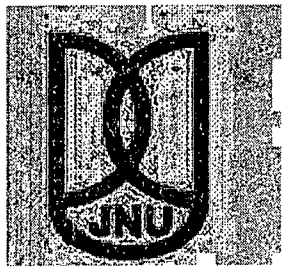
SPORTING TRANSACTIONS: CRICKET, PRINT AND CONSUMERS IN BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA, 1926-67

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SOUVIK NAHA



CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067
INDIA

2012

Centre for Historical Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

20 July 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this dissertation entitled 'Sporting Transactions: Cricket, Print and Consumers in Bombay and Calcutta, 1926-67' submitted for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is the result of original research and has not been submitted for any other degree to any other university or institution.

Souvik Naha

Souvik Naha

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr. Bhagwan Josh	Dr. Radhika Singha	Dr. M.S.S. Pandian
(CHAIRPERSON)	(SUPERVISOR)	(CO-SUPERVISOR)
CHAIRPERSON Centre for Historical Studies School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi - 110067, INDIA	Centre for Historical Studies School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi-110067	Centre for Historical Studies School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi-110067

CHS Office Phone : (011) 26704456, 26704457
E-mail : chsjnu@gmail.com

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Abbreviations

AmBP	*Amrita Bazar Patrika*
ABP	*Anandabazar Patrika*
BC	*Bombay Chronicle*
BCCI	Board of Control for Cricket in India
BS	*Bombay Sentinel*
CAB	Cricket Association of Bengal
CCI	Cricket Club of India
IC	*Indian Cricket*
MCC	Marylebone Cricket Club
PTI	Press Trust of India
TOI	*The Times of India*
TS	*The Statesman*

Acknowledgements

In the two years which I took to finish this dissertation, I faced a daunting number of questions from academics and non-academics on the choice of my research topic. Some inquired if it had got something to do with my fancy (and failure) to be a cricketer, and if a non-cricketer was eligible to write on cricket. I would peevishly reply that just as a historian of working class did not need to chip stones on a road or a journalist did not need to be a member of the parliament to criticise government policies, one did not need to be a cricketer to write about cricket. But I thank every one of them for expressing surprise/interest/annoyance or whatever in my topic.

I am grateful to the M. Phil interview board for keeping faith in me even after the miserable M.A. results, and to two people in particular. The ever accommodating Radhika Singha and M.S.S. Pandian tackled the painful task of consolidating my whims into a dissertation. The M.Phil would not have materialised without the submission deadlines set and the million critical observations made by Dr. Singha. Dr. Pandian put an order to my erratic ideas and entertained every odd request. Comments made by Neeladri Bhattacharya substantially assisted the writing of the first two chapters. Discussions with Ranabir Chakravarti revealed important aspects of fan culture in Bengal. Kunal Chakraborty was ever encouraging. Arvind Sinha, on more occasions than one, brought to my notice new research areas. Indivar Kamtekar had permitted me to write a tutorial on colonial cricket, which Ramachandra Guha read and inspired me to continue. I appreciate the efforts which my graduate and undergraduate tutors at the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU and Presidency College, Calcutta made to teach me history.

Soumyen Mallik spent countless hours discussing cricket and everything else and also shared with me his excellent collection of books. Kausik Bandyopadhyay read a few drafts, encouraged me to send papers to journals and gave me three books to review. Boria Majumdar generously provided plentiful advices and some rare, unpublished documents from his superlative personal archive. I benefitted immensely from the cricket talks with Theo Braganza. Conversations with Rajsekhar Basu threw up numerous ideas on sport in Calcutta, processing which requires the space of several doctoral theses! Sean Brown and Cate Watson emailed important articles at the shortest notice, and Paul Dimeo sent me one of his lesser-known articles which was a major source of inspiration. The anonymous referees and editors of *The International Journal of the History of Sport* and *Sport in Society* offered suggestions which helped to rearrange a few of my arguments. I specially thank Susan Bandy for carefully editing the chapter on female spectators.

I thank all the second-hand booksellers at College Street in Calcutta and Daryaganj in New Delhi for supplying me out-of-print cricket books over the years, albeit often at a taxing price. Pirated online copies of expensive academic titles equipped me with umpteen ideas some of which went into the making of this dissertation. I thank the staff of the National Library and its old newspaper section at Esplanade East, especially Partha*da*, the Centre for Academic Excellence Library at the Cricket Association of Bengal, the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat Library, Calcutta, and the JNU Central Library, the CHS DSA Library, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

Anirban Bandyopadhyay pulled me out of the debris of M.A. and walked me to this M.Phil. at the CHS. The affection he has shown me over the years embarrasses even the archetypal doting elder brother. Amitava Chatterjee, aside from sharing books,

inviting me to conferences and asking me to write what became my first academic publication, saw me through many ups and downs. Compliments from Surit Das held me in high spirit. Milinda Banerjee and Agnibha Gangopadhyay relayed constructive suggestions at the right time.

Thanks to Avipshu Halder (Mejda) for the fond memories, stimulating gossips, conspiracies and treats, to Aparup Choudhury (Borda) for the laugh riots at our triumvirate, to Soumik Mukhopadhyay and Vishal Maurya for the happy times in our little cove at Lohit, to Sarbajit Mitra for numerous chats and valuable leads, to Sebanti Chatterjee for humouring my visions, to Amrita Mondal and Sohinee Basak for friendship, to Kankadeb Mishra and Isha Shah for never failing to boost my morale when I needed it, to Ashis Das for the friendliest moments I ever had at the Centre, to Biswajit Jha and Aniket Mishra for asking me to write on cricket and football for their websites, and to Subhransu Roy for bringing out my hidden potential of writing a full-length article in two days, something that could not be replicated since.

Heartfelt gratitude to my parents Sumit and Rita Naha for the support once they were convinced that my desire to study cricket (of all things!) was neither an empty threat nor a joke. Partha and Susmita Dutt took my dream seriously earlier than expected and along with Chintu and Mamma have remained pillars of support ever since. Thanks to Arnab, Ananya, Pranab and Soma Mullick for the most wonderful time in Delhi.

Manikarnika in her various avatars encouraged, goaded, reassured and threatened me to finish this dissertation in time. She supported me in more ways than I can remember and acknowledge, so it is better to leave a note which simply says that she and cricket are all that mattered to me in these two years.

Introduction: Consumption of Mediated Cricket in India

One cannot realistically speak of the 'contemporary cultural horizon' without the mediation of sport, claims Lawrence A. Wenner.[1] No daily newspaper or radio news bulletin is complete without sports coverage. There are times when, sport, generally considered inferior to 'serious' issues such as politics or economy, overshadows them all. This is more so in India, where cricket is so popular that it has become one of the primary signifiers of the country.[2] Jonathan Rice, author and editor of a number of cricket books, unreservedly assumes that for Indians cricket sits next to god and family.[3] As he speculates, the future of this sport, in which 106 countries currently participate, 'will surely be shaped by events and decisions made in India'.[4]

Studies on sporting performance, whether on Gaelic Football in Ireland or Rugby in New Zealand, have acknowledged its huge influence of sport in society.[5] Likewise, the making of Victorian Britain or postcolonial Caribbean Islands cannot be understood without referring to the contribution of cricket. Ramachandra Guha, Boria Majumdar and Kausik Bandyopadhyay have recently started to explore in detail the social history of

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[1] Lawrence A. Wenner, 'Preface', in Wenner ed., *MediaSport*, London & New York: Routledge, 1998, p. xii.

[2] Indian cricket was the 'surefire conversational opener' with any unknown Englishman during his student life in England, recalls Soumya Bhattacharya, editor of the *Hindustan Times*, Mumbai. The rest of the world reportedly operates under the belief that 'If you're Indian, you must be crazy about cricket'. Bhattacharya, *You Must Like Cricket?: Memoirs of an Indian Cricket Fan*, London: Yellow Jersey Press, 2006, p. 24.

[3] Jonathan Rice ed., *Wisden on India: An Anthology*, New Delhi: Penguin, 2011, p. vii.

[4] Ibid, p. 5.

[5] Tom Humphries, *Green Fields: Gaelic Sport in Ireland*, London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1998; Paul Darby and David Hassan eds., *Emigrant Players: Sport in the Irish Diaspora*, London: Routledge, 2008; Geoff Fougere, 'Sport, Culture and Identity: The Case of Rugby Football', in David Novitz and Bill Willmott ed. *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, Wellington: GP Books, 1989; Greg Ryan ed., *Tackling Rugby Myths: Rugby and New Zealand Society 1854-2004*, Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2005.

cricket and football in India.[6] As an addition of this social history, this dissertation explores the ways in which the discourses of cricket has been historically articulated in different print media sites to examine how transactions between leisure and networks of circulation has shaped the urban sport consumer in India. Publication of the first cricket books, credited to Mohammad Abdullah Khan's *Cricket Guide* (1892), coincided with the proliferation of print culture. The sport press, the focus of my study, started growing rapidly in the 1920s and became a multifaceted media which made critical aesthetic and commercial investments towards the making of cricket consumers.[7] I read these journalistic and literary representations of cricket in Bombay and Calcutta as not mere sources of statistical data or anecdotes on cricket, but as texts which reveal an interface of sport, media and cultures of consumption in mid-twentieth century India. To this effect, I primarily concentrate on advertisements, the culture of hero worship, and the depiction of subjects and events in the media.

Historiography of Indian Cricket

> ... across the globe, sport is now too important to be left in the hands of sportsmen and women. More and more, it is the property of the 'People' in their various manifestations as politicians, entrepreneurs, educationists, commercialists, publicists, and, no least, academics.

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[6] Ramachandra Guha, *Corner of a Foreign Field: An Indian History of a British Sport*, London: Picador, 2002; Boria Majumdar, *Twenty-Two Yards to Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Penguin, 2004; Kausik Bandyopadhyay, *Scoring Off the Field: Football Culture in Bengal 1911-80*, London: Routledge, 2011.

[7] According to Ulrike Stark, newspapers played a pivotal part in the 'project of Indian modernity' and its 'cultural, literary, and political domains'. She acknowledges the socio-political impact of the press and its function in shaping public knowledge. Study of newspapers remains an underdeveloped area in South Asian history, which this dissertation hopes to redress to some extent. Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India, 1858-1895*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007, p. 2.

The academic attention devoted to sport in Europe and America has broadened considerably in the last few decades. Sociology was the first discipline to examine sport as a meaningful human activity, and the literature on sport and leisure has grown substantially since the early 1990s. Historians too have engaged with the cultural, economic and political manifestations of sport, and identified the latter's hitherto unrecognised historical contingencies in social formations. Stephen Jones, for instance, wrote of sport in industrial societies as an important economic, social and political activity yielding vital insights about labour market, capital investment, class, gender and even international relations.[9]

Appraisal of the history of cricket in India is important especially since the sport had been associated with a number of institutions—from macro entities (empire, dominion) to walks of everyday life (sports press, advertising)—the interplay among which reveals a complex history of Indian society. Although cricket's origin can be traced to Early Modern folk games in France, its modern form was developed in Britain. In the nineteenth century, cricket was an important element of the colonial 'civilising mission' albeit without overt official encouragement.[10] The sport was invested with ideals of sporting spirit and fair play, and promoted as an ideological template—a design to strengthen the player's moral and physical character, thereby producing exemplary citizens and subjects. Education and religion were the primary media of propagating

[8] J.A. Mangan, 'Series Editor's Foreward' in Mike Cronin and David Mayall eds., *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*, London: Frank Cass, 1998, pp. xi-xii.
[9] Stephen G. Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, p. 2.
[10] Paul Dimeo, 'Sporting and the "Civilizing Mission" in India', in Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann eds., *Colonialism and Civilising Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, London: Anthem, 2004, pp. 165-78.

cricket eliciting asymmetric responses in different contexts.[11] Americans reportedly distorted cricket into baseball to articulate their dislike for everything British.[12] South Asians, on the other hand, enthusiastically took to cricket, transforming it into an instrument of at once imitating and interrogating imperial institutions. Cricket in India has therefore emerged as a site of contestation among forces of colonialism, nationalism, communalism, race, caste, religion etc. Linkages with transnational sporting philosophy, 'native' princely patronage, corporate sponsorship and public opinion have increasingly widened the reach and complexities of cricket; so much so that South Asia has emerged as the economic and performative nerve centre of global cricket, displacing the sport from its British 'home'.

The beginning of academic studies of cricket in India coincided with the latter's first victory in the Cricket World Cup in 1983 and its entry into the global network of sport capitalism. Aided by the relative profusion of sources, historians of Indian cricket have reframed many age old ideas and stereotypes about the game.[13] Their works not only evaluate sporting traditions, myths and identities but also illuminate cultural and social pasts, producing in the process a way of understanding their transformation into the present.

The central theme in the historiography of Indian cricket has been the way in which colonial subjects appropriated cricket, recasting its role from a colonial 'civilising mission' to a powerful mechanism for subverting imperial hegemony. According to Allen

[11] Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30 (4), 1988, pp. 649-73.
[12] Boria Majumdar and Sean Brown, 'Why Baseball, Why Cricket? Differing Nationalisms, Differing Challenges', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 24 (2), 2007, pp. 139-56.
[13] I recall reading an apocryphal account that in India alone there are at least a thousand pages of cricket coverage published or posted every single time India plays an international cricket match.

Guttmann, cricket offered the colonial subject the space for emulation—'a splendid opportunity to enhance their self-esteem, for nothing can be more delightful than "beating [the British] at their own game".[14] This act has often been endowed with a nationalist/anti-colonial agency in which subversion of the colonial regime was enacted through 'apparent' imitation. C.L.R. James' *Beyond a Boundary*, which discusses the centrality of cricket in Caribbean social formations, foregrounds the discursive functions of sport as a cultural form which alternately upholds and/or sabotages colonial hegemony.[15] This literature also tells the story of how cricket moved out of local, elite preserves to become the *national* game, against a complex background of changing economic and political processes.

The Parsis seemed to have taken the British rule as an opportunity to underscore a community identity which previously lay unnoticed on account of their social and cultural insularity. For instance, texts such as Dosabhai Framji Karaka's *The Parsees* (1858) describe the community as loyal citizens of the Raj but closer scrutiny shows that it was not so much devotion to the coloniser but a desire to distinguish themselves from Indians in general which encouraged Parsis to take cricket so seriously.[16] An examination of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Parsi texts reveals a number of self-attributes—progressiveness, rationality and civilised masculinity—which symbolically constructed the Parsis as the most Westernised community in India, erased their thousand year history of agricultural labour and reanimated the grandeur of the ancient Persian Empire.[17] After

[14] Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 179.
[15] C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, London: Stanley Paul, 1963.
[16] Dosabhai Framjee Karaka, *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, and Religion*, London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858, p. 226.
[17] Tanya Luhrmann, *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 96-9.

defeating G.F. Vernon's XI in 1891, 'the imaginative and emotional Parsee youth', writes J.M. Framjee Patel, 'felt for a day or two that he was the victor of the victors of Waterloo'.[18]

Ashis Nandy has rather uniquely interpreted this obligation of emulation. He demonstrates that Victorian discourses of cricket were coextensive with the conventional temperament and philosophy of Indians.[19] The idea of moral masculinity embedded in cricket dovetailed particularly well with the 'rather classical Brahminic concept' which stressed 'control over [one's] impulsive self', 'superiority of form over substance, mind over body, culture over nature' and 'serenity in the face of the vagaries of fate'.[20] Cricket's 'posture of moral superiority', suggests Nandy, empowered Indians to question the post-utilitarian colonial government for not living up to their own standards of morality.[21]

Ramachandra Guha shows how imperatives of colonial politics such as governmental patronage of local cricket often resulted in a sport's unique appropriation, consisting in imitation, subversion or both. Cricket gradually emerged as an arena on which an indigenous brand of nationalism was inscribed. Subversion of the colonial ideology through symbolic resistance, he argues, was the dominant feature of colonial sports, especially cricket and football, from the early twentieth century onwards.[22]

Boria Majumdar's study of cricketing nationalism emphasises the local variations of nationalism. In the Bengal Presidency, the *bhadralok* (educated middle class) adopted

[18] J.M. Framjee Patel, *Stray Thoughts on Indian Cricket*, Bombay: The Times Press, 1905, p. 55.
[19] Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games*, 2nd edn., New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 1.
[20] Ibid., pp. xx.
[21] Ibid., p. 7.
[22] Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field.*

the game in the 1880s as a means to challenge the Raj and counter the European allegation of Indian effeminacy. Contrary to the usual explanation of cricket's princely patronage as a quest for political mobility, Majumdar highlights a variety of underlying factors such as peer rivalries (as between the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the Maharaja of Natore), self-aggrandizement (Ranji) or regional rivalry (between Bengal and Mumbai).[23] He concludes that the princes often joined hands with the nationalist middle class to fulfil personal ambitions.[24]

Arjun Appadurai writes about the larger processes that post-independence Indian cricket opened out to. Media engagements—print culture and vernacular radio commentary—constitute a process which subverted the traditions propagated by the 'civilising mission' and decolonised Indian cricket.[25] Satadru Sen questions the treatment of cricket in the prevalent historiography, contending that nationalist value has been so deeply grafted in Indian cricket that colonial cricket matches which did not convey overtly political messages left no impression on popular memory, and by extension, academic studies. This is why, he states, 'memorable' performances in regional tournaments have been forgotten, while brief episodes in East-West matches have been recorded widely.[26]

The second theme that this literature explores competently is cricket's influence on community formation based on caste and religion. In this regard, Guha's pioneering

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[23] For a more nuanced exposition of such princely exigencies, see Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
[24] Majumdar, *Twenty-Two Yards to Freedom.*
[25] Arjun Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity: Decolonization of Indian Cricket', in Carol A. Breckenridge ed., *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp. 23-48.
[26] Satadru Sen, 'History without a Past: Memory and Forgetting in Indian Cricket', in Stephen Wagg ed., *Cricket And National Identity in the Postcolonial Age: Following On,* Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, pp. 97-8.

work on the cricketing and political career of Dalit icon Palwankar Baloo is particularly illuminating. Guha's account of Baloo's struggles and successes on the field and his subsequent electoral contest against B.R. Ambedkar, an eminent Dalit leader and politician, offers critical insights to not only cricket's potential as a means of mobility, but also shows how cricket emerged as a site on which untouchability has been contested. Guha's analysis of the anti-Pentangular movement highlights contours of Hindu-Muslim relations and contemporary nationalist criticism of the tournament as a threat to communal harmony.[27] Majumdar adds that commercial viability made the tournament an object of envy to competing sporting bodies including the Board of Control for Cricket in India. Their campaign to eliminate this threat was effectively strengthened by the intervention of anti-communalism campaigners such as Gandhi.[28]

Finally, Majumdar managed to shift the attention of cricket scholarship which had somewhat unproblematically privileged Bombay as the first centre in which an indigenous cricket culture developed and then travelled to other parts of the country. His productive exploration of the complexities of Bengal cricket shows that the Mumbai-based model of viewing colonial cricket is inadequate to comprehend different contexts and implications of the game in other parts of India.

