialism’, in Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (eds), *C.L.R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, pp. 359-387, quotation from p. 362, emphasis in original.

must hate – the game of the master’.⁶⁸ Birley, whom we have already encountered as a critic of James’s views on cricket and art, accuses James of being naive about the strength of the antagonisms created by imperialism, even when these appear to have been contained by a code of sporting behaviour. He argues that James’s social history ‘explains how important to black people winning a cricket match against white people can be for reasons only incidentally connected with cricket’, while his faith in the ‘exalted philosophy he associates with the public-school tradition of cricket’ means that he cannot grasp the full social implications of his analysis.⁶⁹ From an explicitly postcolonial perspective, Helen Tiffin argues that *Beyond a Boundary* (unlike James’s fiction and historical work) never engages adequately with the problem of how to express dissent in a cultural form taken from the imperial overlord, and remains in thrall to an English cricketing ideal.⁷⁰

James can, I think, be defended against these charges – at least in the sense that, even if there are tensions within *Beyond a Boundary*, the author is aware of most of them.⁷¹ Patterson’s and Tiffin’s arguments amount to an accusation of false consciousness directed at cricket enthusiasts, but they hardly explain how so many people could have come to delude themselves so thoroughly. Tiffin’s essay, by a leading postcolonial scholar, may help to explain why *Beyond a Boundary* has never made it into the postcolonial canon. But there is a sense in which Tiffin simply misses the point. Assuming that the only legitimate (post)colonial response to imperial culture is resistance, she finds fault with James (and by implication with many others) for not resisting vigorously enough. This does not get us very far if what we are primarily interested in is cricket. Birley’s objection may have more force, and it could well be that James was reluctant to acknowledge the full force of the antagonisms that can become focused around cricket matches. Subsequent historians and analysts of West Indies cricket have continued to explore the tensions, and have encountered their own difficulties as they have followed the story into the prolonged period during which the West Indies were the uncrowned kings of world cricket (c. 1976 to the early-to-mid 1990s), and then on into a period of steep decline (c. 1995 to the present day).

⁶⁸ Orlando Patterson, ‘The ritual of cricket’, in Hilary McD. Beckles and Brian Stoddart (eds), *Liberation cricket: West Indies cricket culture*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995 (this essay first published 1969), pp. 141-147, quotation from p. 144.

⁶⁹ Derek Birley, ‘Beyond the Boundary in the West Indies’, in *The Willow Wand*, op. cit., pp. 169-183, quotation from p. 183.

⁷⁰ Helen Tiffin, ‘Cricket, literature and the politics of de-colonisation: the case of C.L.R. James’, in Beckles and Stoddart, *Liberation cricket*, op. cit., pp. 356-369 (this essay first published in 1981).

⁷¹ See Smith, ‘“Beyond a Boundary”’, op. cit. Mike Brearley, in his Foreword to the 1986 edition of *Beyond a Boundary*, writes: ‘One hidden agenda of the book is, I suspect, James’s intense desire to refute the denigration of his life-long love – cricket – at the hands of many literary and political colleagues.’ (p. 11)

Hilary Beckles introduces a significant corrective when he argues that James ‘overstated the impact of the Graeco-Roman literary and theatrical tradition upon West Indies cricket’, and redirects attention towards its ‘African and Asian social cosmology’.⁷² Other authors have argued on similar lines, exploring the element of carnivalistic participation by West Indian spectators and hence establishing a direct connection with Bakhtin’s literary and cultural theory.⁷³ Beckles captures the tension within the Jamesian account when he speaks of ‘a dichotomous political history of intense ethnic contention and the nonviolent search for an idyllic area of social life’.⁷⁴ He goes on to document the contribution of an explicitly anticolonial, nation-building ideology to the West Indies’ success in the 1970s and 80s, and also to Viv Richards’s sometimes fractious relations with elite Caribbean society.⁷⁵ More problematically, Beckles sees his intellectual task in the era of West Indies cricketing decline as the restoration of ‘world supremacy’, a term he introduces without any discernible ironic intent.⁷⁶ Beckles falls victim here to a combination of sporting naivety and distorted priorities, but he is not alone. West Indian dominance of international cricket up until the mid-1990s lured both social theorists and historians like Beckles into some rather foolish statements and predictions. Appadurai’s 1996 ‘Playing with Modernity’ essay contained a mildly chauvinistic hostage to fortune in the assessment that ‘the black and brown former colonies now dominate world cricket’.⁷⁷ The introductory summary in Beckles and Stoddart’s 1995 *Liberation cricket* included the statement that: ‘Their [West Indies cricketers’] hegemony has proved durable and shows no serious signs of being overturned.’⁷⁸ These assertions were published just as the West Indies were going into decline and a decade (at least) of Australian domination of world cricket, with only occasional hiccups, was beginning. In general, if one is interested in who is on top and who is not, it is advisable to wait until cricket matches are over before writing about them.⁷⁹

Nandy, as we have seen, insists that winning does not matter very much. His critique of postcolonial nationalism and excessive competitiveness places him in opposition to

⁷² Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. xix.