[27] The Bombay Pentangular started as the Presidency match in 1892 which was annually played between the Bombay Gymkhana and the Parsi Orient Club. The Hindu Gymkhana joined in 1907, the Muslims in 1912, and the Rest, comprising the Anglo-Indians and converted Indian Christians, came in 1937, effectively making the tournament a Pentangular. The teams were composed on communal lines, which led to frenzied protests against its very existence as inimical to national unity.

[28] Majumdar, *Twenty-two Yards to Freedom*, pp. 226-61.

Among the most recent works, Nalin Mehta has written about the critical role of new media technologies such as satellite television in the expansion of a cricket culture.[29] Prashant Kidambi has predicated the celebrity of Sachin Tendulkar on socio-economic transformations in contemporary India.[30] A number of studies by Amit Gupta and Shakya Mitra have addressed the recent globalisation of Indian cricket, focusing mainly on the Indian Premier League. The latter arguably may not be 'history writing' in the strict sense of the term for they do not historicise commercial cricket or sport capitalism with adequate methodological rigour.[31]

These studies have few insights to offer on the events and processes surrounding Indian cricket between 1947 and 1990, which I suspect is a result of a notion that cricket was secondary to football in terms of popularity in this period. My research demonstrates, on the contrary, that during this period between India's independence and the advent of globalised cricket, Indian cricket gradually enveloped nationwide imagination and inched towards becoming a model of global sports business. I treat this intermediate phase as the vantage point from which to make sense of the increasing popularity and social formations around cricket. The rise of cricket as a mass sport in India has been loosely related to the decline of Indian football and hockey in the 1970s.[32] The World Cup

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[29] Nalin Mehta, 'Batting for the Flag: Cricket, Television and Globalization in India', *Sport in Society* 12 (4), 2009, pp. 579-99, Nalin Mehta, 'The Great Indian Willow Trick: Cricket, Nationalism and India's TV News Revolution, 1998-2005', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 24 (9), 2007, pp. 1187-99.

[30] Prashant Kidambi, 'Hero, Celebrity and Icon: Sachin Tendulkar and the Indian Public Culture', in Anthony Bateman and Jeffrey Hill eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 187-202.

[31] Amit Gupta, 'The IPL and the Indian Domination of Global Cricket', *Sport in Society* 14 (10), 2011, pp. 1316-25, Amit Gupta 'India and the IPL: Cricket's Globalized Empire', *The Round Table* 98 (401), 2009, pp. 201-11, Amit Gupta, 'The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 21 (2), 2004, pp. 257-76, Shakya Mitra, 'The IPL: India's Foray into World Sports Business', *Sport in Society*, 13 (9), 2010, pp. 1314-33.

[32] Gulu Ezekiel, 'How Cricket Bowled Us Over', in *Cricket and Beyond*, New Delhi: Ocean Books, 2011, p. 87. Wenner used the term 'MediaSport' to describe the sport/media complex arising out of the interplay of sporting institutions with modern communication technologies which constitutes a large body of texts and

triumph in 1983 has certainly had a positive impact on the fortunes of Indian cricket, but it is difficult to envisage how a sport can ride on a mere decade's success to become a signifier of a country. If indeed a few high-profile losses are all it takes to remove a sport from popular memory and attention, live radio broadcast of seventeen consecutive away Test defeats in the 1950-60s would have certainly obscured cricket much before the coming of television. On the contrary, the collective anticipation before every match, reflected in the contents of newspapers and periodicals, displays a marked rise in cricket's public recognition. I hold this long-term synergy between the print media and cricket consumers to have underscored cricket's status as the representative spectator sport in the later decades.

This dissertation therefore travels through a longer history to explore the making of cricket as a popular sport in terms of tangible investments in the newspaper, magazine and advertising sectors and its consumption between 1926 and 1967. The year 1926 arguably marked the 'moment of arrival' of Indian cricket, heralded by C.K. Nayudu's absolute massacre of some high quality English bowling. In 1967, one of the most violent cricket riots, which occurred at the Eden Gardens, Calcutta, staggered the cricket world. It was also a watershed year since the events around the riot presaged India's ascendency in world cricket, a phenomenon signposted by India's first-ever away series win in New Zealand in 1968 and then two successive away Test series victories in 1971. In a departure from previous works which focused exclusively on political economy or social relations, I envisage cricket as a cultural form which was reported and produced as a consumer item and acquired wider connotations in due course. The next sections

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audiences controlled by, most importantly, mediation and consumerism. Lawrence A. Wenner ed., *Media, Sports, & Society*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989.

therefore address some of the historiographical issues concerning the mediation and consumption of sport and sporting culture.

The Agenda for a History of Mediated Sport

> ...in prison in Milan, where *Il Sole* was available: most of the prisoners, including politicals, read *La Gazzetta dello Sport*.
>
> Antonio Gramsci[33]

Newspapers, literature, film, photography, radio and television broadcasting have all had a profound effect on shaping the popular and political culture of the last century. Sport has become increasingly intertwined with media and television in particular.[34] Words and images translate a sport into a form which followers consume and reciprocate. Recognising the function of this mediation is necessary for an understanding of sporting culture.[35] Sport has shared a close relationship with the press for more than two centuries. Although the respectable press of the nineteenth century considered it secondary in importance to news concerning empire and industry, a sport press existed from as early as 1751 in the form of *The Racing Calendar* which helped the Jockey Club to bring to public notice the rules of racing.[36] The growth of popular gambling was a second and more economic rationale for the proliferation of an early sport press. Modern sport and the modern press, stresses Tony Mason, flourished together.[37] Newspapers provided free

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[33] David Forgacs ed., *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 1988, p. 376.
[34] Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes, *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture* 2nd edn., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, p. 1.
[35] Eileen Kennedy and Laura Hills, *Sport, Media and Society*, Oxford & New York: Berg, 2009, p. 120.
[36] Boyle and Haynes, *Power Play*, p. 25.
[37] Tony Mason, 'All the Winners and the Half Times'. *Sport in History* 13 (May) 1993, p. 3.

publicity, described the main events, published the results and since the early years of the nineteenth century sponsored and even judged sport events. Newspapers and the sporting press, Mason continues, facilitated the formation of specific sporting sub-cultures around particular sports and particular events.[38]

Every spectatorial and reading experience of sport, one may say, is mediated. John Bale contends, drawing on Paul Virilio's formulation, that televised and live spectating present a sport event from two analytically and experientially different angles. Live spectatorship is more subjective. Since no two people occupy the same physical space, their gazes turn out to be qualitatively different. Conversely, in televisual rendition the camera becomes the spectator and relays its perspective, refereed by the discretion of video editors, across the network of tertiary audience.[39] The interaction of media and sport has been analysed from perspectives of various academic disciplines, including specialised studies of gender, culture, media and leisure.[40] Even though the 'cultural turn' in sport studies has produced a significant body of literature not just in terms of questioning the televisual representation but all forms of literary and audio-visual communication including live commentary and video streaming on internet, the need for a historical perspective to understand the forms of mediation cannot be overestimated.

The history of sport has been to a large extent the history of mediated sport. The sources which a sport historian uses to reconstruct the past, namely newspaper reports, magazine articles, newsreels, official documents, biographical and autobiographical

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[38] Ibid., p. 4.
[39] John Bale, 'Virtual Fandoms: Futurescapes of Football', in Adam Brown ed., *Fanatics: Power, Identity, and Fandom in Football*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 273; Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.
[40] Alina Bernstein and Neil Blain eds., *Sport, Media and Culture: Global and Local Dimensions*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 1.

writings, reproduce the past from the perspective of agents of mediation such as journalists, fans, officials. *Media, Sports, and Society*, edited by Lawence A. Wenner, was arguably the earliest collection of essays which attempted to study the contours of the media-sport relationship and its influence on social and cultural life.[41] The study of the media in relation to sport, culture and society has so far has tended to be dominated by focus on television rather than the print media. Within this form of communication, research has distinguished between at least three aspects, namely production, content and audience.[42] The production of the media message invariably involves hierarchisation, personalisation, narrativising and framing of events for a particular audience. Using historical frameworks to contextualise content analysis, a number of scholars have produced path-breaking studies of the sport media.

Fabio Chisari adds depth to the analysis of the market segmentation and commercialization of English football by positioning the sport against a historical backdrop of BBC-ITV-Football League negotiations over television rights and technologies.[43] Michael Oriard and Martin Polley acknowledge the growing role of the media in shaping sporting discourse as a central element of the social and cultural history of American and British society respectively.[44] These works examine the relationship between mediated sport and the society that produces and consumes them. These studies often focus on particular media or specific sporting events and scrutinise the role played

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[41] Lawrence A. Wenner ed., *Media, Sports, & Society*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989.
[42] Garry Whannel, *Media Sport Stars: Masculinities and Moralities*, London & New York: Routledge, 2002.
[43] Fabio Chisari, *The Match: Football and the BBC, 1937-82*, Dudweiler Landstr: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010.
[44] Michael Oriard, *King Football: Sport and Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies and Magazines, the Weekly & the Daily Press*, Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001; Martin Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945*, London: Routledge, 1998.

by mediated versions of sport in the process of identity formation around issues of class, gender, ethnicity, culture and nationalism.

Apart from verbal commentaries and video feeds, mediated sport functions through two other overlapping means of expression. Sports journalism, which typically represents the largest specialism within the newspaper or news website, often a separate department with its own editorial and production team, is the premier mediator of sports. There is of course the familiar charge against sports journalism that its recurring emphasis on statistics and structural detachment from the rest of the news creates only a segmented audience—'male' and 'juvenile'.[45] This is counterbalanced by literature which constructs sports as an emotional and aspirational institution by asking rhetorical questions and producing knowledge which is in turn consumed and appropriated by sports followers.

Boyle and Haynes warn against the perils of attaching too much importance to the media alone as a lens of social development, contending that one must be alert to the wider pressures, often political, economic and cultural, which frequently set the parameters in which mediasport and its relationship with collective identities are shaped.[46] Historians often focus too much on mega events or controversies, and ignore the fact that on everyday basis journalism is very conventional and reproduce certain clichés.[47] However, it remains true that mediated discourses of sport play a composite role in reproducing, naturalizing and even constructing values, attitudes and sometimes prejudices which circulate in wider society. There is a need to recognize that often particular ideological formations of identity exist in and around sporting subcultures; the

[45] It is equally true that women and 'serious' adults may recall statistics of past matches at ease. All one requires is interest, which is bred by involvements with the forms of mediation.
[46] Boyle and Haynes, *Power Play*, pp. 10-11.
[47] Rod Brookes, *Representing Sport*, London: Arnold, 2002, p. 40.

masculine culture which often surrounds sports such as wrestling or rugby football is a case in point.[48] Detailed reports and features on these formations are some of the selling strategies adopted by the sports media.

Mediated versions of sport may have reasons to ignore or amplify certain aspects of sport culture. Coverage of international sport often carries with it a broader political agenda which is evident in India-Pakistan cricket ties or England-Argentina football matches. The point remains just as valid at the national level, where sport and its attendant coverage often become a focal point for articulating a range of collective identities, as exemplified by the football rivalry between Barcelona and Real Madrid in Spain, or Mohun Bagan and East Bengal in India. This process calls into question the complex relationship between discourses which circulate in the media about sport and its appeal. Boyle and Haynes raises the pertinent point that the press, in a bid to sustain its symbiotic relationship with sport, rarely probes the internal politics of sporting institutions, and intervenes only when corruption of organisers or scandal of practitioners threaten to dismantle the existing structure as a whole.[49] The existing structures, after all, signify an arrangement designed and laid out to optimise the consumption of certain sports-mediated cultural artefacts. The next section attends to this dimension of my problematic.

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[48] Michael A. Messner, *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1995; John Nauright and Timothy J.L. Chandler, *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, London: Frank Cass, 1996.

[49] Boyle and Haynes, *Power Play*, p. 29.

Consumers of Mediasport

A number of academics have commented on the proximate relationship of sport and physical culture with consumerism. McPherson *et al.*, for instance, suggests that 'the progressive commercialisation and commodification of sport and sporting bodies' was corollary to the growth of consumerism,[50] According to John Hargreaves, 'what links up consumer culture with sports culture so economically is their common concern with, and capacity to accommodate, the body as a means of expression.'[51] In the last decade, a number of studies have explored the role of media in the consumption of sport. Sport is highly consumable, according to Jackson, Andrews and Scherer, because:

> (1) it attracts large and passionately devoted audiences; (2) in a relative sense it is cheaper to produce than many other types of programming; (3) it is human drama at its finest, providing a stimulus and an acceptable arena for the full range of human emotion; (4) it reveals real people demonstrating the limits of the body; (5) it is sexy and erotic (Guttmann, 1996); (6) it provides us with carefully crafted narratives of heroes and villains (Whannel, 2002); (7) it is associated with positive images of health and nationhood (Rowe, 1996).[52]

According to Rod Brookes, sports news delivers a large, loyal (mainly young male) readership to advertisers, and is therefore crucial to the economic success of news organisations or publishers.[53] Specialised sport magazines and tabloids are published exclusively for specific groups of followers.

Hargreaves emphasised that the significance of sports varied within and between cultures, and that an account of sport, power and culture can be comprehensive only when

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[50] Barry McPherson, James Curtis and John Loy, *The Social Significance of Sport: An Introduction to the Sociology of Sport*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1993, p. 81.
[51] John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986, p. 134.
[52] Steven Jackson, David Andrews and Jay Scherer, 'Introduction: The Contemporary Landscape of Sport Advertising', in Steven Jackson and David Andrews eds., *Sport, Culture and Advertising: Identities, Commodities and the Politics of Representation*, p. 10.
[53] Brookes, *Representing Sport*, p. 38.

it refers to other forms of culture such as popular culture and consumer culture, and more specifically, the relationship between the populist attraction of sport and capitalism.[54] Sport has become increasingly allied to the consumption of goods and services through discourses about the modern consumer-citizen. In the second half of the twentieth century in Britain, for example, the media has acted as a most important transforming force, turning sport into a 'male soap opera'.[55] Sport has been promoted like other commodities—as a consistent and quality product.[56]

Garry Crawford's work on the everyday life of fans and networks of fandom emphasises the need to study the influence of mass media, sport-related commodities, and promotional activities on fan loyalty.[57] The contributors to the volume edited by Steven Jackson and David Andrews have recognised advertising as an important site for the analysis of power relations, cultural politics and cultural representation of sport.[58] Barry Smart and Garry Whannel have analysed contexts in which key economic and cultural factors including media coverage and commercial encroachment have recast individual sportspersons or teams as celebrities.[59] Correspondingly, the studies situate the sport fan—spectators and readers of sport events—at the centre of a complex network of social relations such as class or community.

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[54] Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture*. p. 9.
[55] Richard Holt and Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain 1945–2000*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 94.
[56] Ibid., p. 177.
[57] Garry Crawford, *Consuming Sport: Fans, Sport And Culture*, London & New York, Routledge, 2004.
[58] Steven J. Jackson and David L. Andrews eds., *Sport, Culture and Advertising: Identities, Commodities and the Politics of Representation*, London & New York: Routledge, 2005.
[59] David L. Andrews and Steven J. Jackson eds., *Sport Stars: The Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity*, London: Routlegde, 2002; Barry Smart, *The Sport Star: Modern Sport and the Cultural Economy of Sporting Celebrity*, London: Sage, 2005; Garry Whannel, *Media Sport Stars: Masculinities and Moralities*, London: Routledge, 2002.

Understanding the consumption of mediated sport by the sport fan requires locating sport fandom within its broader social context. Boyle and Haynes advocate that even mediated football consumption is experienced differently by fans according to their own sense of tradition, community and place. The sports media has been driven by an urge to capture that sense of belonging to class and community, and in some cases gender, that is important to the sport fan.[60] Much of the research into this interplay of sport, culture and society since at least the 1980s has acknowledged the importance of a cultural politics that transcends the concerns and confines of the nation-state.

Media-cricket and its Consumers in India

Compared to other sports, the body of cricket writing in India is so large that it is not possible to imagine cricket without the literature it has produced.[61] This corpus of cricket literature, contends Paul Dimeo, has promoted a literary tradition which celebrates cricket as a ritual of either conforming or dissenting against paradigms of moral, masculine Christianity, and has marginalised the impact of other sports.[62] He explains how patronage of social elites and financial promises contributed to the proliferation of cricket writings in the print media and books, and continued to dominate indigenous sports

[60] Boyle and Haynes, *Power Play*, p. 202.
[61] In the words of Benny Green, 'Not only does cricket, more than any other game, inspire the urge to literary expression; it is almost as though the game itself would not exist at all until written about.' *A History of Cricket,* London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988, p. 14.
[62] This is not entirely true. In Bengal, local football still promotes more social memories than cricket.

writings. Contemporary historians of cricket such as Guha, he illustrates, consider cricket a mirror of the nation since its past has been subconsciously mythologized as such.[63]

I consider an analysis of representations of cricket and the social sphere around the game important for understanding the making of a significant section of modern India. I work under the assumption that English or vernacular texts enhanced cricket's acceptability and marketability to consumers, which I intend to examine in detail for a better appreciation of public culture in India. Representation mediates the space along the sport-consumer continuum. By analysing representations of cricket, cricketers and the cricket-consuming public in various media—local and national newspapers, periodicals and oral accounts—I intend to situate the sport not merely as a reflection of broader socio-economic history, but as an engine of modernizing some of the forces which had shaped lexical and visual consumerism in late colonial and postcolonial urban India.