⁷³ Sylvia Wynter, ‘In Quest of Matthew Bondman: Some Cultural Notes on the Jamesian Journey’, in Paul Buhle (ed.), *C.L.R. James: His Life and Work*, London & New York: Allison & Busby, 1986, pp. 131-145, and Richard D.E. Burton, ‘Cricket, carnival and street culture in the Caribbean’, in Beckles and Stoddart, *Liberation cricket*, op. cit., pp. 89-106.

⁷⁴ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 4.

⁷⁵ See in particular chapter 4, ‘Political Ideology and Anticolonialism’, in *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, Vol. 2, op. cit., p. 125.

⁷⁷ Appadurai, ‘Playing with Modernity’, op. cit., p. 107.

⁷⁸ Beckles and Stoddart, *Liberation cricket*, summary appearing under the names of the series editors, Stephen Wagg and John Williams. However, the series editors presumably consulted Beckles and Stoddart before writing this.

⁷⁹ English cricket writers received what one hopes was a salutary lesson on this point during the catastrophic (from the English point of view) 2006-7 Ashes series in Australia.

significant elements of Beckles's analysis, at least when Beckles is in 'world supremacy' mode. Nandy's most trenchant criticism comes when he writes about short-pitched fast bowling and accuses Richards of having internalized 'the white man's concepts of hardness and success' in his defence of the practice.⁸⁰ (Hence some interesting affinities between Nandy's philosophy and Burstyn's feminist critique of modern sport.⁸¹) In fact, Beckles knows – at least some of the time – that notions of 'world supremacy' in cricket are part of the problem, not the solution. In an appendix to his history, Beckles puts into Michael Manley's mouth a sentiment which, it appears from the context, must have been a topic the two authors discussed in the later years of Manley's life: 'I oftentimes asked myself whether we have asked too much of cricket, and whether it is time for us to let it go free to find a level and place outside of our extraordinary social expectation.'⁸² Clearly, Manley and Beckles are right to pose this question. We know *why* cricket has been so important to so many West Indians (though presumably not to all of them), and no cricket follower with access to the works of James, Manley, and Beckles has any excuse for not being aware of this. But the era of West Indies decline requires a different idiom for writing about the inevitable ebb and flow of sporting fortune.⁸³

The Tao of Cricket's place within Indian cricket writing is less central than that of *Beyond a Boundary* for West Indians, in the sense that although younger Indian authors may refer to Nandy they do not seem to feel they are writing in the shadow of a canonical work. Some historical accounts have found more to criticize than Nandy in early Indian cricket. Ramachandra Guha's history of the game in Bombay, which was under the British organized on communal lines (Europeans, Parsis, Hindus, and Muslims), shows the Indians in their distinct communities to have been at times just as capable as the British of a selective attitude to the idea of fair play. Too much of India's domestic cricket culture, argues Guha, has been a matter of 'riots minus the stabbing': "'Communal cricket'" was moulded as much by Hindu caste prejudice as by Parsi social snobbery, by Muslim cultural insularity and by British racial

⁸⁰ Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, op. cit., pp. 119-120. For Nandy's criticism of Fanon, on very similar lines, see *Bonfire of Creeds*, op. cit., pp. 451-2.

⁸¹ Nandy appears to have been the originator of the concept of 'hypermasculinity', as used by Burstyn but not credited to him; he originally used it in connection with aspects of British rule in India. See Nandy's 'The Psychology of Colonialism: Sex, Age and Ideology in British India', in *The Intimate Enemy*, op. cit., pp. 1-63.

⁸² Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket, Vol. 2*, op. cit., p. 153. This comes from an inventive and moving imagined three-way conversation between James, Manley, and Beckles published by the latter as a tribute to Manley after his death in 1997.

⁸³ I cannot go into this in detail here, but see the irreverent work of the Trinidadian cricket writer B.C. Pires. For example: 'Coping with Defeat', in Ramachandra Guha (ed.), *The Picador Book of Cricket*, London: Picador, 2001, pp. 419-423.

superiority.’⁸⁴ Manu Joseph questions the ‘Indianness’ of cricket, arguing that the game has largely been imposed by the social elite, but he implicitly endorses Nandy’s critique of cricketing nationalism.⁸⁵ Guha and others share Nandy’s worries about a number of current developments: Indian spectators abandoning civility and resorting to chauvinism as they prefer one-day matches to longer forms of the game; spectators following televised cricket in an enthusiastic but increasingly superficial way; the commercialization that has seen the emergence of a small elite of super-rich cricketing superstars; growing consumerism; increasing ignorance of the finer points of the game among both spectators and journalists; and the (understandable) shock of discovering that one of the places to which the match-fixing trail led was the very apex of Indian cricket.⁸⁶ *The Tao of Cricket* can therefore be seen as a work that expresses, in a more philosophically ambitious form, widely shared concerns. If these observers of Indian cricket are right, it would even appear that the country in which the game has the largest popular following is also one where some of its traditional values are endangered.⁸⁷