The style of playing cricket has been considered a form of high art ever since Neville Cardus elevated the game of cricket as the ultimate expression of human aestheticism. Aside from achieving this figurative effect, writings on cricket reflect not only how the sport was perceived at any given time but play a key role in shaping perceptions of the sport too. In the nineteenth century the ethical status accorded to cricket was very much connected with its status as an imperial sport and with the literary representations of the empire as a moral crusade. In England, print circulated cricket's discourses across subjects varying from statesmen to gamblers, associating with it a range of values. The mainstream literature celebrated cricket as the highest code of moral behaviour whereas it disowned cricket's link with peasants, gamblers and drunken

[63] Paul Dimeo, 'Cricket and the Misinterpretation of Indian Sports History', *Historical Studies* 24, 2005, pp. 98-111.

spectators. Cricket's past remained an imbalanced history of playful aristocrats until Derek Birley recovered some of these lost histories.[64]

Literary representations have arguably done much to shape perceptions of cricket, but evidence concerning what readers made of cricket's canonical works and whether outlooks changed between classes, localities and over time is scarce. This is why a close reading of everyday newspaper reports is particularly useful. In order to understand the cultural and social implications of cricket in India, I examine several forms of writings such as newspaper reports, fiction and poetry as witness to cricket's spread within the colony and the post-colony. These texts can be shown to have been instrumental, argues Anthony Bateman, not only in dissemination and acculturation of cricket, but also in terms of 'cricket's self-representation as a hegemonic cultural form within the imagined community of empire' and nation, in the context of India.[65] Taking a cue from Bateman, I argue that the texts constituted the cricket field as an arena on which to inscribe accomplishment. They invested in this cultural space the agency to transform the identities of colonial subjects, and formulated indigenous public cultures through manipulated circulation of the symbols of cricket. Put another way, the representations which strove to forge a clan of consumers consisting of spectators, listeners and readers, evoked the hegemonic colonial cultural bond and subsequently broke it to weave an indigenous bond that rearticulated hegemony. These writings, I contend, are heuristic tools to understand the emerging cultures of cricket consumption in modern India.

[64] Derek Birley, *The Willow Wand: Some Cricket Myths Explored*, London: Aurum Press, 2000 (1979).
[65] Anthony Bateman, *Cricket, Literature and Culture: Symbolising the Nation, Destabilizing Empire*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, p. 12.

Cultural studies scholars worldwide have discussed an extensive range of topics related to advertising, working with a broad horizon of theoretical and methodological positions. Advertisements of sport have been largely overlooked in these studies. Although we witness some recent development in the study of sport advertising, India occupies a marginal corner in this sub-discipline. Writing on the Fair & Lovely commercial aired during India's World Cup 2003 campaign, Anisha Datta analyses how a television commercial simulated and capitalised on the dominant aesthetic, careerist, consumerist desires of female subjects in India.[66] This is probably the only contribution to sport advertisements in India. In the first chapter, I examine the efforts of the sport press to weave a band of loyal customers around the game of cricket, and the attempts of advertisers to associate consumer items with discourses of cricket, in order to increase brand value and hence consumption of specific products. I have selected the English newspapers of Bombay for analysis, for two reasons: firstly, these are the earliest and most extensive texts available; and secondly, because, as Douglas Haynes points out, English newspapers made greater efforts to develop brand loyalties than vernacular dailies.[67]

In this chapter, I engage with the cricket-related phrases and images used in consumer item advertisements to register how the latter produced or reproduced hegemonies related to race, sexuality, class, nation etc. and constructed particular identities and markets in the context of late colonial Bombay. These advertisements can

[66] Anisha Datta, 'Fair's Unfair: Simulations of Consumption and Career in Indian Advertising', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 25 (12), 2008, pp. 1628-36.
[67] Douglas Haynes, 'Creating the Consumer? Advertising, Capitalism, and the Middle Class in Urban Western India, 1914-40', in Douglas E. Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, and Haruka Yanagisawa eds., *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 186.

be shown to have signified modernization of commercial networks towards the end of the colonial period using cricket as the meridian of quality, sophistication and class. Interestingly, the campaigns demonstrate that consumption, even in those early days, was a field contested by European and anti-colonial sensibilities.

The arguments made in the first chapter are explored in greater detail in the second chapter by means of a case study of a cricket personality. Descriptions of sportspersons are significant texts for analysing how the media tend to make a business out of distributing dramatized knowledge of the game. Historians have acknowledged the complex and varied roles of contemporary sport celebrities as athletic labourers, entertainers, marketable commodities, role models, and political figures within an increasingly global cultural economy.[68] Although the contemporary, late modern sport celebrity has attracted significant amount of attention recently, images of sport heroes from the early twentieth century or earlier have rarely been investigated. This is particularly true for history of cricket. The social impact of no pre-1950s cricketer other than W.G. Grace, Ranjitsinhji, Don Bradman and, surprisingly, Palwankar Baloo has so far been rigorously studied.[69]

The second chapter analyses the growing influence of cricket in the urban milieu, and extends the study of sporting celebrity, by historicising representations of C.K. Nayudu in newspapers and biographies. Nayudu, someone utterly disliked by his team

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[68] Smart, *The Sport Star: Modern Sport and the Cultural Economy of Sporting Celebrity*, p. 9.
[69] W.F. Mandle, 'W.G. Grace as a Victorian Hero', in *Historical Studies* 19 (76), 1981, pp. 353-68; Robert Low, *W.G. Grace: An Intimate Biography*, London: John Blake, 2004; Mario Rodrigues, *Batting for the Empire: A Political Biography of Ranjitsinhji*, New Delhi: Penguin, 2003; Satadru Sen, *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K.S. Ranjitsinhji*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004; Tara Brabazon, 'Our Don and Their Eddie', in *Playing on the Periphery: Sport, Identity and Memory*, Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2006; Brett Hutchins, *Don Bradman: Challenging the Myth*, Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Guha, *Corner of a Foreign Field*, pp. 123-47.

mates, became an object of popular fantasy for qualities which he might not have possessed. He exemplified and transformed the discourses of public culture more than any other contemporary sportsperson in India. The chapter examines biographical and newspaper representations of Nayudu, drawing particular attention to how contemporary accounts nationalised his body as a stand against the European attributes of masculine behaviour. Thereafter it explores why newspapers and advertisers had selected the persona of Nayudu as an intermediary between production and consumption. It demonstrates how the media in colonial India promoted him as a star and dramatized his contributions on the field of play into a spectacle conducive to building a market around cricket, in the context of rising middle class consumerism in Bombay in the 1930-40s.

In the third chapter, I explore women's consumption of cricket by looking at the debates over cricket-watching women in Calcutta. I prefer a shift in location primarily because the relative abundance and depth of vernacular cricket writing in Calcutta on female spectatorship offer more valuable insights than other possible sources. Feminist scholarship in sport has been concerned with the documentation and presentation of gender differences through the sports media which, they suggest, continues to associate women with appearance rather than performance. Consequently feminist scholars have pointed out that the content of sports media production largely emplots women athletes as the object of sports gaze rather than the subject.[70] I propose a shift from female athletes to spectators may lead us to some fresh insights to consumption of sports by women as well as on processes and networks within which it is implicated. I argue that the exigencies of

[70] Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports*, London: Routledge, 1994.

leisure consumerism might have exercised greater influence on the mediation of women in and outside the sport place.

I begin with a historical background of women's presence in sport grounds. I briefly explore what I call the construction of an 'ideal' women-sport relationship, and proceed to examine a supposed subversion of this paradigm in the context of women's experience at the Eden Gardens, the international Test venue of Calcutta. Whereas the historiography of women and society in Indian has mostly addressed domesticity, I deal with activities in public spaces to examine the interface of the domestic and the public. I review the shifts in representations of femininity within the news media and in cricket books to understand the media's interaction with the gendered public sphere of cricket.

My next chapter examines the ways in which a riot in the cricket stadium was reported and responded to. In the introduction to the book *Soccer and Disaster*, the editors contend that analyses of disasters that consider not only the 'causes' of disastrous incidents, but also the ways in which societies and communities construct and respond to tragedies, can reveal much about the social, economic and political cultures within which we make sense of our worlds. The essays in this collection offer an analysis of particular disasters with resonance for a wider understanding of football's social and political economies in different cultural times and places.[71] I examine the mediations of the New Year's Day riot at the Eden Gardens in 1967 for a nuanced understanding of the media's management of sport spectatorship.

[71] Paul Darby, Martin Johnes and Gavin Mellor, 'Football Disasters: A Conceptual Frame', in Darby, Johnes, Mellor eds. *Soccer and Disaster: International Perspectives*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, p. 4.

The content and style of reporting, the chapter demonstrates, were often informed by the political or social affiliation of editors, major journalists and consumers. Contemporary newspapers published different accounts of the possible managerial causes, government inaction, police inefficiency and miscellaneous topics related to the incident. They tried to establish their respective investigations as authentic by means of indirect polemics. A close reading of the media narratives in the context of editorial backgrounds and cultures of cricket consumption reveals the ambiguities of mediation and urban consumer society. The chapter illustrates how the sport press capitalised on potential readers' collective/individual sensibility about sport and stadium events, which were visualised as sites of social relations such as community, ethnicity and civic pride.

Methodologies

The instrumentality of theory in sport studies has been a matter of debate between historians and sociologists. To cut a long story short, historians criticise sociological studies of sport as laden with the ideological baggage of the individual researcher. They argue that sociologists use sport as a set of data to test and legitimise certain theoretical presumptions, which leads to insular, fallacious positions because the latter do not adequately frame sporting structures in historical paradigms.[72] A more critical framework, used by the likes of Grant Jarvie, Joseph Maguire and Jeffrey Hill, synthesises the theoretical paradigms of sociology with the empirical-analytical methods of history.[73]

[72] Grant Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 61.
[73] Grant Jarvie, *Highland Games: The Making of the Myth*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991; Joseph Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999; Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

This dissertation takes a similar interdisciplinary approach to address some of the historiographical limitations. Not only does it ask how sport has been affected by the historical period in which it is located, but it also traces the agency of sport or sportsperson in producing change, that is, the extent to which sport has influenced structures of socio-political identities. The relationship between sport's reflection in the media in the heterogenous forms of narrative reports, photographs, advertisements etc. and broader public issues is the most important question that this work pursues. It inspects the society around cricket from various perspectives, taking the game's textual nature as the entry point whereas race, caste and nationalism were the essence of previous works. In addition to using conventional archived materials such as commission reports, it depends heavily on diverse modes of representation which includes newspaper reports, biographies, memoirs and private memories, and interprets them with tools ranging from semiotics to ethnography. While focusing on the linguistic, discursive elements in the remnants of history, it takes into account the limits and excesses of evidence concerning mediation and reality. Otherwise, in a constructivist mode, it interprets the remnants as sources yielding knowledge of the historical past and also the present.

Like any other academic discipline, sports studies have their own analytical perspective, but it often slides into an exploration of praxis in keeping with the performative aspect of sport. This dissertation maintains a balance between sport and history, and provides a field where their fluid boundaries intersect, interrogate and integrate one another. Or at least takes a few baby steps in that direction.

CHAPTER ONE

Reporting and Selling Leisure: Cricket News and Advertisements in the English Press in Bombay

Indian cricket and its reporting underwent a significant change in the 1920s. Previously English newspapers devoted more space to tennis or swimming, while those sympathetic to the nationalist cause dwelt more on 'native' football or hockey. Three concurrent developments helped cricket take the centre stage in sports coverage in the 1920s. Firstly, diverse trajectories of regional cricket now began to intertwine as cricketers travelled and took part in tournaments across the country. A bunch of skilful cricketers arrived to make the Bombay Quadrangular tournament competitive as never before, drawing more spectators.[1] Secondly, the princely and English patrons began work towards forming a centralised organisation for better regulation and development of the domestic circuit. Their labour resulted into the establishment of the Board of Control for Cricket in India in 1928 as the governing body of Indian cricket. Thirdly, good cricketing performances by Indians against international teams started attracting foreign press. The shift is nowhere more apparent than in the editorial policy of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. The newspaper had no sport section until the mid-1920s but started publishing full scorecards of even local club cricket from the late 1920s. The game of cricket must have impressed its authorities

[1] Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, London: Picador, 2002, p. 169.

sufficiently 'seriously' for them to revise the editorial policy of a which took great pride on its political commentaries and had little attention left to devote to sports. This chapter examines English newspapers and periodicals published in colonial India in early twentieth century to understand how the press portrayed and sold cricket while the sport increasingly came to constitute an inalienable aspect of urban society.

Besides reporting, advertisements constituted an important segment of the news media which annexed cricket to its agenda. The Indian advertising industry had taken its first step towards addressing a consumer society in the late 1920s. B. Dattaram & Co. in Bombay, founded in 1905, is believed to be the first advertising agency in India. In the 1920s, a number of multinational agencies were set up—L.A. Stronach & Co. (1926), Bomas Ltd. (1928) and J. Walter Thompson (1929) being among the most notable.[2] How they worked out particular decisions regarding specifics of promotional campaigns is largely unknown. But the culminating advertisements in colonial newspapers are relatively abundant, which form a critical source of interpreting consumption patterns in urban society.

The nature and role of advertising as the intermediary between culture, consumption and capitalism have been extensively analysed and debated. The major arguments are best summarised by Varda Burstyn who identifies desire and anxiety as the two key emotions that have been manipulated to make people buy consumer products. Since the 1970s this has been systematized through deft use of psycho-demographics and

[2] William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003, p. 12.

market segmentation techniques.[3] The formula involved in the former is the creation of a brand image that a product can deliver something that a potential consumer will find desirable—a more beautiful body, sexual attractiveness, friendship etc. An anxiety is created to the effect that the consumer finds life unfulfilled unless the certain strategically advertised products are obtained. An organised manufacture of dissatisfaction was the key to market development.[4]

Cultural theorists of advertising have tended to ignore sports, whereas scholars working on the cultural politics of sport have only recently acknowledged advertising, and by extension visuals, as an integral part of sporting culture.[5] Advertisers use pictorial narratives—images and corresponding texts—as outer stimuli to direct 'dissatisfied' consumers to the solution of their misery. The importance of studying these brand narratives is underlined by Timothy Dewhirst and Robert Sparks in their discussion of Canadian tobacco companies in the following manner,

> Sponsorship messages comprise a system of commercialized metanarratives about the relationships between people, products and ways of living in a consumer culture. This system helps to normalize the integration of brands and brand promotions into people's daily lives as a status attribute of celebrities and a social marker for consumers.[6]

In the introduction to a recent addition to this corpus, Steven Jackson and David Andrews demonstrate that instead of simple deconstruction which guided the initial studies of sport

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[3] Varda Burstyn, *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics and the Culture of Sport*, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999.
[4] Burstyn, *The Rites of Men*, p. 109.
[5] The 'pictorial turn' in sport studies has inspired a few works such as Kasia Boddy's history of boxing's cultural diffusion. She has analysed an enormous domain of visual sources, spanning over 150 posters, film advertisements, postcards, paintings and other materials ranging from depictions of fisticuff on Mycenaean pottery from Cyprus (1300-1200 BCE) to Michael Halsband's photograph of Andy Warhol and Jean Michel Basquiat as boxers (10 July 1985). Boddy, *Boxing: A Cultural History*, London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2008.
[6] Timothy Dewhirst and Robert Sparks, 'Intertextuality, Tobacco Sponsorship of Sports, and Adolescent Male Smoking Culture', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 27 (4), 2003, p. 373.

advertising, a more critical insight could be gained by situating advertisements in the socio-historical contexts of their circulation.[7] The essays in the collection question the construction and representation of particular identities, markets and hegemonies based on concepts of race, gender, sexuality, disability and national identities involved in sport advertising. While this collection and other related works offer excellent observations of the contemporary panorama of sport advertising as a cultural form and as an agent of global capitalism, they seldom refer to any context predating the modern forms of sport capitalism which were put in place as late as the 1980s. This chapter seeks to address that lacuna by taking a look at 'pre-modern' cricket advertising in India as a first step towards the study of sport capitalism in a decolonising society.

In choosing a particular sport as a vehicle of product promotion, commercial corporations bank on its social acceptance, the response it presently evokes, and its potential of optimizing spectator/reader interest in future. They do not make arbitrary decisions; such choices in turn distinguish and shape who or what counts as significant within the sporting calendar. In a process reminiscent of commercial appropriation of football in England or baseball in the United States, corporate entities in India adopted cricket as the most frequent and convenient means to spotlight their products. The process of commodification of cricket started in the early twentieth century and matured as Indian cricket developed as a competitive sport, eventually reaching its peak in the mid-1990s.

The initial cricket advertisements were the ones in which manufacturers of cricket equipment showcased their range, from the late nineteenth century onward. As newspapers grew in circulation, advertisements in sport pages increasingly became a

[7] Steven Jackson & David Andrews, *Sport, Culture and Advertising: Identities, Commodities and the Politics of Representation*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, p. 3.

major means of informing the public about forthcoming matches. Finally, advertisers used phrases and images related to cricket to promote a variety of consumer items ranging from wristwatches to alcohols which were somewhat indirectly related to cricket. In this chapter, I primarily interpret the visual metaphors and print captions of this third type as they appeared in English newspapers and periodicals in Bombay. Firstly, I treat miscellaneous advertisements as semiotic objects in order to understand how the use of cricket might have infused difference into a familiar object, rendering the latter more attractive to consumers. Secondly, I contextualise these texts in the history of consumer culture and 'cultural imperialism' to appraise the interlinked nature of these institutions in India. Together, they offer an insight into the early material culture of sport consumption in India.

Magazines and Annuals

Publication of cricket periodicals can be said to have begun in the 1930s. S.G. Narwane of Bombay published a weekly magazine called *Cricket Times* (Figure 1.1). Priced at one anna, the magazine ran between August and October 1933 and returned in August 1934. A total of twenty-six weekly issues came out before it disappeared for good.[8] A.J. Francis and Frank Pereira brought out *Cricket* in 1936, an annual consisting of forty-eight pages. A second issue, which also proved to be the last, came out in 1937-38. *Crickinia*, the

[8] *The Times of India*, 28 Jul 1933, p. 12.

annual edited by Muni Lal from Lahore, was better received but lasted merely six years between 1939 and 1944.[9]

Indian Cricket Annual, published in 1946-47 by *The Hindu*, was a cricket yearbook modelled on the *Wisden Almanac*. It replicated many of *Wisden's* usual features including the 'Five Cricketers of the Year' award and even the page size. It published brief reports and full scores of every first-class domestic cricket match in India and of matches played by Indian teams abroad. There was a detailed statistics section on domestic cricket, India in Test cricket, a small section on Test cricket abroad and obituaries. From 1952 onwards, it started a *special portrait* section in which a notable ex-cricketer's achievements were highlighted. S.K. Gurunathan was the first editor. After his death in 1966, P.N. Sunderasan and G. Viswanath shouldered editorial responsibilities. Reproduction of several features of the *Wisden* legitimized the journal's authenticity as a source of knowledge and authority in judging cricket. Its monopoly briefly came under threat from 1957-65 as Dicky Rutnagur's *Indian Cricket-field Annual* captured some of the market. Its publication was terminated after Rutnagur left for the UK to work for *The Daily Telegraph*.[10] While most other cricket periodical struggled for want of financial backing, *Indian Cricket Annual* continued to be printed until 2004. The almost total dependence of early Indian cricket periodicals in formal terms on similar English publications as means to establish quality and authenticity was a most formative characteristic. At the same time, the financial constraints of most such publications, especially the amateur ones, highlight their limited market. Finally, a cricket periodical from a firmly nationalist publication house modelled entirely on its English counterparts

[9] Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1980, p. 152.
[10] Ibid.

ironically exposed—at least partly—the limited and Anglicised elite constituency which it addressed.

The most 'handsome, well illustrated, informative and glossy-paged' among these periodicals was *Indian Cricket*, a monthly venture by the Cricket Club of India (CCI). It ran for sixty-three issue between 1934 and 1939.[11] The magazine was patronized by the likes of the Viceroy, the Maharajadhiraj of Patiala and Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Premier of Punjab who served as BCCI President (1935-37). Printed on art paper, adorned with illustrations and photos, and replete with interesting, serious articles by well-known sportspersons on various subjects, it became popular among English-reading sport enthusiasts. The content was not restricted to cricket. Articles on hockey, tennis, soccer, rugger, golf, flying and athletics were published too. Since it was also the official newsletter of the Cricket Club of India, which had a generous purse, it faced little problem in employing some of the best sportspeople as writers. The first issue contained articles such as 'Seriousness of Test Cricket' by the 'Australian', 'India in International Cricket' by C.K. Nayudu, 'Building for To-morrrow' by an 'Englishman', 'Umpiring' by J.B. Higgins, and 'How to Get the Most of Your Bowing' by Hedley Verity.[12] The contents of forthcoming issues and subscription rates were often advertised in *The Times of India*. In some of the advertisements, the magazine claimed to bring out the 'vital news *behind* the score; the story *behind* "who won". 'Vivid, vital, dramatic and instructive', it demanded, 'here at last is India's *real* sports magazine'.[13]

[11] Ibid., p. 151. Cashman erroneously put the end of publication in 1940.
[12] *Indian Cricket*, Oct 1934.
[13] *TOI*, 23 Oct 1936, p. 16. Emphasis mine.

Indian Cricket uniquely connected media producers with consumers since there was little journalistic distance between the producers and the consumers of sport news. They came roughly from the same class, which is *already* well-schooled in cricket and shared as such an implied camaraderie. The coverage was quite extensive. The in-depth review of the Bombay Quadrangular tournament in the January 1937 issue of the magazine, for instance, started with an appreciative account of the thousands who swarmed the Gymkhana ground.[14] All the three matches played in the tournament were described in vivid detail despite a month's lapse of the publication from the actual events. Numerous photographs enriched the narrative, concluded with the photograph of the dinner organised by the Merry Makers Club in honour of the victorious Hindus. A comprehensive statistical account of the cricketers' performances throughout the history of the Quadrangular tournament (1912-36) was published as well.[15] The report on the Quadrangular was followed by news of cricket from Ceylon, the Ranji Trophy (still called the Inter-provincial Championship), the MCC's tour of Australia, and the report of the Beaumont Committee on the problems of the All-India team during the 1936 England tour, replete with scorecards and photographs. The rest of the issue contained review of sporting literature, essays on playing instructions (the world-famous Rene Lacoste wrote a serial column on how to improve one's tennis), and reflections on other important local, national and international sport events, held in places as various as Madras and New Zealand, which included racing, lawn tennis, golf, hockey football and ski-ing. The comprehensiveness of reporting and the abundance of action photographs often played on the ideal reader's assumed inquisitiveness and sense of missing the action.

[14] *IC*, Jan 1937, pp. 180-6.
[15] Ibid, pp. 188-9.

The layout of the magazine directed the reader's gaze to texts that satiated not only one's desire for knowledge but facilitated indirect participation in one's favourite sport. In addition, some of the reflective articles, such as Reginald Clark's exploration of 'How Old Are the Popular Modern Sports?' typically focused on aspects of contemporary sport and helped to define its characteristics, norms and values.[16] Evidently, not only was the magazine expensive, but was suggestive of 'too much of British pen and British material from cover to cover'.[17] It did not attempt to relate to variants of social identity, attitudes to sport or consumption patterns; to that extent it was somewhat monochromatic. An English-educated sport enthusiast, at least moderately wealthy and familiar with 'western' outlooks and habits was clearly the ideal reader of this magazine. I take up for case study, the range of consumer items advertised is the January 1937 issue (which had hardly changed in the medium term)—Majestic and Taj Mahal Hotel, Brandon's Bar and Restaurant, Jacob's Lager liquor, Macropolo's Turkish cigarettes, Bourn-vita and Quaker Oats, Agfa Photo Co., Adler car and Goodyear tyres. Such specialisation effectively prevented the magazine from targeting a wider subscription base despite its attractive news value. However, the commercial value of these ventures cannot be assessed with statistical precision since detailed long term data on sales or subscription are not available.

[16] Ibid, p. 230.
[17] *Bombay Chronicle*, 28 Oct 1934, p. 10.

Newspapers

Cricket's popularity in the 1930s is manifest in the wide coverage of the Bombay Pentangular tournament by leading dailies such as the *Bombay Chronicle*, *Bombay Sentinel* and *The Times of India*. Summarised reports of every match featured at the centre of the first page and details published in a separate page fully devoted to sport. Introduction of running radio commentary further intensified the public's engagement with cricket. Office-goers and students would throng hotels and other public spaces, eagerly awaiting breaking of news.[18] Even before the radio days:

> You could hear reactions of the spectators in the corridors of Hornby Road; you could feel that great things were happening, that offices were denuded of clerks, especially in the afternoon... there came the muffled voices of ten thousand spectators, a call from afar which made work impossible and narrowed Bombay to that sunny green spot where our heroes were making heart beat pit-a-pat.[19]

It should be noted that when radio commentary on the Pentangular was banned in 1940 and directions issued to report Ranji Trophy matches instead, the All India Radio petitioned a review of the decision specifically mentioning that the Pentangular broadcasts were the most valued radio events of the year, listened to by 'every class, community or creed'.[20]

Bombay Chronicle set a new benchmark in sports reporting. Apart from detailed descriptions of matches, it comprehensively analysed each of the turning points of that particular day. Even after taking up nearly half of the first page, the match report would continue in the sport page until the editor was satisfied that sufficient attention had been

[18] *Bombay Sentinel*, 23 Nov 1937, p. 4.
[19] Rustam Vakeel, 'The Joys of Cricket', in *BC*, 2 Dec 1934, p. 8.
[20] *BC*, 16 Dec 1940, p. 8.

given to the event. Action photos and full scorecards were displayed just as prominently. As many as five photographs were included in the report on the second 'Test' against Lord Tennyson's touring XI in 1937.[21] Any interesting spectacle on or off the field was allotted even more space in the first page, relegating even significant political developments. The news that 'Nayudu to Lead India in Fifth Test?', for instance, was printed in bigger fonts above the news of 'Purge for Erring Congressmen' during the Haripura Congress in 1938. Working Committee discussions on the viability of non-violence as a policy and the Congress' stand regarding Kisan Sabha leaders, issues which have since inspired a number of historical inquiries, were evidently considered secondary to Nayudu's success.[22] Nayudu's status as a hero and an icon for public consumption led to a number of innovations in the press, which is discussed in a separate chapter.

B.G. Horniman, a British civilian renowned for sympathy towards India and a distinguished editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, started an independent newspaper called the *Bombay Sentinel* in the 1920s. His insistence to continue the same editorial policies resulted in the *Bombay Sentinel* following the path charted out by the *Bombay Chronicle*. The news contents were similar, but the *Bombay Sentinel*'s layout was more attractive. It summarized the important events of the day's play in a box. This feature helped cricket fans, especially professionals caught up between love for cricket and job obligations, to quickly read and know in advance what to expect from the main body of news. Presentation of tabulated information inside a box in the first page itself was sure to draw the attention of non-interested readers too.

[21] Ibid, 15 Dec 1937, p. 16.
[22] Ibid, 5 Jan 1938, p. 1.

The newspapers represented cricket as a British sport successfully indigenized though years of involved participation. They were extremely conscious to maintain and constantly remind the readers of the spirit of cricket. Letters bemoaning the lack of sporting temperament or righteousness of administrative measures were published regularly. One such letter reads,

> Last Sunday such a miniature "battle" was fought in the tent where I was sitting. Sugarcane pieces, small stones, big berries were freely used, let alone catcalls, jeerings and cursing. Almost every hour it was staged... At first it was amongst the youngsters, but later on "gentlemen" also joined it.[23]

Stress on the word gentleman clearly shows the letter-writer's concern about the preservation of certain values considered intrinsic to cricket as a way of life, fit for men of a certain disposition. The spectators not schooled in the Victorian ethics of the game evidently did not see any error of judgment in surging into the ground at the slightest provocation. As the instances of interruption went up, cricketers signed a petition urging the spectators to desist from rowdy behaviour.[24] The newspapers, irrespective of their editorial policies, carefully avoided stereotypical descriptions of players bordering on religion or ethnicity. They were generally cautious about publishing anything that might annoy certain sections of readers. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, while reporting a Pentangular match between Hindus and Muslims, mentioned that at least three umpiring decisions went against the Hindus, but did not reveal the umpire's name or religion.[25] A report in *Bombay Chronicle* pointed out that sport does not recognize distinction based on social status and that ability and sportsmanship were the only things that counted.[26] Indian

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[23] Ibid, 2 Dec 1934, p. 8.
[24] *TOI*, 21 Nov 1938, p. 22.
[25] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 Nov 1935, p. 11.
[26] *BC*, 1 Dec 1934, p. 3.

cricket in the 1930s had been looking forward to be taken more seriously by the elite cricketing bodies of England and Australia. The Indian cricketing public were required to be familiarised with the game's traditions in order for the press to project a healthy sporting image of the country, which the newspapers evidently tried hard to circulate.

As more people started following the proceedings, the press sold more units of news and made more profit than ever. To increase its exclusivity, newspapers started deputing correspondents to watch live matches and report eye-witness accounts. It developed a higher-quality graphic outline to display the profiles and statistics of cricketers to capture readers' interest ahead of a hugely anticipated game.

The Times of India started sponsoring a tournament, called the Times of India Challenge Shield, in 1930. Twenty-four teams from corporate houses, colleges and public services participated in the inaugural edition. K.M. Rangnekar, one of the best left-handed batsmen in colonial India who played in three Tests, considered Bombay cricket to have been built around this tournament.[27] It became a major public attraction in 1944 after the Pentangular was banned, and emerged as the most prestigious corporate cricket contest in the country.[28] It attracted many top players from all over the country who were either given a job in the office or hired *ad hoc* to elevate the office team to a higher division.

Apart from sponsoring events, *The Times of India* held various contests for readers, one among which was a 'predict the team' challenge. The reader was supposed to enter the names of probable cricketers for the unofficial matches against the touring MCC team. At least eight of the twelve names, including that of the standby player, had to be

[27] Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p. 49.
[28] Ibid, p. 51.

correct for claiming a prize. Rs. 200, a lucrative amount at that time, was offered as the first prize.[29] Later they started another contest called 'Cricket Forecast', in which Rs. 500 was announced as the prize money. The participant had to send a coupon containing the correct outcomes of twelve county cricket matches held on 22-25 August 1928.[30] In case no one matched the correct sequence of results, the daily was supposed to award Rs. 200 to the entry which predicted the nearest correct result, containing at least eight accurate predictions. Readers were encouraged to send as many entries as one liked, especially since entry was kept free of cost.

To mark the visits by foreign cricket teams, *The Times of India* would bring out pull-out pages which could be collected as souvenirs. It published a twelve-page special issue on the occasion of Brabourne Stadium's inauguration.[31] The *Illustrated Weekly of India*, the newspaper's weekly edition, was known for its sports coverage. One of the earliest attractions of the *Illustrated Weekly*'s sports section was a column in which Test players revealed secrets of playing good cricket.[32] It held a 'predict the team' competition similar to *The Times of India*, but the prize money was a gigantic Rs. 2500, to be won by the person whose list of the probable twelve cricketers to play against the MCC matched the actual combination.[33] In 1950, they started to publish coloured photographs of leading cricketers with each issue and encouraged readers to collect them.[34] The comprehensive coverage of cricket must have been one of the major selling points of this weekly. It may

[29] *TOI*, 17 Nov 1926, p. 7.
[30] Ibid., 6 Aug 1928, p. 16 ; 8 Aug 1928, p. 15; 16 Aug 1928, p. 2; 21 Aug 1928, p. 11.
[31] Ibid., 8 Dec 1937.
[32] Ibid., 10 May 1928, p. 12.
[33] Ibid., 29 Apr 1933, p. 5.
[34] Ibid., 24 Mar 1950, p. 9 ; 1 Apr 1950, p. 8; 2 Apr, 1950, p. 4.

also be credited with inaugurating a systematic culture of sports consumption, turning cricketers' photos into commodified cultural artefacts to be treasured by its readers.

Advertisements

It is difficult to identify exactly when sport press became a key institution in the Indian mass media. It is more difficult to locate when the first sport-related advertisements started coming out. One of the earliest advertisements was a call for participation in a friendly match between Her Majesty's 56th Regiment and the Bombay Gymkhana. C.C. Strettell, the Secretary of the Gymkhana, placed a notice in *The Times of India*, asking interested gentlemen to be present at the ground at the prescribed hour before the match started.[35] Another call for participation, searching for estimable opposition, came out in 1886, the year in which a subcontinental team undertook an overseas cricket tour for the first time. It was written in the form of a letter to the editor from the 'invincible' student cricketers of a school, most of whom were Parsi. It reads as follws:

> ...the present students of the Bombay Proprietary School, and your humble servant amongst them, having won each and every match in which they were engaged till now, call their team "invincible", and shall feel highly obliged to receive an offer of playing a match with the present students of any school or college in the Bombay Presidency... we would offer even a pretty prize to those who may prove themselves stronger than ourselves.[36]

The CCI routinely used the sports page to announce daily rates of admission to different stands and the location of the ticket counter for a variety of matches ranging from the unofficial Test between an India XI and Lord Tennyson's XI to famine and flood relief

[35] Ibid., 6 Nov 1861, p. 2.
[36] Ibid., 2 Dec 1886, p. 6.

matches (Figure 1.2). On the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Brabourne Stadium, the CCI informed its members in advance to wear 'morning dress or lounge suits' at the ceremony.[37] Other regional cricket authorities made similar use of the sport press. The organisers of the All-India Moinud Dowla Challenge Gold Cup, for instance, invited entries for their tournament though a notice in *The Times of India*.[38] The early notices may thus be seen to embody messages either announcing matches and seeking competition or specifying the right ritual for some function. While it may be presumptuous to read too much into this limited empirical material, together they certainly illustrate the early stages of a process in which modalities of a new performativity were gradually standardized.

Cricket Equipment

The most regular cricket-related advertisements in the late nineteenth century involved promotions of cricket paraphernalia. Some renowned foreign manufacturers such as Wisden, Treacher, Pilling & Briggs, Dukes, Gradidges, Lillywhite & Frowd etc. publicized their equipment in leading English newspapers such as *The Times of India* in Bombay and in *The Statesman* in Calcutta.

Advertisements of Gradidge's cricket bats came out more frequently than those of any other sport equipment manufacturer in the late nineteenth century.[39] They drew upon the imperial metaphors of the game to sell their products. Their logo depicted two crossed

[37] Ibid., 21 May 1936, p. 13.
[38] Ibid., 21 Oct 1931, p. 10.
[39] Ibid., 1 Nov 1895, p. 7.

bats resting on a set of stumps, with the imperial coat of arms on top. One of the more famous bats in their production line was the 'Imperial Driver', the name of which arguably alluded to the imperiousness of the equipment's performance as well as the imperial connections of the game.[40] Cricket was supposed to have been a cultural bond which held the discursive ethnic, racial, political, social and other elements of the empire together. Self-ascribing the function of driving the imperial mission, the bat symbolised an important constituent in the imperial administrative machinery.