One major difference between James and Nandy is the former’s superior ability to enthuse and to capture a player in a few words. Nandy can reasonably respond that this is not what his book is about, and he is not trying to be a Jamesian fine writer about the game. Even so, Nandy does not convey much sense of enjoyment, and even though his categories are supposed to be cultural rather than historical he does not really acknowledge the possibility that ‘traditional cricket’ could in practice continue to exist alongside or within ‘new cricket’ (perhaps in amateur cricket, but not just there).⁸⁸ Pursuing this line of thought, I want to argue in concluding this section that James and Nandy both have a blind spot in relation to English cricket, and that common-or-garden English county cricket contains elements which, while not postcolonial, are compatible with their philosophies of the game.

⁸⁴ Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, op. cit., pp. 306-7. ‘Riots minus the stabbing’ is a play on George Orwell’s ‘war minus the shooting’ as a characterization of sport; see Orwell’s 1945 essay, ‘The Sporting Spirit’, in *The Penguin Essays of George Orwell*, London: Penguin, 1968, 327-330, where the phrase occurs at p. 329.

⁸⁵ Manu Joseph, ‘India: An Unnatural Cricketing Nation’, in Boria Majumdar and J.A. Mangan (eds), *Cricketing Cultures in Conflict: World Cup 2003*, London & New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 116-128.

⁸⁶ Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket*, op. cit.; Soumitra Bose and Dujay Gupta, ‘Money Tames Cricket’, Chitra Narayanan, ‘The Indian Spectator: A Grandstand View’, and G. Rajaraman, ‘Match-Fixing: A Dead Enemy?’, all in Majumdar and Mangan, *Cricketing Cultures in Conflict*, op. cit., pages 176-197, 198-212, and 213-224. One point that emerges from these studies of Indian cricket is that enthusiasm for the game as a mass phenomenon only developed as a result of live TV coverage of one-day internationals in the 1980s.

⁸⁷ Not that Indian spectators are the only culprits. A significant minority of English cricket followers see Test matches as opportunities to drink all day, act up for the TV cameras, and block other people’s view.

⁸⁸ Anyone in search of a contemporary Indian author with the capacity to enthuse should turn to Guha. A few sentences from Guha, and the reader can see Bedi sauntering up to bowl and hear a well-timed square cut going off Vishwanath’s bat: Ramachandra Guha, *Spin and Other Turns: Indian Cricket’s Coming of Age*, New Delhi: Penguin, 1994.

This may seem a reckless claim, but pay close attention. James is fairly disparaging about the post-1945 English game, at one point bemoaning an unadventurous ‘Welfare State of Mind’ in 1950s English cricket and sounding remarkably like a contemporary spectator at a county match, chuntering about the state of the nation as he riffles through his *Daily Mail* or *Telegraph*. Nandy would presumably classify county cricket under ‘modern cricket’, and has little or nothing to say about it. I want to argue that there is an important and valuable social democratic philosophy of English cricket, and that this can be found in the career and views of Tom Cartwright, the former Warwickshire, Somerset, Glamorgan and England player who died in April 2007 at the age of 71.

Cartwright never wrote a book about cricket, and I have pieced together his philosophy from Stephen Chalke’s biography (published shortly before Cartwright’s death).⁸⁹ Cartwright learned his trade as a cricketer in the 1950s, leaving school at the age of 15 and continuing to work in the Coventry car industry during the winters after he became a professional cricketer with Warwickshire. He played 25 seasons of county cricket and 5 Tests (there is widespread agreement that the England selectors regularly overlooked him and this number should have been much higher), and towards the end of his career and in retirement became one of the most respected coaches in the game (working in Wales). Never exactly a rebel, Cartwright knew his own mind and found that there were times when he did not see eye to eye with the figures from quite different social backgrounds who ran county cricket clubs. His philosophy of cricket, though, was profoundly traditional: the game was a craft to be learned, something that required discipline, respect for tradition and one’s opponents, and appreciation of the knowledge passed down from one generation to the next. As a coach, he believed in instilling high standards of fair play and hoped coaching would give all young cricketers the opportunity to rise to the top. But Cartwright also thought cricket had an ‘artistic form’,⁹⁰ and that this had been more appreciated in the 1950s and 60s:

Most of the time the spectators came because they wanted to see particular people bat or bowl. They were looking for something artistic, something of real class. It wasn’t a question of ‘Will my team win or not?’ The expectancy is different now.....In those days I think people were looking for a deeper meaning.⁹¹

In later life, Cartwright’s views on contemporary trends were forthright. On on-field behaviour: ‘Sledging is infantile playground behaviour’; on the commercialization of the game and the professionalization of its administration: ‘I’m staggered by my own thoughts

⁸⁹ Stephen Chalke, *Tom Cartwright: The Flame Still Burns*, Bath: Fairfield Books, 2007.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

now. I'd rather see the thing go back to being controlled by the MCC of yesteryear, that type of person, rather than the hard-bitten professional who's come out of the city'; and finally: 'Cricket is not like any other sport....It has a purity, and that purity is being taken away.'⁹²