This was, of course, no imperialism of force. Gradidge's celebrated the end of the World War II on a rather unusual but most pleasing note. Published when the United States were on verge of winning the battle of Iwo Jima and 9,000 Allied bombers were wrecking Berlin, the advertisement assured the connoisseurs of sport, who had a rough time playing cricket under continuous bomb scare, that, 'When the weapons of war are replaced by the implements of peace... Gradidges... will be ready to supply your needs'.[41] The campaign played on the image of cricket as a noble pursuit contrary to brutish militarism and fortified the sport's stature as a civilising force which can lead to positive human development compensating for the ravages of war.

As cricket penetrated newer levels of Indian society, engaging more social groups and attracting more practitioners, a number of Indian traders entered the equipment business. Indian sport goods companies, pioneered by the famous S. Ray & Co of Calcutta, started advertising their products—imported and/or manufactured—in the early

[40] Ibid., 8 Oct 1897, p. 7.
[41] Ibid., 21 Feb 1945, p. 9.

twentieth century.[42] Kuckreja & Co., the leading sporting warehouse in the Deccan, claimed that the bats they imported were of the highest quality, which is 'remembered long after the price is forgotten'.[43] Gujarat Sports Supplying was another well-known concern which sold imported bats such as Summer Brown, Gunn & Moore, Spalding, Wisden and Dukes.[44] Sakloth & Co. dealt in Force bats.[45] J. Boseck & Co. supplied sports prizes, giving special discounts to cricket clubs and gymkhanas.[46] The main product on offer in Sathe Sports shop was Punjab Mail balls—the name inducing associations with the fastest train service in colonial India and thus appealing to fast bowlers.[47] Ahmedabad Sports Depot promoted 'carefully seasoned, oiled and double-rubber' Wearwell bats, known for their 'tremendous driving power and firm grip'.[48] Incidentally, the advertisement for bats far outnumbered those promoting balls. The reason may be at best be speculated. Bats normally cost much more, promising greater profit margins to the manufacturers. Alternatively, the reigning conception of batsmen dominating bowlers as the ideal moment of pleasure for the cricket audience might have had something to do with it.[49]

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[42] *The Statesman*, 22 Jan 1901, p. 5. The text of the advertisement reads: 'CRICKET BATS, Ours are the cheapest, because they are priced the lowest and last the longest and because with every bat above 10 we give a superfine quality extra stout rubber bat handle free. S. Ray & Co, 62, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta, Patronised by the Calcutta Cricket Club'.
[43] *TOI*, 11 Dec 1916, p. 10.
[44] Ibid., 10 Aug 1918, p. 16.
[45] *TS*, 12 Nov 1936, p. 12.
[46] Ibid, 21 Nov 1936, p. 12.
[47] *TOI*, 1 Jul 1935, p. 11.
[48] Ibid., 27 Apr 1936, p. 13.
[49] Richard Holt addresses the paradox of the treatment of batsmen as heroes even when bowlers were recognised as more effective match winners in this illuminating article: 'Cricket and Englishness: The Batsman as Hero', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 13 (1), 1996, pp. 48-70.

Consumer items

Advertising requires products to be associated with qualities that appear to satisfy the consumers' personal and social aspirations. Judith Williamson suggested that advertising does more than simply sell things to us—'it creates structures of meaning'.[50] To be effective, advertising had to be situated in a highly visible media site where it could facilitate the trade in goods and services.[51] The sports section of English newspapers which had made a conscious attempt to draw a society of consumers and specialist periodicals gave better visibility to cricket-related advertisements.

Chicago Telephone & Radio, the oldest radio concern in India, promoted their Pilot radio set claiming that one would 'need a Pilot to hear the commentator distinctly – well above the roar of the crowd'[52], that it would be 'Right on the wicket...you can almost hear the bails drop with a Pilot'.[53] The caption speaks to those cricket followers who could not visit the ground and would listen to radio commentaries at home or workplace. The campaign was strategically designed to assure this audience segment of the highest quality of enjoyment; to satisfy the cricket followers whose desire to participate in the collective history created by a match would otherwise not be fulfilled. An existing aspiration (physical presence in the stadium) was thereby magnified into a craving and sought to be supplied by means of the advertised product, developing a particular brand value and increasing its sales.

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[50] Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, London: Marion Boyars, 1978, p. 12.
[51] David Rowe, *Sport, Culture and the Media: The Unruly Trinity*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2004, p. 28.
[52] *TOI*, 28 Nov 1938, p. 15.
[53] Ibid., 30 Nov 1938, p. 19.

Marcks & Co. advertised their wrist watches as the perfect companion to sporting gentlemen. The watches, it claimed, would give correct time even if they were 'flung into various positions' and came under 'violent shocks' while playing cricket.[54] In the Zenith watches' advertisement by Favre Leuba, deftness of the batsman's movement, the rhythm of his stroke, and the perfect timing—hallmark of class—was compared to the watch's accurate time-keeping.[55] Cricket was supposed to be the highest categorical degree of precision required in human activities, and the watch was posed as following its example. Clearly, these campaigns appealed to men aspiring to cultivate particular values articulated through analogies with cricketing activity. Cricket was not merely a game; it represented for these men a way of life which went right into the making of their drawers and wardrobes.

Tobacco and alcohol

The advertisement of State Express 999 cigarette published in *Indian Cricket* carried a visual in which two gentlemen in cricket attire, one donning a blazer, were seen in conversation with a lady reclined on a deck chair (Figure 1.4).[56] All three of them were shown holding cigarettes between fingers, but not smoking. The act of smoking sparingly underscored the elite refinement which was posited as an exclusive property of cricketers. The leisurely atmosphere was accentuated by the quaint setting with lush vegetation and the top of the club house rising beyond a match in progress. Clearly, cricketers in such

[54] Ibid., 4 May 1926, p. 12.
[55] Ibid., 30 Nov 1938, p. 16.
[56] *IC*, June 1938, p. 487.

early advertising imaginary were conceived as ideals of refined men especially desired by sophisticated women for their stylishly restrained manner.

The tobacco giant Godfrey Philip's association with Indian cricket started in the 1930s. It advertised brands of Four Square tobacco, often featuring a cartoon of a cherub-faced, pipe-puffing young cricketer in action. In one of the advertisements, the promotional lines read,

> Any true pipe-smoker would make a *stand* for Four Square – the tobacco of such heavenly coolness, such matured fragrance. Selected from the finest leaf, free from all artificial flavouring or harshness, Four Square will be your *steadiest partner till stumps are drawn* – and after. Special vacuum tins bring it to you factory-fresh in any climate. Why not give Four Square an *innings* – remember, it comes from a firm that has long since reached its *century*.[57]

The manufacturers emphasized that they had preserved the natural flavour of tobacco by not adding artificial ingredients in the product. Use of particular cricket-related terms such as 'stand' and 'steadiest partner' drew the consumer's attention to the brand's reputation as a trusted, long-serving product. Phrases such as 'innings' and 'century' hinted that the aromatic upsurge last longer than usual, making the product a high-quality, value for money companion to a smoker. Here too, cricketing terminologies served to underscore values that transcended the field—durability, natural flavour and companionship—but remained embodied nonetheless in relationships built within it.

Even liquor manufactures were bowled over by cricket's appeal. Johnnie Walker whisky, one of the most expensive alcohol brands in late colonial India, took recourse to images of cricket as a means to promote itself for an upscale market. It started advertising

[57] *TOI*, 30 Nov 1938, p. 20. Emphasis mine.

in *Indian Cricket* with the caption 'Born in 1820 – still growing strong'.[58] Unlike the usual visual of good performances, this campaign featured a batsman leaving the ground with a bat tucked under his left arm. In the background was shown the pavilion where his teammates were sipping Johnnie Walker whisky. This was a direct appeal to cricket-lovers to join the league of their heroes, and emulate them in drinking in order to reach somewhere near the astral level where cricketers supposedly belonged. 'Still going strong' became a much publicised urban catchphrase. An illustration of its popularity can be found in the *Bombay Sentinel* report: 'Vajifdar's bowing was of excellent length and like Johnnie Walker the Parsi veteran is still going strong'.[59] The association between vintage whisky and a not out batsman in terms of durability and trust, to be toasted by everyone around them, was smartly extended to according some respect to a bowler, a somewhat lowlier specimen of a cricketer.

Jeffreys, the British Lager, commissioned an ingenious advertisement, showing the visual of a ball beating an ambitious drive and hitting the stumps. The batsman was supposed to be 'clean bowled by Jeffreys'. The narrative attached to the picture read:

1. When you're *stumped* for a good lager ask for Jeffreys. *First over*, it gets you *caught in the gulley*, and every *umpire* worth the name points to the *pavilion* – and *another* Jeffreys!

2. *Second innings* you'll put Jeffreys on again. And they are *all out* for lunch – because Jeffreys keeps fit with faultless *length* and fine flavour – the lager that never slips.

[58] *IC*, Oct 1934, p. 23.
[59] *BS*, 25 Nov 1934, p. 1.

3. *Third day's test*, there's no match for Jeffreys; it *scores all round the wicket*. There'd be no Bombay duck, if chaps took to Jeffreys – the lager that's been *capped for all-India*.[60]

Instead of the inebriating effect, here the recreational value of alcohol was stressed. A Jacob's Lager advertisement carried the caption 'In at the Finish', with a visual of a batsman hurrying to make the crease to complete a run (Figure 1.5).[61] The short text encourages consumption of alcohol at the end of a match, and amplifies the brand's appeal showing the desperation with which a batsman wants to do just that. Thus advertised, alcohol appears to be, of all things, an energy restorer to be taken after a hard day's match.

Seagers quoted the players of Lord Tennyson's touring XI having asked for its special dry gin, since 'TEST MATCH cricketers are highly trained athletes and therefore can only drink sparingly of the best and purest'.[62] The accompanying visual shows a batsman in action. Mentioning the preference of a victorious team captained by a Lord who happened to be the grandson of a renowned Poet Laureate was a well-thought way to canvass the exclusive and excellent quality of the gin's taste which was supposedly preserved for the best. Concern for the health of cricketers was another tactic to assure the potential consumers of the purity of its ingredients. If alcoholic drinks were strategically advertised as relaxant and restorer, health drinks and tonics were much more demonstrably positioned as such.

[60] *TOI*, 24 Nov 1938, p. 13. Emphasis mine.
[61] *IC*, Oct 1936, p. 13.
[62] *TOI*, 14 Dec 1937, p. 15; 15 Dec 1937, p. 11.

Health drinks and tonics

Images of sport were used to magnify the positive growth and fitness resulting from the systematic consumption of health drinks. Wincarnis tonic wine, trying to find the right combination of words and image, opted for the picture of a batsman smiling as he plays an uppish square cut. As an outcome of its intake, the accompanying text describes, 'Languid muscles grow firm, eyes brighten, pale cheeks glow once more-thanks to the rich red blood that Wincarnis has sent coursing through our veins'.[63] Since the start of its production in UK in 1887 by Coleman & Co., Wincarnis had been recommended because of its positive effects, especially for mothers after child-birth, for those recovering from an operation or those simply aspiring for good health. *The British Journal of Nursing* recorded in 1916 that its 'primary effect is immediate stimulation and invigoration of the system, and the secondary an upbuilding of mental and physical vigour'.[64] An advertisement in the same journal in 1928 states that, 'Many nurses have found that in anaemic and debilitated conditions, during convalescence, and in post-operation cases, Wincarnis stimulates appetite, promotes digestion, and effects marked improvement in nutrition.'[65] Focusing on the vigorous, efficient, aestheticized sporting body of a cricketer, the advertisement conveyed that consumption of Wincarnis was a means to improve bodily limitations and achieve the sophisticated efficiency of a cricketer. At another level, it offered its prospective consumers an easy means of imitating a cricketer—all one had to do is buy a bottle of Wincarnis. Its measured consumption at once promised one sound health and cricketer-like fitness.

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[63] Ibid., 18 Dec 1937, p. 19.
[64] *British Journal of Nursing* 57, 8 July 1916, p. 39.
[65] Ibid. 76, Sept 1928, p. 239.

Attributes to cricket were manipulated by other health drink manufacturers as well. A Horlick's Malted Milk advertisement juxtaposed the visual of a left-handed batsman launching into a vicious heave and the drooping frame of a sickly figure.[66] Successful execution of such a shot requires a healthy and strong body—something even a convalescent man may accomplish by drinking Horlick's regularly.

Another Horlick's advertisement featured a cartoon in which a morose cricket captain was contemplating giving up the game at the age of thirty-one (Figure 1.6). His doctor, apparently a batsman in the same team, advised him to drink Horlick's every night which would help him to sleep better and replenish his fatigued muscles. In two weeks the captain started feeling better. In a month, he was seen playing as energetically as ever. Horlick's evidently took care of his 'enervation, depression and that dreadful feeling of exhaustion'.[67] The advertisement was part of Horlick's global campaign as the best drink to fight 'night starvation'. The beverage, first brewed in 1873 by James and William Horlick, was anticipated to become the baby food of the future, but it proved more popular among adults especially in England, where the product was eventually marketed as a sleep aid.[68] Horlicks was nearly twice as expensive as its rival drinks, but it thrived on a successful campaign planned by J. Walter Thompson, the famous US advertising agency which capitalized on the 'scientific' theory of 'night starvation' developed by Sir E. Charles Dodds, a consultant to several companies, in 1933. Photograph-based and story-line comic strip advertisements were circulated, making the consumers aware of Horlick's sleep-inducing properties. Young men faring poorly at jobs and other social

[66] *AmBP*, 19 Nov 1932, p. 11.
[67] *TOI*, 3 Jan 1938, p. 19.

[68] Brendan Koerner, 'What Do Brits Mean by "Horlicks"?', *http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2003/07/what_do_brits_mean_by_horlicks.html*, accessed on 4 Feb 2012.

performances owing to sleep deprivation-induced physical and mental fragility responded enthusiastically and smart advertising practically turned a baby food into a sedative for adults. Although it remained an upmarket premium product, emphasis on pharmaceutical values demonstrably increased its consumption as a health drink.[69]

Indian soldiers of the British Indian Army introduced Horlicks to India. On the return journey at the end of the First World War, they brought it home as a diet supplement. Punjab, Bengal and Madras Presidencies became early adopters of Horlicks and well-to-do Indians took to Horlicks as a family drink in early 1940s and 1950s. It became a status symbol in upper middle class Indian households. This campaign established cricket as a field in which any willing, slightly skilful consumer could fulfil one's potential with the help of Horlicks. On the other hand, through showing that a weak Indian benefitted by consuming a British drink, it emphasised the supremacy of British medical knowledge and the benevolence of British rule upon colonial subjects. The captain apparently lived in a mansion, evident from the arched door behind his back in the panel. The dinner suit worn at home testified to his position of wealth and etiquette, learnt obviously from a European institution. The doctor resembled a typical amateur cricketer à la W.G. Grace who divided his time between vocation and leisure pursuit. The orthodox clothing of the other cricketers, that is, donning blazers when not in action, declared cricket's successful assimilation into the 'native' Indian life in its pristine English form. The idyllic trees and bushes that formed the background of the cricket match in the last panel traced the sport's roots to the English pastoral. Nothing could illustrate the

[69] Vernon Ward, 'Marketing Convenience Foods between the Wars', in Geoffrey Jones and Nicholas J. Morgan eds., *Adding Value: Brands and Marketing in Food and Drink*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 271-8.

hegemonic incursion of British values into Indian lives and perceptions in so understated a manner (which too was a typical British 'virtue').

An advertisement of Kruschen in *The Times of India* retold the familiar story from a more indigenised angle (Figure 1.7). Ramlal lost his form due to rheumatism. On advice of the captain, a father figure who appears either as a doctor or a trusted friend in similar commercials, Ramlal consumed Kruschen malts and regained his touch.[70] Not one allusion to cricket's tradition or any colonial link was mentioned in the narrative, signalling the newspaper's passage from a colonial to a post-independence state.

Spacious advertisements of Tonovan, a testosterone-based potency tonic, portrayed a batsman sashaying down the pitch for an almighty whack. The caption read: 'On top of his form thanks to daily Tonovan'.[71] Male anxiety about sexual performance creates a ready market for seemingly scientific potency drugs. The potency and vigour associated with sporting male bodies justified use of a sporting figure in the advertisement. Yet, instead of the seemingly more virile body of a wrestler, the archetypal refined manliness of cricketers was sought to advertise the brand, possibly to attract educated, suave, upper middle-class consumers.

If cricketers represented sexually potent and suave adult male bodies, a child with a cricket bat symbolised a healthy habit and a fit body, the ideal raw material with which to deliver future cricketing glories. The most popular tonic after the First World War, Waterbury's Compound was taken as a cure to malaria, weak lung conditions and more

[70] TOI, 16 Feb 1949, p. 4 ; 24 Apr 1949, p. 5.
[71] Ibid, 18 Dec 1937, p. 20; 25 Dec 1937, p. 19; 29 Dec 1937, p. 11.

commonly cough and cold.[72] In a Waterbury's Compound advertisement, a small boy stands with a cricket bat in his shoulders and in the background a batsman plays an authentic cover drive. It is implied that the small boy growing up on Waterbury's Compound would in time develop enough stamina to achieve success as a dashing batsman. Here the caption is; 'Big little Man in Tip Top form'.[73]

These advertisements constructed and propagated elegant images of the body, emphasising regular body maintenance as the method to sustain its elegance and to optimise efficiency. People were urged to devote time to care of the body through new technologies and disciplines such as diets and exercise, and in some cases chemicals and surgery aimed at physical transformation.[74] In course of time, this association between health drinks and cricket had less to do with promoting maintenance of a perfect body and more to enhancing the smartness of one's appearance.

Raymond Williams once described advertising as a system of magic that manufactures desires and anxieties: 'You do not only buy this object; you buy social respect, discrimination, health, beauty, success, and power to control your environment.'[75] The advertisements of drinks played on the desires of colonial settlers and subjects. The drinks promoted corresponded essentially to two varieties—one to be taken as a refresher after the match, and the other to be taken for stimulating energy and revitalizing limbs before or during the match. These advertisements tried to highlight two specific aspects of a man. Consumption of alcoholic drinks projected a cricketer as a

[72] Madhuri Sharma, 'Creating a Consumer: Exploring Medical Advertisements in Colonial India', in Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison eds., *The Social History of Health and Medicine in Colonial India*, Abingdon & New York: Routledge, p. 227.
[73] *TOI*, 12 Jan 1942, p. 13.
[74] John Horne, *Sport in Consumer Culture*, Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 129.
[75] Raymond Williams, 'Advertising: The Magic System', in *Problems in Culture & Materialism*, London: Verso, 1980, p. 189.

sophisticated elite gentleman, whose recreational choices should be emulated by his fans. The health drinks, on the other hand, created the visual of a sound mind in an ideally healthy body. Moreover, they sought to transform a weak man into a strong one—'extracting from objects their opposites'.[76] The drinks and the cigarettes cast the cricketers' image in the mould of an alert, virile, athletic and proactive masculine figure who is either a batsman playing an aggressive stroke or a team-man relaxing among his playmates. This domain of the advertisements was inescapably a male fantasy.

Cricketers as models

The practice of enlisting the fame of cricketers to promote a brand is far from new. A cricketer publicly approving the quality of sport equipment is a longstanding tradition. W.G. Grace was the first cricketer as well as the first sportsperson to have endorsed a consumer item unrelated to sport. In 1895, an advertisement of Colman's Mustard featured Grace, with the caption claiming that the brand 'heads the field' the same way as Grace dominates the field of cricket.[77] A cricketer's public guarantee of the quality of a product is used in marketing campaigns to increase the product's brand value and appeal to customers who may buy it to emulate their favourite cricketer. The process of product endorsement by famous people in advertising campaigns not only 'uses celebrities; it

[76] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, New York: Noonday Press, 1991 (1957), p. 58.
[77] Copy in author's collection.

helps to make them' and as a well-known name becomes better known, the individual's celebrity status is enhanced.[78]

The consumption of material goods in colonial urban India underwent the most significant expansion in the 1930s when the middle class, especially the youth, started adopting favourable outlooks towards expenditure.[79] As more people were paying to purchase the excitement generated by the game, the advertisers found it opportune to invest in the making as well as on the makers of this excitement. C.K. Nayudu was the most well-known of cricketers to have endorsed material goods, and his story I take up at some length in the next chapter. Before Indian cricketers were enlisted by marketing companies, advertisements made abroad with foreign cricketers were circulated in Indian newspapers. The following Phosferine advertisement featuring Patsy Hendren is a case in point:

> The ability to knock up a big score in the playing fields, or in the more serious game of life, is largely a matter of physical fitness and strong nerves... I have found Phosferine the most effective means of toning up my physical and mental capacities... A short course quickly produces an invigoration of body and brain, and the benefits are lasting... I recommend Phosferine to my brother sportsmen, and business men.[80]

Not only is Hendren's appeal to businessmen suggestive of an inchoate fusion of cricket and business, his repeated emphasis on the nourishment of both mind and body is a reaffirmation of the greatness of cricket, and by association of Phosferine, as the ultimate convergence of physical vigour and moral resilience. The colonial superiority,

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[78] Daniel Boorstin, *The Image, or What Happened to the American Dream*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963, p. 68.
[79] Kaushik Bhaumik, 'At Home in the World: Cinema and Cultures of the Young in Bombay in the 1920s', in Douglas E. Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, and Haruka Yanagisawa eds., *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 136.
[80] *AmBP*, 8 Dec 1926, p. 12.

masquerading as moral masculinity, was contested in campaigns of health drinks starring Indian cricketers.

In 1937 Cadbury's Bourn-vita brought out a set of three advertisements in successive months, featuring three famous cricketers—Shute Banerji, Mushtaq Ali and J.N. Bhaya—each endorsing a fundamental aspect of the daytime energy drink. Banerji, a well-built pace bowler, guaranteed that Bourn-vita provides ample strength and energy (Figure 1.8).[81] For Mushtaq Ali, the dashing batsman, Bourn-vita bolstered the 'co-ordination of a fit body, an iron nerve and an intensely active and alert brain' (Figure 1.9).[82] Bhaya, known for his reliability and tireless energy, supposedly drank Bourn-vita to keep himself fit for the cricket season (Figure 1.10).[83] All three of them were clad in immaculate suits or blazers, reinforcing cricket's Englishness. Adoption of the English national game, accompanied by the signature apparel and breakfast drink of the English, symbolically reinforced the theory that following English rituals was the assured way of elevating the mental and physical faculty of Indians. At the same time, the brown bodies subverted the sanctity of the Western attire, and decolonised their values as well as the game these bodies represented. Nothing, one suspects, illustrated the structural—and operational—ambiguities of the colonial enterprise in so visually nuanced a manner.

At the same time, cricketers were conceived as special individuals capable of adding marketable value—sanctity and/or glamour—to non-cricketing events by means of their physical presence. The Western India Theatres, for instance, invited the cricket

[81] *IC*, Jan 1937, p. 185.
[82] Ibid., Feb 1937, p. 245.
[83] Ibid., Mar 1937, p. 305.

teams of the 'Quadrangular Carnival' to attend the evening's 6-15 show of *Amrit Manthan* at the Krishna Talkies at New Charni Road.[84]

Product endorsement by celebrity cricketers took off in the mid-1950s when a number of them appeared in print advertisements. Vinoo Mankad briefly endorsed Brylcreem. In return for fees of Rs. 500, Polly Umrigar promoted Sloan's Liniment, a remedy for 'muscular aches, strains and sprains', distributed from America.[85] The diminutive Ramakant Desai vouched for Hamdard's Cinkara, a non-alcoholic vitaminised herbal tonic of proven bioavailability in mental performance, anaemia of pregnancy, lactating mothers, liver protection and known for stimulating muscles and nerves:

> A spell at top speed takes away a lot from a pace bowler's store of energy. When my captain looks at me as if to enquire would I take the ball again, I am ready and willing: because my energy has been built with CINKARA, and there is always the prospect of refreshing myself with CINKARA again at the next interval. Even when I finish a day without a wicket, I consider CINKARA a fitting reward for my toils – it restores my energy and builds more.[86]

These post-independence advertisings were not significantly different from the colonial ones, since the cricketers still upheld the notion of moral manliness through their endorsements. The only noticeable strategic change was the replacement of advertisements of liquor by those of non-alcoholic beverages, possibly to avert raising moral issues in a country in which a dominant class considers consumption of alcohol not

[84] *BC*, 30 Nov 1934, p. 8.
[85] *Hindustan Standard*, 4 Jan 1962, p. 8.
[86] Ibid., 3 Jan 1962, p. 8.

as refreshment, but as a sin. Beverage and automobile became the top sectors to have utilised the image of cricketers in promotional activities.[87]

Conclusion

The circulation of cricket advertisements followed specific cultural patterns which changed over the period I study. This chapter explored initially the efforts of some of the leading dailies and periodicals to construct a class of cricket consumers. Advertising of consumer products through a cricketing vocabulary appealed to the aesthetic sense of a particular segment of potential consumers whose cultural imaginary I have briefly touched upon. These campaigns were generally ephemeral and episodic in form. Most of these appeared not more than once or twice in the same newspaper in a week, which generally coincided with the peak of the cricket season.[88] After a few episodes they were replaced by a different commercial, using a fresh set of words and images, not necessarily of the cricketing variety. In this context, it must be noted that cricketing vocabulary in consumer products campaigns peaked during the cricketing season, that is, winter and spring. The overwhelming presence of cricketing images noticed and commented upon by scholars in more recent times perfectly corresponds with the organization and performance of international cricket throughout the year which is a far later development.

[87] Since 2007, however, some cricketers have been associated with promoting alcoholic brands again, in the form what is called surrogate advertising. For instance, Harbhajan Singh, a spin bowler and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the captain of the Indian cricket team, endorse Music CD brands with the same brand name of an IMFL whiskey manufacturer. This subtle difference in the form of liquor endorsement return needs to be kept in mind.

[88] Most of the advertisements were structured around the Bombay Pentangular, the major sport event in late colonial India, to exploit the increased readership of sport pages, and the emotional current of national and/or community pride of a reader.

In the times which this study focuses, there still existed a 'cricket season' during which consumers spoke and lived cricket.

The rhetoric adopted by nearly all the advertisements was the manipulation of human physicality with reference to sensory adaptations. The impression of listening to a faint but all-important sound, or the touch of the wristband of a precise watch, or the sensation of pouring a warm drink down one's throat built up a landscape where the body of a decidedly male consumer was caressed with an intense sensory experience bordering on sexuality. Cricket, widely narrativised as the meridian of quality, sophistication and class, became therefore the obvious choice among field sports. To judge by the generous use of cricket parlance in the advertisements, the amount of cricket knowledge expected from readers was rather considerable. Not all the cricket-laden advertisements appeared in the sport pages; some of these came out in the pages set aside for commercials. No clearly marked distinction was made between casual and well-informed readers, assuming effectively that everybody familiar with the English language would be just as well up with the language of England's national game too.

Just as significantly, not all cricketing figures were modelled after the European cast of male body. Most of the sporting figures appearing in *The Times of India* advertisements bore distinct European racial features, with exceptions of course. But the bodies displayed in newspapers such as *Bombay Chronicle* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika* often showed 'subcontinental' features such as dark complexion and medium height, made more conspicuous by use of Indian names in the narrative. The early advertisements on cricket therefore constituted a rather contested field where traces of both Englishness and nationalist sensibilities battled for the consumers' attention. Just as the majority of the

advertisements conjured up the image of a sophisticated, alert and yet only moderately aggressive, desirable male figure as the ideal cricketing model; those published in the nationalist papers subtly changed his skin complexion, contending perhaps that these qualities were not after all the exclusive preserve of the Englishman. The core values attached to the game's discourse appeared to have remained fairly unchanged while their embodiments underwent cosmetic adjustments.

The moments of contestation in the sport media, and sporting literature in general, became more vivid when the processes of mediation were ordered through a representative of cricketing virtues. A cricketing figure, invested with the aspirations of a consortium of followers, was iconized not only as the paradigmatic cricketing performer but also as a model for moral behaviour to be emulated by citizens. In the next chapter, I analyse various nationalist and consumerist representations of C.K. Nayudu to underline the ways in which the press and corporate concerns addressed the emerging consumer-citizens in late colonial Bombay.

CHAPTER TWO

The First 'Indian' Cricket Hero: Nationalism, Body Culture, Consumption and the Sport Press

The heroic individual, towering over the crowd by virtue of an achieved or ascribed quality, has become a prominent, popular figure in contemporary culture. The celebrity image of the individual is commonly connected with capitalist modes of production and consumption. As Abilash Nalapat and Andrew Parker argue, a celebrity is a cultural production, commonly framed within notions of fame, notoriety, charisma and exception. It is a commoditized form of an achiever; it is the epitome of economic fetishism, the process and product of representations and images promoted and exchanged via media networks.[1] Before the twentieth century, statesmen or military leaders had more or less monopolized the hero status. With the progress of the twentieth century, and the development of a mass consumer society, individuals from the world of sport and entertainment, the dominant spheres of cultural consumption and organized leisure, gradually emerged to challenge this monopoly. As an observer has put it, sport has become an activity whose popularity transcends all social and political barriers.[2] The ability to make a sweeping appeal across regions and cultures enables a sportsperson to achieve pervasive cross-society acceptance as an icon. Before the extensive development

[1] Abilash Nalapat and Andrew Parker, 'Sport, Celebrity and Popular Culture: Sachin Tendulkar, Cricket and Indian Nationalisms', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 40 (4), 2005, p. 435.
[2] Barry Smart, *The Sport Star: Modern Sport and the Cultural Economy of Sporting Celebrity*, London: Sage, 2005, p. 1.

of print culture or mass media, oral transmission was the primary mode of circulating the aura of sport stars. The advent of print played a crucial role in publicizing local heroes to a wider coterie of fans. Sport coverage received a lift around the 1890s when some newspapers in America started a separate sports section to cater to the growing interest in sport idols, much before professional modern sport spawned an institutional climate conducive to the construction of celebrity status.[3]

The study of celebrity culture as a category of academic analysis dates back to Daniel Boorstin's criticism of the modern, self-promoted, commerce-produced celebrity in 1961. It was followed by several works, most notably by Francis Alberoni (1972), Alexander Walker (1974), James Monaco (1978) and Richard Dyer (1979).[4] Most of the subsequent studies have drawn inspiration from Leo Braudy (1986) who insisted that from the late seventeenth century three factors have 'democratised' fame—diffusion of the printing press, extended functionality of civil society and the declining authority of royal judgment over matters of fame and notoriety.[5] Simon Morgan has criticised Braudy for ignoring cultural practices of public consumption and construction of the hero, and the centrality of elites and the state in this process. The recent trend in celebrity studies shifts the understanding of celebrities as essentially a product of late modernity towards analysing it as one of the key drivers of the modernisation process itself. By stimulating the production of consumer goods, printed images and periodical literature, Morgan

[3] David Andrews & Steven Jackson eds., *Sport Stars: The Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity*, London & New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 6.
[4] James Bennett, 'Historicising Celebrity Studies', *Celebrity Studies* 1 (3), 2010, p. 358.
[5] Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

argues, the celebrity played a crucial role in the growth of the public sphere, the emergence of consumer society and the global expansion of Western culture.[6]

This perspective, however, has not yet been tested with significant case studies from India. Most of the existing works have focused on movie stars, whereas only two articles have analysed the sporting hero as a celebrity. Both of these, the above-mentioned article by Nalapat and the recent paper by Prashant Kidambi, are centred on Sachin Tendulkar, one of the world's premier modern cricketers.[7] This paper intends to explore the making of the sporting hero during the colonial period. Before the coming of television coverage and multi-layered promotional culture, at a time when good cricketers remained local idols, C.K. Nayudu became perhaps the first Indian cricketer to emerge as a public figure, a corporate commodity and a cultural icon. His emergence as a proto-celebrity helps raise some questions, concerning mainly the standing of cricket in the country and the patterns of sport consumption at a time when mass consumerism in India had only just appeared on the horizon. This chapter tries to at once extend and complicate the existing literature by exploring the drives generated at several sites that constructed Nayudu's proto-celebrity status.

The first section unpacks the conundrum that Nayudu became the most well-known Indian cricketer of his generation despite little approval from his peers and the cricket authorities. The second section analyses reactions to his performances to understand how Nayudu came to exemplify and transform the discourses of nationalism and public culture more than any other sportsperson in his time. The third section

[6] Simon Morgan, 'Historicising Celebrity', *Celebrity Studies* 1 (3), 2010, pp. 366-7.
[7] Prashant Kidambi, 'Hero, Celebrity and Icon: Sachin Tendulkar and the Indian Public Culture', in Anthony Bateman and Jeffrey Hill eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 187-202.

examines what may be called the nationalization of his body as a stand against the European attributes of masculine behaviour. The fourth section attempts a close study of Indian newspapers to trace the social forces that produced his heroic status and the socio-economic ramifications of such portrayals. I do this to understand why and how Nayudu became the chosen one, and how the news media promoted him as a star, dramatized his achievements and turned his cricketing contributions into a spectacle conducive to building a market around the game, in the context of rising middle class consumerism in Bombay in the 1930s. In short, this chapter does not assess the cricketing achievements of Nayudu. Instead, it tries to problematize his sporting biography in the context of the modernization of Indian cricket and society in the first half of the twentieth-century.

The Paradox of Nayudu

> And then a great cheer gathers strength all round the ground as a tall and stately figure emerges from the pavilion and strides majestically to the wickets. This the batsman for a crisis- this crisis- this the wicket to be got cheaply if the match is to be won by the fielding side. But also, this the batsman *all have come to watch*. C.K. Nayudu. ...[8]

Born on 31 October 1895 at Nagpur, Cottari Kankaiya Nayudu is one of the most colourful and mythicized characters of the cricket world. Nayudu was a dashing batsman, a resourceful slow-medium bowler, and an agile fielder—a complete all-rounder, that is. He is the Colonel*saab* of Indian cricket, the first captain of the national team, the first Indian to feature among the Wisden Cricketers of the Year (1933), one of the first Indians ever and one of the first Indian cricketers to endorse commercial brands, and the first

[8] A.F.S. Talyarkhan, 'C.K. Nayudu As We Knew Him', in *On with the Game*, Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1945, p. 57. Emphasis mine.

sportsperson to be awarded the Padma Bhushan (1956), a high civilian award in India. He was a Vice-President of the BCCI and the Chairman of Indian Test Selection Committee. The BCCI presents the C.K. Nayudu award for Lifetime Achievement in cricket and the annual C.K. Nayudu Trophy to the winner of the Under-22 inter-state cricket tournament. The Government of India issued a stamp to honour this cricketer on 13 March 13 1996, probably a first of its kind (Figure 2.1).[9] The CCI has named its banquet hall after Nayudu. A stadium in Hyderabad, again in Andhra Pradesh, is named after him too.[10] In 2007, Castrol, an India based automobile engine lubricant company that presents annual awards for cricketing excellence, honoured him as the best Indian cricketer during the period of 1932-47. The newsprint spent on him is the maximum among cricketers before Sunil Gavaskar. By far the most popular figure among his fellow cricketers, he has at times reportedly beaten even M.K. Gandhi for headlines.[11] Cricketers are liable to be eclipsed in popularity by their peers on occasions, but none of his peers could even for a single moment upstage Nayudu during his playing days. To borrow Talyarkhan's inimitable phrase, Nayudu is the 'most discussed, most *disliked*, most idolized of Indian cricketers'.[12] He is certainly the first in the long list of instantly recognizable sport heroes to have cut across diverse communities and regions.