Is this sentimentality, a retired cricketer looking back and romanticizing the past? Perhaps in part; it is unlikely that all current trends in the administration of English cricket are changes for the worse. But cricket would not be cricket without this nostalgia, and Cartwright does not seem to have been a particularly sentimental person. More to the point, the tensions we have seen in James and Nandy reappear in Cartwright. As Mike Brearley put it in his obituary tribute, Cartwright was 'radical but conservative in some ways'.⁹³ This is not to suggest for a moment that the majority of English county cricketers have been social democrats. Far from it.⁹⁴ Cartwright recalled being one of only 7 members of the Professional Cricketers' Association to vote against playing a South African touring side in 1970.⁹⁵ And yet: the combination of egalitarianism and respect for tradition and artistry we find in Cartwright's views and career are not only compatible with James's and Nandy's anti-colonial and postcolonial philosophies of cricket, they are to a considerable extent the same values. An appreciation of cricket can combine commitment to the crustiest traditionalism with radical utopianism, sometimes in the same people, and the idea that cricket is somehow different but permanently threatened reappears time and again.⁹⁶ Nandy points out that we project our own meanings onto cricket, but this does not seem to be purely a matter of projection: there is something about cricket on which committed British imperialists, Trinidadian pan-Africanist Marxists, Indian critics of modernity, and West Midlands social democrats can all agree.

⁹² Ibid., p. 197, 199, 215.

⁹³ *The Wisden Cricketer*, June 2007, p. 78.

⁹⁴ For critical views of English cricket, see Mike Marqusee, *Anyone but England: Cricket, Race and Class*, London: Two Heads Publishing, 1998, and Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race*, Oxford & New York: Berg, 2001.

⁹⁵ Chalke, *Tom Cartwright*, op. cit., p. 160. Cartwright was involved in the 'D'Oliveira Affair', the cancellation of the planned 1968-9 England tour of South Africa after England had selected Basil D'Oliveira, the South African-born 'coloured' player (see Peter Osborne, *Basil D'Oliveira - Cricket and Conspiracy: The Untold Story*, London: Time Warner Books, 2005). Cartwright's withdrawal from the tour party, prompted (as he told the story to Chalke) by a combination of fitness worries, reluctance to leave his family, and political disquiet, led to D'Oliveira's selection and thus the cancellation of the tour. If one accepts the plausible view that the sports boycott made some contribution to undermining apartheid South Africa, Cartwright played a small but not insignificant part in this.

⁹⁶ In addition to Mike Marqusee, who is notoriously both American by birth and a Marxist, cricket-loving scourges of the establishment in Britain include Harold Pinter, Ken Loach, and Tariq Ali.

4. World cricket in the 21st century

A quick run through the history of international cricket may help to demonstrate why the concept of a postcolonial international society is an illuminating characterization of contemporary world cricket, and to indicate what further questions the current state of the game throws up. Before 1914, Test cricket was a triangular affair involving England, Australia, and South Africa. This trio came together to form the Imperial Cricket Conference as Foundation Members in 1909.⁹⁷ (However, the very first match classified as international was played between the USA and Canada in 1844; England and Australia's first meeting did not take place until 1877.) During the inter-war period of the twentieth century they were joined in 1926 by the West Indies (playing as a region), New Zealand, and India. After 1945, the ranks of Test-playing countries were strengthened by Pakistan (1953), Sri Lanka (1981), Zimbabwe (1992), and most recently Bangladesh (2000).⁹⁸ One can note that in some of these cases Test status preceded political independence, and that the West Indies continued to play internationally as a region after the individual Caribbean states became independent. The name of the game's international governing body was changed in 1965 to International Cricket Conference, and in 1989 the name was changed again to its present form, International Cricket Council (ICC). South Africa ceased to be a member in 1961 when it left the Commonwealth, and was re-elected in 1991.⁹⁹ There are thus currently ten ICC Full Members or Test-playing countries (if one includes Zimbabwe – see below), all of which were formerly part of the British Empire. For the purposes of one-day international matches this rises to 12 with the inclusion of Kenya and Ireland (following Ireland's successful performances at the 2007 World Cup). The ICC also has responsibility for matters such as discipline on the field of play, measures to prevent corruption in the game, the appointment of umpires, and the legality of bowlers' actions. In 2005, the ICC moved its headquarters from Lord's to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The ICC does not, however, decide on changes to the laws of the game, which continue to be the responsibility of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in London; the MCC describes itself as a 'private club with a public function', and is recognized as the 'guardian of the Laws'.¹⁰⁰

Without stretching the point too far, one can suggest some analogies between contemporary world cricket and the terminology conventionally used to describe relations

⁹⁷ www.icc-cricket.com, accessed 16.7.2007.

⁹⁸ The dates given refer to full ICC membership, not necessarily the first Test match played.