Yet he rarely features in any of the all-time India XIs experts and fans so regularly indulge in conjuring up. His record in international matches hardly matches up to his legendary status. Detractors can well claim that Nayudu would not have dazzled as much

[9] Mohan B. Daryanani, *Who's Who on Indian Stamps*, New Delhi, 1999.
[10] This is not incongruous. A stadium named after him in his ancestral place, and not workplace, was part of an ethnic poitics.
[11] The news that 'Nayudu to Lead India in Fifth Test?' was printed in bigger fonts above bulletin of 'Purge for Erring Congressmen' debated in the All-India Congress meeting at Haripura. The Working Committee's discussions on the viability of non-violence as a policy and their stand regarding Kisan Sabha leaders were printed below the news concerning Nayudu, *BC*, 5 Jan 1938, p. 1.
[12] Talyarkhan, 'C.K. Nayudu As We Knew Him', p. 60, emphasis mine.

in the competitive cricket of today. Comparing cricketers from different eras is as absurd as comparing the military achievements of Alexander the Great and George Bush. But, a critical look at Nayudu's contemporaries does not give the impression that he was leaps and bounds above his peers. Quite a few, such as Wazir Ali or Vijay Merchant came close to him in cricketing merits, but the stories surrounding Nayudu mushroomed into epics while those of others left only faded imprints on popular memory. He appears to be a character mired in conflicts and controversies, someone his fellow journeymen disliked more than they admired. He came across as unsocial, even authoritarian, with a killjoy attitude to sport – who emphasized getting on with the game, with no heed to loss of limbs and life. As a matter of fact, fellow cricketers and cricket administrators found him difficult to negotiate, let alone harness. After Nayudu was elected to lead the Indian squad for the one-off Test during India's 1932 tour of England, several of his teammates woke up the Maharaja of Porbander, who had abdicated captaincy in favour of Nayudu, to express their unwillingness to play under Nayudu. Cables were sent to and fro, and the rebellion subdued for the time being. However, most of the players, upset at having to follow the strict authority of a fellow commoner, 'pledged themselves to be after Nayudu's blood ever since'.[13]

Dr. M.E. Pavri, commenting on the failure of the Indian cricket team against Jardine's redoubtable MCC in 1933-34, criticized Nayudu for being aloof on the field and in the dressing room, and for not paying much attention to strategies – relying on his instincts instead of his players' capabilities while making decisions. Pavri wrote,

[13] Vasant Raiji, *C.K. Nayudu, the Shahenshah of Indian Cricket*, Mumbai: Marine Sports, 1989, p. 60. Rajji quotes an essay by J.C. Maitra of *Bombay Chronicle* to that effect.

> Major C.K. Nayudu was, undoubtedly, the best all-round cricketer and the best *available* captain, but not an ideal one, as he was not able to control the men under his command and there was no co-operation between him and the players. There was a lack of team work, and the "team spirit" was absent altogether. The manner in which Ramji fielded carelessly and standing at point, with hands behind his back, clearly showed that there must have been some sort of disagreement between him and his captain. ... [I]t seemed that Major Nayudu was obsessed with *self-importance*, which leads to narrow-mindedness and is fatal to success.[14]

Even during the 'unofficial' visit of Lord Tennyson's MCC in 1937, nine out of fourteen players including L. Amarsingh, S.M. Colah, Amir Elahi and Vinoo Mankad, refused to play if Nayudu was selected. Vasant Raiji suspects that the players primarily resented his superior status.[15] Nayudu's position as the most privileged among the ordinary and his reportedly authoritarian style embittered them further.[16] To quote Rajan Bala, he was not the one to 'put his arm round the young cricketer's shoulder and coax him into obedience'.[17] His victory-at-all-costs motto often made him appear insensitive to the very spirit of the game he was supposed to personify. In the Ranji national championship match against a weak Bihar at Indore in 1943-44, he ordered the groundstaff to use a hosepipe to water the matting pitch to deny Shute Banerjee, the in-form Bihar speedster, enough purchase from the coir mat that otherwise offered little advantage to fast bowlers. To Nayudu's chagrin, the umpire came to know of the affair and ensured that the groundstaff used nothing other than the customary sprinkler. As it turned out, Banerjee

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[14] M.E. Pavri, 'Reflections on the Test Matches Played in India in 1933-34', in H.D. Darukhanwala ed., *Parsis and Sports and Kindred Subjects*, Bombay: Published by the author, 1935, p. 56.
[15] Raiji, *Shahenshah*, p. 60.
[16] It may be recalled at this juncture that Nayudu came from a family that had patronised cricket for generations. They sponsored young students provided they aspired to be cricketers. To celebrate C.K.'s birth, his grandfather organised a cricket match between soldiers and the Nayudu Club XI in 1896. His father and uncle went to Cambridge at the same time as Ranjitsinhji. After the cricketing princes, C.K. had the most illustrious ancestry and connection to cricket, which set him apart from almost all of his contemporary cricketers.
[17] Rajan Bala, *The Covers Are Off: A Socio-Historical Study of Indian Cricket 1932-2003*, New Delhi: Rupa, 2004, p. 35.

ran away with five wickets and Naidu was left only to fret.[18] However, Nayudu's Holkar team ultimately won the match following some superb bowling by its spinners C.S. Nayudu and Chandu Sarwate.[19]

In short, he manifestly lacked the soft skills required of a popular captain. Ironically, the contemporary print media and the subsequent tribute literature attributed far greater imaginative and important social roles to his persona than he possessed in fact. How do we understand this obvious incompatibility between Nayudu's person and his persona? The next section attempts an answer in terms of exploring an important social factor which Nayudu appear to have addressed through his performances.

Nayudu and Indian Nationalisms

Cricket in colonial India was, ideologically, one of the models for correct and appropriate masculine behaviour. The British invested cricket with spirit of sportsmanship and fair play, and promoted it as a design to strengthen the player's moral and physical character.[20] It became a means to socialize Indians into the progressive civilization of the West, in a distinctly manner. Its traditions and value systems elicited enthusiastic response from certain sections of Indians. Some of the 'native' princes patronised cricket to obtain social and political advantage. At the same time, turning the colonial ideology on its head, some other 'natives', including a few princes, discovered in the playing field

[18] Soumyen Mallik, interview with author, 25 Sep 2010. He is the nephew of Prasad Sinha, the umpire who snubbed Nayudu.

[19] *http://static.espncricinfo.com/db/ARCHIVE/1940S/1945-46/IND_LOCAL/RANJI/HOLKAR_BIHAR_RJI_15-16DEC 1945. html.*

[20] Jack Williams, *Cricket and England: A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-war Years,* London: Frank Cass, 1999, p. 1.

a technique of resisting and subverting the imperial dogmas without fear of retribution.[21] This brand of sporting nationalism took off as indigenous teams achieved victories against European outfits and these victories were praised by the colonial press.

The story at this moment requires a brief flashback to 1911. It was a landmark year for Indian sport enthusiasts for two maiden achievements that directly strengthened the nationalist sentiment. In Calcutta, Mohun Bagan clinched the Indian Football Association Shield beating East Yorkshire Regiment in the final, becoming in the process the first Indian team to win a prestigious football tournament in colonial India. In the very same year, Palwankar Baloo, already past his prime, took 114 wickets at an average of 18.84 runs per wicket against English county sides in their own backyards. He bowled so well that quite a few county sides offered him a contract. These two sporting achievements against 'colonial' oppositions arguably stoked the media's interest in sport. Around the same time, in 1916 to be precise, Nayudu made his first class debut for the Hindus against the Europeans in the Bombay Quadrangular tournament. He came in to bat with the score at 79 for 7. Facing Frank Tarrant, widely regarded as the greatest cricketer never to have played Test cricket, he blocked the first three balls and carted the fourth for a six—the shot lifting Nayudu straight up to the status of a symbol of anti-imperial and ethnic nationalism.[22]

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[21] The literature on how and why the Indians indigenised cricket include Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, Boria Majumdar, *Twenty-two Yards to Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*.

[22] A precise description of Nayudu's legendary sixes can be found in Ramachandra Guha's *The States of Indian Cricket: Anecdotal Histories*; I could not resist the temptation of narrating a six he hit during the England tour of 1932. As he carted the ball over deep square leg, it flew out of the ground and fell into the river Rea, the boundary between Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Gerald Brodribb joked that it might have been the only instance when a batsman hit a ball from one county to another. L.N. Mathur, *C.K. Nayudu – Legend in His Life Time*, Udaipur: Shiva Publishers, 1996, p. 26.

During the MCC's tour of India in 1925-26, Nayudu became a 'national hero' after scoring 153 in 116 minutes with eleven sixes and thirteen fours, an innings of prodigious attack even by today's standard of helter-skelter batting, against four Test bowlers. Writing on the hype generated around the innings, Edward Docker said, 'It was amazing how fast the news spread, considering the city was still without a wireless set. When Nayudu and Mahale returned to the wicket after lunch every tree was (filled) with human spectators...'[23] Later, historians of Indian cricket came to regard this innings as a premier symbol of resistance against the British Empire. Baloo's mastery over English batsmen had obviously failed to evoke such gushing response. Ramachanra Guha comes forward with a number of reasons. Firstly, subtle slow bowling does not really catch people's fancy. Secondly, it happened away from the Indian public gaze. Newspapers in those days could not sufficiently publicize Baloo's feats for want of better technology and a travelling sport reporter. A third factor was the excellent timing of Nayudu's innings. As uncertainty clouded the path to political self-determination after the non-violent Non-cooperation movement (1920-22) led by Gandhi petered out, the common man started looking out for new heroes. Nayudu's innings, coming against the representatives of the colonizers in the most British of games at the most famous cricket ground in India at the moment, offered a flamboyant platform to the temporarily depressed nationalist pride.[24] A recent historian of Indian cricket describes this epic innings as a 'moment of departure',

[23] Edward Docker, *History of Indian Cricket*, Delhi: MacMillan, 1976, p. 3. I have decided, much against academic conventions, to replace the word 'black' in the original by 'filled' as a mark of my disapproval of Docker's evidently, though perhaps unintentional, racist prose in this particular instance.
[24] Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, London: Picador, 2002, pp. 173-5.

signifying the juncture when 'an indigenous brand of Indian nationalism "took off" on the cricket field'.[25]

The MCC returned in the winter of 1933-34. The political situation had become even more volatile than it was during 1926-27. The Civil Disobedience movement had lost momentum. A number of leaders were in jail. Gandhi seemed more occupied with admission of 'untouchables' into temples than driving the British out through mass mobilization. The Congress had been looking forward to important constitutional developments leading to enlarged electorates and provincial autonomy. However, Muslims and Dalits were all set to abandon Congress en masse, while most of the Parsis and the Europeans stood apart from it anyway. The colony was divided upon questions of communalism, caste, and methods of revolution. In other words, on the verge of holding real political authority for the first time, the largest nationalist political organization in India found its acceptability declining more than ever before. Nayudu lit up these politically volatile times with a furious 116 at Lahore. Two young cricketers in the crowd later wrote of how his stroke-play sent them a broader political message. One of them, Prithvi Raj, expressed gratitude to Nayudu for driving away the 'fear of the foreigner' from his mind.[26] Prem Bhatia, the other student, wrote: 'Every sixer hit by 'C.K.' Nayudu against the visitors' slow bowlers was as good as a nail in the coffin of the British

[25] Boria Majumdar, *Lost Histories of Indian Cricket: Battles off the Pitch*, London & New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 118. It is arguable whether the term 'the moment of departure' appropriately describes the development, or it is better described as a 'moment of arrival'. For more on the theoretical implication of the phrase 'moment of arrival' see Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Tokyo: Zed Books, 1986.

[26] Guha, *Corner of a Foreign Field*, p. 204.

Empire... [each shot was] also an assertion of our resolve to throw the British out of India'.[27]

Ironically, Nayudu was perhaps the least likely individual to despatch such messages. Fathered by a Cambridge scholar and nurtured in a family fond of Shakespeare, Nayudu resembled the proverbial 'brown sahib' rather than the typical flag-bearing nationalist. Yet his batting became for spectators a beacon of nationalist pride. Incidentally, the fact that contemporary press reports did not narrate these centuries in nationalist terms suggests that the nationalist tone was added in retrospect. Later reminiscences and histories appear to appropriate these events as significant anti-colonial moments in the history of India's freedom struggle.

There is a single instance when Nayudu might have indirectly articulated his ideas on the potential of sport in nation-building. In 1939, during the Bombay Pentangular match against the Parsis, the South Indian Association at Matunga felicitated Nayudu. Addressing a gathering of over 3,000 which included a large number of women, Nayudu reportedly encouraged youngsters to take up sports which, he said, was a better vehicle to Swaraj than politics.[28] It is impossible to understand what exactly he meant by attainment of Swaraj—an autonomous political space or a self-sufficient setting for building character—without reading the full text of the lecture. Nayudu's grandfather, a lawyer, was a nationalist. In fact, the All India Congress Committee, the largest association of Indian nationalists, met for its annual conference at his Nagpur residence in 1891.[29] The ambience of Nayudu's childhood was steeped in politics. When Nayudu was in college,

[27] Ibid., p. 205.
[28] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 Nov 1939, p. 11.
[29] 'Cothari Kankaiya Nayudu 1893-1967 – A Short Background of His Early Days', Not Dated, Author Unknown, Boria Majumdar Collection.

roughly during World War I, he and his brother C.L. Nayudu were always on the lookout to fight an arrogant British soldier who dared to insult any 'native'.[30] Some of Nayudu's actions, however, negate this association. He went to the England tour in 1932 at a time when his teammates Vijay Merchant and L.P. Jai boycotted it in solidarity with the Civil Disobedience Movement led by the Congress. For all we know, Nayudu's action might be read to indicate his indifference to the nationalist cause. But considering that he was employed as the *aide-de-camp* of a prince who could not afford to annoy the British, Nayudu probably could not afford to be actively involved in nationalist politics.

Matunga, the suburb in Bombay where the felicitation was held, was a relatively prosperous middle class neighbourhood of mostly South Indian families which considered sporting activities necessary for a healthy life.[31] This upper middle class professional crowd has always been treated as the most likely articulators of a territory's political aspirations and as also the chief patrons of sports and games.[32] At a conjuncture of national and international crisis, the organisers at Matunga might have been concerned about the worsening communal divide and the possible implications of India joining the war effort.[33] If this assumption can be arguable, we can risk two more conjectures. One, that Nayudu deliberately used political idioms to tell these fans what they wanted to hear anyway, in order to sustain, if not enhance, his appeal. It is also possible that the report of the speech was customised by the organizing committee or the newspaper to suit public

[30] Ibid.
[31] Majumdar, *Twenty-two Yards to Freedom*, p. 232. The most famous product of Matunga *maidan* is Sunil Gavaskar, regarded as one of the best batsmen in cricket.
[32] Majumdar's work on the role of the middle class in developing a rich culture of cricket in colonial Bengal developed a rich cricket culture is a case in point. Majumdar, *Twenty-two Yards to Freedom*, pp. 163-7.
[33] The speech was delivered in late November 1939, two months after WWII had already begun.

sentiment at the time. Given Nayudu's domineering personality the first conjecture seems more plausible.

Or it is possible that Nayudu knew very well that he had already been elevated to the status of a national icon and intentionally fed into the popular imagination. In 2009, the news of one Adinarayana Rao donating a seven foot bronze statue of a cricketer called C.K. Nayudu for the ACA-VDCA Stadium in Pothinamallayyapalem came as a pleasant surprise to many.[34] At first sight it was surprising that Nayudu, a figure seldom recalled in Bombay, the site of his exploits, was accorded such singular honour in Andhra Pradesh, a state with which his active connections were rather modest. He and his brother C.S. Nayudu helped to form the Andhra Cricket Association in 1953. In the same year they appeared in a festival match at Guntur that marked the beginning of Andhra's journey as a cricketing state, and later led them in the Ranji Trophy, the inter-state domestic cricket tournament in India. But so did so many other cricketers for so many different states. Vijay Manjrekar, for instance, played for eight states in his first class career. Interestingly, no other state went to extent of adopting these migrant cricketers as 'cricketing sons', which Andhra did for the Nayudus.[35]

In Andhra Pradesh, Nayudu came to symbolize the spirit of ethnic nationalism in his playing days. On his visit to the city of Cocanada in 1940, The Literary Association felicitated him in a gala ceremony on 18 January. In the welcome address, the members acknowledged that Nayudu had earned esteem and glory for India, particularly befitting the 'Andhra Desa'. The members admired Nayudu's 'simple and unostentatious life',

[34] *Yo! Vizag*, April 2009, p. 19.
[35] Ibid., May 2008, p. 26.

'love of the game more than its prize', and 'devotion to discipline', which they expected to be followed reverentially by every Indian.[36]

The Andhra Students' Association in Lucknow extended a similar reception to Nayudu on 11 January 1943. They were more outspoken regarding the glory Nayudu's feats had conferred Andhra:

> ...We welcome you not only as one of the greatest Cricketers of the World, but also as a great Andhra. You are one of the makers of Modern India in the field of Cricket. India is proud of you. But we Andhras are prouder still, for you have added to the glory of Andhra, the land that has produced great men in every walk of life...[37]

In 1964, Nayudu was reportedly honoured by his 'home state' Andhra as a road was named after him in his 'home town' Masulipatam, where his grandfather used to live before settling in Nagpur.[38] This connection proved vital as the Telegu nationalist project started using Nayudu's fame to promote their cultural identity. So, when the rest of India looked to Nayudu as a source of sporting delight, the people of Andhra adopted him as a symbol of the Telegu community, which continues even today.