⁹⁹ In 1965, the ICC adopted new rules permitting non-Commonwealth countries to become members. The existing Full Members decide which associates are allowed to join them (there are currently 33 Associate Members and 58 Affiliate Members). Up until 1993, the ICC was administered by the MCC and the Foundation Members enjoyed the power of veto over all resolutions.

¹⁰⁰ *Wisden 2007*, p. 1447. For the laws, see *ibid.*, pp. 1449-1495.

between states. Towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, world cricket has a former imperial centre (England) which was responsible for the original spread of the game but is now one competing country among others. It has a former superpower which went into sudden decline in the last decade of the previous century (the West Indies). It has a reigning superpower or world champion as measured by the ICC Test Championship table introduced in 2001 (Australia). The world's one-day champion team is decided by the ICC's world cups held every three to four years (also currently Australia), and by the ICC ODI Championship table in between these world cups. World cricket has a powerful Asian regional bloc (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh), including India which is the most populous Test cricket-playing country and the one sometimes considered likely to dominate the global game in the medium to long term. It has a traditional rivalry between England and Australia dating back to the 19th century, and a number of regional rivalries, typically between a larger and a smaller neighbour - India v. Pakistan, Australia v. New Zealand, and South Africa v. Zimbabwe. The South Africa v. Zimbabwe rivalry is at the time of writing in abeyance, since Zimbabwean cricket was so weakened by political disputes and general internal strife during the 2000s that it became, in cricketing terms, a failed state and withdrew temporarily from Test match competition in 2005.¹⁰¹

This *sui generis* international sporting constellation is clearly, and almost by definition, postcolonial in a descriptive sense: without British imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we would have had no world cricket in the twentieth and twenty-first. The most obvious contemporary manifestations of cricket's origins can be found in the status of the MCC in relation to the laws of the game, and in the fact that the ICC's regulations and other documents are drawn up and circulated only in English. But world cricket is now very much a matter of routine, as international teams criss-cross the globe to play each other in regular bilateral series and (less frequently) multilateral competitions, in a way that seems to be placing increasing physical and mental strain on some top players. All these international exchanges have to be coordinated, and here the ICC cooperates with the national (and one regional in the case of the West Indies) governing bodies. This can reasonably be seen as a self-regulating, though clearly limited, international society made up of national sporting bodies plus an international or transnational organization. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and its counterparts are not, of course, states, but otherwise Bull's conditions for an international society are met.

¹⁰¹ This is not to suggest that cricketing status was anything more than a minor problem among those confronting the majority of Zimbabweans during this period.

Postcolonial resistance in the classical sense is now much less significant, since the vast majority of Test matches do not involve England and international cricketers are likely to regard playing against the world champions, i.e. at present Australia, as the greatest challenge they will face in their careers. The period in which serious diplomatic incidents could arise because of a cricket match seems to be over; it is hard to imagine circumstances today in which a crisis in British-Australian relations would only narrowly be averted because one side voiced its opinion that the other had been behaving in an ‘unsportsmanlike’ manner, as happened during the 1932-3 Bodyline series.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the exclusion of apartheid South Africa, and recent disputes about cricketing links with Zimbabwe (on which the ICC has pursued a policy of strict non-intervention), remind us that some very serious political issues lie behind the question of who is considered to belong to this international cricketing society. Nor can one claim that countries which play cricket against each other will never go to war, since the most heated regional rivalry is between India and Pakistan, two states which have fought several wars against each other and sometimes use international cricket matches as part of their peacetime diplomatic relations.¹⁰³ But the fact that wars occur does not invalidate the concept of international society either.

One curiosity of contemporary world cricket is that while the leading functionaries of the national bodies will be citizens of the relevant state, recent years have seen an increasing number of ‘outsiders’ being appointed as national coaches (in a period when the status of coaches has increased significantly). At first glance there seems to be a neo-colonial element here, since the usual pattern has been to appoint a lighter-skinned coach to instruct darker-skinned cricketers (I cannot think of any counter-examples). Looking more closely, however, one finds that it is Australian coaches who are most in demand, i.e. citizens of the country seen to have the best organized system for preparing young cricketers and getting the best performances out of established ones. In other words, this phenomenon reflects current conceptions of scientific cricketing meritocracy. The Australian Cricket Academy, set up in 1987, has also been widely copied.

As I have already mentioned, the framework within which these cricket teams compete involves quasi-legal provisions (the Laws of cricket), associated normative expectations (‘The Spirit of Cricket’), national or regional governing bodies (the ECB and its counterparts), and the ICC. The game’s ‘spirit’ was traditionally uncodified, and was traditionally seen as what

¹⁰² David Frith, *Bodyline Autopsy - The full story of the most sensational Test cricket series: AUSTRALIA v ENGLAND 1932-33*, London: Aurum Press, 2002. (Frith’s title really calls for a [sic].)

¹⁰³ See Stuart Croft, ‘South Asia’s arms control process: cricket diplomacy and the composite dialogue’, *International Affairs* 81:5, 2005, pp. 1039-1060.

made cricket 'different'. Since 2000, a preamble to the Laws has specified the content of this spirit and required players to respect it. The crucial elements are: 'respect for · Your opponents. · Your own captain and team. · The role of the umpires. · The game's traditional values.'¹⁰⁴ As was pointed out at the time, this explicit formulation of previously implicit expectations looked like an attempt to shut the stable door. And as we shall see, the late 1990s and early 2000s were difficult times for international cricket.

The IR literature on international organizations, regimes, and transnational actors has touched on issues such as the ways in which sporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to the rationalization of sport and leisure, the different ways in which NGOs may be influenced or manipulated by states, and the complex interactions that may occur between transnational and interstate bodies.¹⁰⁵ As I noted in section 2, Buzan classifies FIFA (football) and FIDE (chess) as transnational actors. It is not clear why he does this. There are presumably differences between such sporting bodies that would become clearer on closer inspection, but if they are federations of national bodies they are likely to resemble international organizations more closely than they resemble, say, Amnesty International or the Catholic Church (without having been set up by governments). The MCC, a private club which 'legislates' for cricket throughout the world, is undoubtedly transnational. The ICC is more international, since it does not take any initiatives that have not been decided upon by the national boards meeting as a group. And yet the ICC also sees itself as having a missionary responsibility, expressed in its Development Programme, to spread the game beyond its present boundaries.¹⁰⁶ So is the ICC also transnational after all? Conceptually, one way of resolving these difficulties might be to recall the potential of a systems-theoretical perspective which treats sport as a distinct system of communication. This move could capture the way in which many sporting bodies straddle the public and private spheres, but it might have the disadvantage of suggesting that nation-based sporting bodies are more aloof from conventional (national and international) politics than is actually the case.

For empirical purposes, we can look at the range of tasks actually performed by the ICC. Like any self-respecting contemporary organization, the ICC has a mission statement

¹⁰⁴ *Wisden 2007*, op. cit., p. 1450.

¹⁰⁵ John Boli and George M. Thomas, 'World Culture in the World Polity: A Century of International Non-governmental Organization', *American Sociological Review* 62: 2, 1997, pp. 171-190; Richard A. Higgott, Geoffrey R.D. Underhill, and Andreas Bieler, 'Introduction: Globalisation and non-state actors', in Higgott, Underhill, and Bieler (eds), *Non-State Actors and Authority in the Global System*, London & New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 1-12; Beth A. Simmons and Lisa L. Martin, 'International Organizations and Institutions', and Thomas Risse, 'Transnational Actors and World Politics', in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations*, London etc.: Sage Publications, 2002, pp. 192-211 and 255-274.

¹⁰⁶ www.icc-cricket.com/icc/development/about.html, accessed 21.7.2007.

detailing the good things it seeks to ‘deliver’. This statement specifies that the ICC is committed to, amongst other things, ‘[p]romoting and protecting the game, and its unique spirit’, [o]ptimising its commercial rights and properties for the benefit of its Members’, and ‘building bridges between continents, countries and communities’ while respecting ‘diversity’.¹⁰⁷ What we have here is a statement of cricketing traditionalism, combined with an expression of commercial aspirations that might be shared by any non-sporting enterprise and an implicit reference to cricket’s imperial heritage and postcolonial present.

These general principles are backed up by a number of internal bodies and codes of conduct: an Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU); a Code of Conduct for Players & Team Officials, which specifies penalties for offences ranging from betting on matches via racist comments to violence on the field of play¹⁰⁸; an Anti-Racism Code¹⁰⁹; and an (extremely detailed) Anti-Doping Code.¹¹⁰ Anyone looking at these documents for the first time might be forgiven for assuming that, were it not for fear of getting caught, international cricketers would be constantly hurling racial abuse at each other, injecting themselves with illegal substances, and fixing the results of Test matches for financial gain.

The situation is not as bad as this, and in the first two categories it is almost certainly nowhere near as bad. This does not mean there are no racists or drug-users in world cricket, or that those who get caught are always adequately punished. Racism on or near the field of play seems to be rare though not unknown (e.g. Darren Lehmann), though implicitly racist innuendo can surface unpredictably; when Pakistan’s coach Bob Woolmer died during the 2007 World Cup, the Pakistan team were virtually accused, especially by British newspapers, of being capable of murdering their coach – even though, as it turned out, he had not been murdered.¹¹¹ At the same time, it is easy to accuse other people of sporting racism, whether or not the charge is justified – just read the *Guardian*’s cricket blogs (anonymity helps to overcome inhibitions). To the extent that cricket has a drugs problem, this appears to be recreational rather than performance-enhancing. (However, the two cannot always be separated: because so much of cricket is played in the mind, it can help to be artificially relaxed.) There is, though, some *prima facie* evidence to suggest that because the international calendar is now so crowded, players have been tempted to use drugs to accelerate recovery after injury. Having said that, there is no indication that cricket has anything like a problem

¹⁰⁷ www.icc-cricket.com/icc/about/about.html, accessed 30.7.2007.

¹⁰⁸ www.icc-cricket.com/icc/rules/code-of-conduct-for-players-and-officials.pdf, accessed 18.7.2007.

¹⁰⁹ www.icc-cricket.com/icc/rules/anti-racism-code.pdf, accessed 18.7.2007.

¹¹⁰ www.icc-cricket.com/icc/rules/anti-doping-code.pdf, accessed 18.7.2007.

¹¹¹ For some of the prehistory, see chapter 6, ‘Pak Off the Cheats’, in Williams, *Cricket and Race*, op. cit., pp. 137-171.

with drugs à la cycling or athletics.¹¹² It is important to note that one reason why the Anti-Doping Code is so complex is that it has to regulate the ICC's interaction with a wider regime involving the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), national anti-doping agencies (covering all sports), and, if need be, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).¹¹³

Match-fixing in cricket has been a far more serious matter. To cut a long and discreditable story short: gambling on matches was an established feature of English cricket in the 18th and early 19th centuries, but disappeared from view after that. During the 1990s, a growing number of rumours concerning contacts between bookmakers and players, and approaches from players to other players offering incentives to fix results or other features of matches, led to investigations by the governing bodies in several countries and, to some extent, by the ICC.¹¹⁴ The most dramatic incident occurred in 2000, when Indian police recorded a telephone conversation between the then South African captain, Hansie Cronje, and an Indian bookmaker.¹¹⁵ Cronje initially denied everything but later confessed. After the dust thrown up by all the investigations had settled, three international captains (Cronje, India's Mohammad Azharuddin, and Pakistan's Salim Malik) had been banned for life by their respective boards and a number of other players punished, the ICC had set up an Anti-Corruption Unit and published its own report on the whole dismal business, and there was widespread doubt as to whether any of the enquiries had got to the bottom of the matter (even Judge Edwin King, who chaired the South African enquiry, had his doubts).¹¹⁶ The ICC's Condon Report concluded that both the ICC and the national boards could and should have acted earlier, and made a number of recommendations designed to educate cricketers, detect improper approaches, and keep bookmakers away from players during matches.¹¹⁷ The current assessment of the ICC is that corruption in the game has now been suppressed to an 'irreducible minimum', which is reassuring after a fashion.

¹¹² There is another argument here for maintaining a distinction between sport and art. Setting aside for a moment the damage some artists have done to themselves and others, the list of works of art (including masterpieces) we might not have without the use of drugs by their creators is long. But cricketers should not use drugs because it is, quite simply, unfair. Fair play is irrelevant in art.

¹¹³ See Barrie Houlihan, 'Building an international regime to combat doping in sport', in Levermore and Budd, *Sport and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 66-76.

¹¹⁴ 'Match-fixing' can cover a multitude of sins, ranging from agreement to underperform and thus influence the result of a match to an arrangement that a certain number of no balls will be bowled in, say, the tenth over of an innings, an occurrence on which it is possible to place a bet.

¹¹⁵ Betting on cricket is illegal in India but widely practised, which means there are large sums of unregulated money potentially available for the corruption of cricketers.

¹¹⁶ For an excellent brief account, see Rajamaran, 'Match-Fixing: A Dead Enemy?', op. cit.; on India: Pradeep Magazine, *Not Quite Cricket: The Explosive Story of How Bookmakers Influence the Game Today*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2000 (revised edition); on South Africa: André Oosthuizen and Gavin Tinkler, *The Banjo Players: Cricket's Match Fixing Scandal*, Hout Bay: Riverside Publications, 2001.

¹¹⁷ www.icc-cricket.com/icc/corruption/condon_report.html, accessed 17.7.2007. There are links here to the national reports.

The ICC comes in for a good deal of criticism, but given that racism, drug abuse, and corruption can and do exist in the game it is hard to see how anyone can object to the setting up of preventative and punitive regimes agreed upon by all the national boards. In other words, world cricket needs the ICC, or something very like it, to police the game. Other aspects of the ICC's governance are more problematic, and it does not take an especially eagle-eyed reader of the mission statement to spot possible tensions between maintaining the spirit of the game and optimizing its commercial potential. Once again, things may be worse in other sports. Cricket clubs cannot, unlike football clubs, be bought by passing multi-millionaires with a passing interest in the game.¹¹⁸ But the obvious question that arises is how the ICC can police itself in this regard. There are plenty of things that might be policed, if anyone felt like taking on global capitalism: leading players are (willingly) used to sell merchandise and are themselves merchandized¹¹⁹; the calendar is packed with Tests and one-day internationals to ensure maximum TV coverage and maximum advertising revenue; global corporations sponsor tournaments, and so on, and so forth....¹²⁰ The results can sometimes be so strange as to defy belief. The Coke v. Pepsi rivalry has invaded cricket, with the soft drinks police sometimes forcing spectators to remove non-approved beverages from their bags before entering grounds and, reportedly, a spectator being ejected from a match at the 2003 World Cup in South Africa for making the wrong fizzy concoction lifestyle choice¹²¹; even more bizarrely, leading ICC figures dream of conquering China, a vast potential market.¹²²

Clearly, no professional sport can remove itself from the world economy. As long as some of the game's new wealth trickles down to benefit ordinary spectators, amateur players, and schools, it is hard to object to it. But the unappealing side of 'new cricket' can hardly be ignored. If one wanted a symbol of the direction being taken by world cricket at the start of the 21st century, the ICC's move to Dubai might serve rather well. Officially the move was made for financial reasons (though it was reported that a fairly minor tax concession by the

¹¹⁸ See Simon Lee, 'Moving the goalposts: The governance and political economy of world football', in Levermore and Budd, *Sport and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 112-128.

¹¹⁹ A recent interview with one of England's leading batsman informed us (quite unnecessarily, in view of the accompanying photograph of KP strutting his sponsored stuff) that 'Kevin Pietersen is an Adidas athlete'; 'I want to be a great player', *The Wisden Cricketer* July 2007, pp. 44-5.

¹²⁰ For some sharp observations on these aspects of the 1996 World Cup, see Mike Marqusee, *War Minus the Shooting: A journey through south Asia during cricket's World Cup*, London: Mandarin, 1997, especially chapter 10.

¹²¹ *The Wisden Cricketer* November 2004, p. 10, and Paul Kelso, 'Logos are no-go for World Cup crowds', *The Guardian* February 20, 2003.

¹²² Here is ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed, hallucinating in 2004: 'it would be great if China could be playing in World Cups as a major one-day international country, say, within 10 years. And, if we could develop a cricket culture there that would sustain Test cricket within 20 years, that would also be great.' (*The Wisden Cricketer*, September 2004, p. 31) Perhaps it is not only the players who should be forced to take drug tests.

British Treasury would have made it unnecessary), and because travel to the Gulf is less time-consuming from most Test-playing countries (which it is). But it was also a move from Lord's to what the urban sociologist Mike Davis, in a brilliant essay on Dubai, has called an environment of 'apocalyptic luxuries', floating on a bubble of high oil prices, tourism, and financial operations (including, apparently, terrorist money-laundering), being built by migrant workers from the Indian subcontinent whose conditions of employment amount to 'virtual slave labour'.¹²³ Needless to say, the ICC and its staff are small fry in this 'synthesis of shopping, entertainment and architectural spectacle', but that is where the organization decided to move to.¹²⁴

The routine that has characterized world cricket in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has done a good deal to ease political tensions within the game. A New Zealand v. Sri Lanka Test series has nothing to do with resistance to imperial culture. With routine has come commercialization, which troubles traditionalists. In many ways they are right to be troubled. For all this routinization, one cannot rule out the possibility that future crises might lead to the reappearance of old colonial faultlines. In cricket, as in life, one never quite knows what is going to happen next. A number of developments that might test cricket's institutions can easily be imagined: a major rift over Zimbabwe; a crisis in Indo-Pakistani relations that made it impossible for the two countries to continue playing against each other; an attempt by the wealthiest board, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), to flex its financial muscles with a view to influencing, for example, the Test schedule; another match-fixing scandal, or perhaps new revelations about unsuspected aspects of earlier scandals. If any of these things happened, we might find out how stable the routine and institutions of world cricket really are.

5. And some concluding thoughts

As a contribution to IR, this paper has presented an implicit argument for intellectual eclecticism in the analysis of sport and international relations. I have drawn on resources as diverse as the English School, postcolonial scholarship, systems theory, the historical sociology of sport, work on international organizations and transnational actors, and cricket's own historical, sociological, and philosophical literature. Only this degree of eclecticism can do justice to the complex past and present of world cricket.

¹²³ Mike Davis, 'Fear and Money in Dubai', *New Left Review* 41, September-October 2006, pp. 46-68, quotations from pages 55 and 65.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

I want to suggest in conclusion, though, that one should not make exaggerated claims for the significance of sport – especially if one has spent a disproportionate amount of one's life playing, watching, and reading about it. Cricket is not going to solve any problems Britain has as a multicultural society, or resolve Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis, or bring about long-term relaxation in relations between India and Pakistan. But for all the antagonisms and crises that have arisen within the game over the past 150 years, from the heyday of empire into the period of decolonization and on into the postcolonial world, it has established itself as a sphere combining non-violent competition and civility in sporting relations between regions of the world influenced by British imperialism. As Elias puts it in his account of the development of sport in general, this has happened without anyone ever intending to bring it about. Cricket, like any sport, cannot be separated from the political, economic, and social world beyond the boundary, and we have seen that cricket's ethos of fair play can be threatened by racism, corruption, commercialism, and chauvinistic nationalism, not to mention puerile behaviour by some of the players. But there is also a sense in which cricket constitutes and remains an autonomous sphere of activity, a relief from more serious matters and a space in which winning and making a profit are sometimes not all that important. In social-scientific terms, world cricket is a postcolonial international society with a lingering suggestion of utopia. In more general terms, the game is perhaps a waste of time – but a sublime one.