Nayudu's Body and Anti-colonial Masculinity

If Matunga South Indians residents hailed—or consumed—Nayudu as a nationally famous South Indian, and Andhra Pradesh banked on his iconic status to build a particular brand image of the state, the print media a whole covered his body with a distinctly

[36] 'Address of Welcome presented by the members, Literary Association, Cocanada', Boria Majumdar collection.
[37] 'Address of Welcome Presented to Lieut. Col. C.K. Nayudu by the Andhra Students Association, Lucknow', Boria Majumdar collection.
[38] *TOI*, 23 Nov 1964, p. 10.

nationalist rhetoric. This last too was a clear nationalist strategy. One of the consistent refrains running through European knowledge of Indian physicality was the latter's inferiority. Indians, especially the Bengalis, were often portrayed as physically and hence intellectually incapable of keeping pace with the strides of modern civilization. The stereotype proved humiliating for groups of Indians who, from the mid-nineteenth century, strove to dispel this myth of the physical downfall of a once proud culture. Numerous *akharas* (gymnasiums) sprang up across India, mostly in modern-day Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Quite a few political leaders and associations espoused the cause of cultivating strong physique in retaliation to the European criticism of fragile Indian body and mentality.[39] A strong body started carrying nationalist connotation. The physical culture movement grew strong in the late nineteenth century, but its political overtone moderated in the 1910s as Indian politics entered the non-violent phase. Yet, a sportsperson with a well-built body and a strong-willed mind evoked appreciation bordering on awe. Nowhere is this better manifested than in the popular response to Nayudu's body and attitude.

Biographies and the media have consistently highlighted the majesty of Nayudu's gait, adherence to strict discipline and imposing leadership. After Nayudu's selection as captain of the Hindu team in the 1939 Pentangular tournament at the age of forty-four, *The Times of India* wrote that, 'if physical fitness is to be an important qualification, there can be no finer example than that of Nayudu'.[40] Eskari shares a story in which a navy captain with no knowledge or interest in cricket recognised Nayudu at a dinner party simply by finding his hand signal to a waiter similar to that of a skipper to his players at a

[39] John Rosselli, 'The Self-Image of Effeteness: Physical Education and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Bengal', *Past & Present* 86 (1), 1980, pp. 121-48.
[40] *TOI*, 24 Oct 1939, p. 10.

cricket field![41] *Wisden* described India's first Test captain as 'tall and well proportioned', 'possessed of supple and powerful wrists and a very good eye'.[42] A tall, dark man with sharp features, he supposedly never touched a drop of alcohol and was a pure vegetarian. Yet he was capable of hitting huge sixes against any bowler. The 'wrists of steel' recur in numerous recollections. Incidentally, his legs, which helped him break the Indian high jump record in 1914, received much less appreciation.[43] In short, Nayudu's body has been an object of a good deal of discussions, eliciting reverential response nearly every time. The unpolluted body and the sharp mind aided not only good performances on the field but also fed into the journalistic imaginary of a charismatic psychosomatic self which, premised on Nayudu's aggressive playing style, became a metonymy for resisting colonialism.[44]

Photography played a central part in magnifying the majesty of his persona. A picture showing him cuddling a lion cub during the England tour of 1932 was widely circulated in newspapers and sold as picture postcard, moulding him into a cast of masculinity otherwise reserved for the robust Europeans.[45] All his photographs show him either in playing whites, blazers, military uniforms or in an immaculate three-piece suit (Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Such representations produced an image that embodied the aspirations of both the intellectual bourgeoisie and the working class.

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[41] Eskari, *C.K. Nayudu: A Cricketer of Charm*, Calcutta: Illustrated News, 1945, pp. 8-9.
[42] Majumdar, *Lost Histories*, p. 34.
[43] 'Cothari Kankaiya Nayudu 1893-1967'.
[44] Joseph Alter examines in detail how North Indian wrestlers construct an iconic psychosomatic individuality through regimented exercises to resist and reform the state's hegemonic power over docile bodies. Nayudu's body likewise signified 'Indian' aspirations as opposed to the disciplinary mechanics of imperial power within the notions of civility as marked out by the British. Alter, 'The Body of One Colour', *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (1), 1993, pp. 49-72.
[45] Guha received one of the postcards from an aunt. He kept it in a book to smoothen the edges only never to find it again. Guha, 'The First Great Indian Cricketer: C. K. Nayudu', in *An Anthropologist among the Marxists and Other Essays*, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001, p. 225.

This is somewhat contrary to Bourdieu's formulation on body habitus. Bourdieu's work stresses the role of the body in the creation and reproduction of social difference in that bodies bear the imprint of social class. The working class supposedly visualise their body as an instrument to earn subsistence. They tend to characterise their body as a machine in relation to health, illness, exercise and lifestyle which should always be kept working properly. On the contrary, the dominant classes purportedly view the body as a project and have available resources to choose the course of action and modes of functioning of the body. Again in comparison to working-class groups, middle-class groups are deemed to have more control over their health which can be exercised by choosing an appropriate lifestyle.[46] The Indian elite, middle and working classes are too heterogeneous to be defined by such parameters. It arguable that projections of Nayudu's body were premised on a potential convergence of middle class rectitude and working class defiance. He carried himself with a dignity and panache that conjured up a graceful militancy. The plain life he led despite being surrounded by riches multiplied his appeal. Not only did he own only the second Rolls Royce in Holkar state, he even held a prized post in the state army, and unlike Ranji he managed every role efficiently without alienating himself from Indian society.[47] In his unabashedly ruthless approach, cricket followers found an answer to the British ridicule of the soft, weak Indian body. What they would have commonly called brutality in everyday circumstances became synonymous to unpitying, aggressive masculinity when performed by Nayudu, evident in the string of anecdotes which follow.

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[46] Bourdieu, 'Sport and Social Class', *Social Science Information* 17 (6), 1978, pp. 819-40.

[47] He joined as a Captain in the Holkar state army in 1923, was a Colonel when chosen to lead India, was shortly promoted to Major, and retired as a Lieutenant Major. He did not have to report for duty. All he did was play cricket and make the state proud. It is curious that the Colonel tag stuck to his name forever in spite of his regular promotions. Dilip Vengasarkar was given the nickname Colonel after he hit an aggressive century on debut in Irani Trophy in the 1970s.

During the Pentangular final against the Muslims in 1935, C.S. Nayudu incurred a bout of mumps during the second day's play and retired to the hotel bed. As the fever grew worse, he could not even lift himself. Set 300 to win, the Hindus had started their second innings well. C.K. hit a brisk 53 but a post-Tea collapse on the fourth afternoon left the Hindus staring at defeat. Nayudu desperately summoned C.S. to stem the rot. This is what followed next:

> Nearly everyone was opposed vehemently to the idea, but the majestic Nayudu was unbending in his attitude...Groping for his cricket clothes from under the rug, C. S., nevertheless, was up on his tottering legs in an instant and dressed up in a hurry stumbling and swaying...[C. S.] now fell in an unconscious heap on the pavilion steps... the indomitable spirit of the Nayudus brought forth respect and admiration from all.[48]

Here is an obstinacy that could have well killed his brother. Ironically, it earned the senior Nayudu's the status of a 'true sportsman'.

Nayudu's conduct was even more severe during the 1944 Ranji Trophy finals against Bombay. To ensure that the thirst for victory of his players did not waver, he did not allow the drinks trolley to enter the ground during the breaks. Only Denis Compton, the great English batsman playing for Holkar on temporary relief from war duty, was allowed to drink glasses of lime juice.[49] This incident, widely reported in the sport press, was constructed as a clever subversion of the tough European.[50] Nayudu dutifully epitomised the nation's aspirations, however unintentional it might have been. Fred Trueman, for instance, might have deliberately played up to his media representations to

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[48] Eskari, *C.K. Nayudu*, pp. 58-9. Ranji, the first internationally acclaimed batsman from India who played for England, was famously quoted as having declared his disdain for 'native' cricket.
[49] Guha, 'The First Great Indian Cricketer: C.K. Nayudu', p. 225.
[50] Eskari, *C.K. Nayudu*, p. 91.

be in the limelight, for different reasons though.[51] The function of celebrities, Guy Debord says, is to dramatically act out unfulfilled social aspirations, which in turn entitles them to wield 'pseudopower' over the fans.[52] Nayudu was a proto-celebrity in the sense that he catered to an embryonic mass consumer society. Instead of being driven by public will, as modern celebrities tend to do, Nayudu took command over it. Hence, it is arguable that he himself might had no desire to withdraw from the circulation of his adamant, arrogant persona. For all we know, it might have helped him to consolidate his authority on and off the field. The next section, however, deals with external factors behind the production of this alternatively authoritative (to the public/consumers) and authoritarian (to brother, for instance, or teammates) figure.

Nayudu and Newspapers in the Making of a Social Space for Cricket

Conventional wisdom of business administration suggests that market is embedded in the society – when the need arises, the market rises and expands by supplying the demand. On the other hand, John Sinclair contends that markets do not already exist 'out there' in social reality but are 'constructed', and advertising plays a significant role in this construction. Advertising agencies pick target audiences, segment them into distinct demand groups, and attract them showing their favourite images to the product

[51] Jack Williams' research shows that Trueman was a very different person from what his public profile suggested. The media portrayed 'Fiery Fred' as a brash, intemperate, ferocious fast bowler hailing from a mining background. In reality he was quite friendly and almost a teetotaller. He seemed to have enjoyed the notoriety that marked him as the paterfamilias of an emerging genre of fast bowling – animalistic antagonism to batsmen. He created an aura of feral charm by demonstrative gestures such as not apologising to a batsman after hitting him with a bouncer and hounding him with another in the very next delivery. His political sympathies lay with the establishment even though his rebellious personality made him appear a foe of the established order and a hero to many. Williams, 'Fiery Fred: Fred Trueman and Cricket Celebrity in the 1950s and Early 1960s', *Sport in Society* 12 (4-5), 2009, pp. 509-22.

[52] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Canberra: Hobgoblin Press, 2002 (1967), p. 17.

advertised. The methods of classifying the distinct categories include demographic, socioeconomic and socio-psychological profiling of potential consumers.[53] Following Sinclair's arguments, one can say that schemes of marketing transformed social categories like sport and sport fans into spheres and agents of consumption. The attributes and achievements of individual players, their thoughts and feelings as well as the public's perception about their performances, have become an important focus of reflection, analysis, and consumption.

The study of how a sport is reported offers an important tool of analysing how the media constructs a sport star, considering the sport consumers' cultural priorities. Newspapers are valuable (re)sources for locating a sport and its players within their social milieu, and studying their portrayals as emplotted in narratives of match reports, interviews, review columns, letters and gossips. Newspapers were the principal means of knowing, understanding and interpreting cricket prior to the coming of radio or television. This section explores how new imperatives and developments in sport reporting amplified C.K. Nayudu's sporting achievements. In tandem with this hagiographic literature, his regular and magnified visibility constructed a class of consumers around the game of cricket.

Nayudu was the batting mainstay of the Hindus, one of the most powerful sides in the Bombay Pentangular and certainly the most popular team. This is evident from the way a campaign was successfully launched to ensure they were granted a match against the MCC. During the 1926-27 tour, the MCC were scheduled to spend twenty-one days in Bombay, in which they were to play five matches in a span of fifteen days. Since such a

[53] John Sinclair, *Images Incorporated: Advertising as Industry and Ideology*, Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987, p. 97.

hectic itinerary would leave them little time for sight-seeing, the organising committee decided to cancel the first match, against the Hindus, winner of the last Quadrangular tournament, in anticipation that A.E.R. Gilligan, the MCC captain, might consider the schedule too stressful. *Bombay Chronicle* disapproved this provisional scheduling. They wanted the match against Bombay Presidency to be cancelled and the Hindus match retained, reasoning that the latter has the potential to draw the largest crowd and stage a keen contest.[54] Another argument was that the Presidency match, if played, would be a mere repetition of the matches against the Hindus or the combined teams as the same players would be chosen, causing public interest to peter out. To speak in sporting terms, the Hindus should not have made the cut since a Presidency team had the scope to enlist players from a larger pool and would definitely make a better eleven. A letter sent to the editor the next day supported the *Chronicle*'s view that the Hindu match is extremely important as a series opener for the level of good cricket it promised.[55] Another letter urged not only to drop the Presidency match but pressed for the Hindu match to be extended to three days.[56] It is a moot question whether this should be read as appreciation of the best cricket team or as communal sentiment prevailing over cricketing logic, but it confirms that the Hindus were the favourite team of Bombay. The Quadrangular Committee gave in. The match went down in history as having produced one of the best attacking innings ever played on Indian soil – that epic innings of 153. The next day *Bombay Chronicle* proclaimed Nayudu's genius in the biggest font of the year.[57] Even if

[54] *Bombay Chronicle*, 11 Oct 1926, p. 4.
[55] Ibid., 15 Oct 1926, p. 5.
[56] Ibid., 16 Oct 1926, p. 7.
[57] Three words, 'NAYUDU ECLIPSES EARLE', were stretched along the entire width of a page, Ibid., 2 Dec 1926, p. 7.

the organisation of the match rode on community appeal, his great innings lifted Nayudu's reputation to unassailable levels.

In recognition of this innings the MCC presented a silver bat to Nayudu which is now a prized possession of the Cricket Club of India museum at Mumbai.[58] Interestingly, cricket history downplays the fact that Nayudu was not the only talent to have been recognized by the game's apex body during the tour. The major concern behind undertaking the tour was to establish strong cricketing ties with India with an eye to expand Great Britain's cricketing frontiers. West Indies had been given Test status in 1924 and a tour to Argentina in 1927 was on the cards. The MCC made it a custom to acknowledge good performances from 'native' cricketers with gifts. After defeating Sindh it presented Ghulam Mahomed a silver flower vase, Abdullah, a coat and Ebrahim, a silver powder box for playing well.[59] History forgot these players since unlike Nayudu they had no institution to preserve their memory.

More important to our study is how the newspapers reported the ways in which Indians celebrated Nayudu's exploits. After Nayudu hit the epic 153, the Sahakari Manoranjan Mandal of the Social Service League, which drew most of its members from clerks and operatives employed in mills and factories, decided to felicitate 'Naidu' with a gold medal on the occasion of staging 'Tratika' (*Taming of the Shrew* in Marathi) on Tuesday, 7 December 1926, at the Damodar Thakersee Mooljee Hall in Parel.[60] Messrs Narothan Bhawoo & Co., the well-known jewellers at Shaikh Memon Street, honoured

[58] Raj Singh Dungarpur received the relic from Chandra Nayudu on behalf of CCI on 31 Oct 2004.
[59] *BC*, 3 Nov 1926, p. 5.
[60] Ibid., 6 Dec 1926, p. 8.

him and his team mates with a gold medal each.[61] Proprietors of the Imperial Cinema decided to present him a gold medal worth Rs. 100.[62] Such accounts point out how cricket was turned into an important component of organised leisure. Nayudu soon outgrew city limits and his exploits in small town cricket too began to attract urban English media coverage. A brisk century at a trivial meet like the Daly Challenge Shield Tournament in Indore evoked applause from the media.[63]

These salutary gestures bring out a complicated history of the early twentieth-century Bombay when the city grew from a cluster of localities into an industrial megalopolis—the economic nerve centre of the country. In 1914, over 87 per cent of the total value of Indian capital investment was concentrated in Bombay while Indian capital accounted for nearly half the total value of private industrial investment centred in the city.[64] Social codes were also changing in keeping with the commercial explosion. A new class of professionals, ranging from officers to communities of labours and workers trained in modern bureaucratic work ethic, was fostered. The Census Commissioner's report in 1931, argues Kaushik Bhaumik, showed a considerable increase of population in the age groups between fifteen and fifty. Despite the fact that the 1931 census was inaccurate as the data collection was hindered by the Civil Disobedience Movement, Bombay was undoubtedly becoming 'a place for younger and younger workers', around whose lifestyle flowered a consumer culture.[65]

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] *TOI*, 21 Dec 1928, p. 15.
[64] Rajnarayan Chandravarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 31.
[65] Kaushik Bhaumik, 'At Home in the World: Cinema and Cultures of the Young in Bombay in the 1920s', in Douglas E. Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, and Haruka Yanagisawa eds., *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 139-41.

Standard of living had been declining in the 1930s in the wake of the global economic depression, but through efficient management of household income and fixed hours of work the white-collar salaried employees could conveniently invest in leisurely activities such as cricket and cinema. Ironically, rising cost of living and growing fears of unemployment deterred the temporary, casual workers from wasting resources on cinema. For them, cricket was far more accessible an entertainment option since most of the major cricket matches were played on unenclosed grounds and could be watched for free. The tents and pavilions were occupied by patrons, club members or other influential persons while the ticketless people sat in the open. Reportedly they turned up in such large numbers that the latecomers had to crowd nearby treetops or top floors of adjacent buildings or any inch of visible open space.[66] As is evident from newspaper reports on number of spectators, insecurities in job tenures did not prevent mill hands from turning up in big numbers to watch cricket matches. Corporate houses saw in this rising popularity of cricket a medium to reach their targeted consumer base – constituted to a great extent by cricket-spectators. They started using cricket imageries to advertise their products. Various entertainment industries in fact solicited alignments with cricket to enhance their market profile, which will be discussed later.

As print technologies improved and publishing photographs became cheaper, newspapers capitalised on the popularity of cricket by featuring action photographs, diagrams and special sections. Nayudu attracted special attention as a series of innovations developed around him. During the Festival match in 1937, *Bombay Chronicle* carried out a series of photos showing Nayudu in sequential postures in his bowling run-

[66] A fan who could not get to a treetop in time wrote a bitter letter to *Indian National Herald*, pleading for space for the thousands of 'poor people who cannot check their enthusiasm and whose purse is too lean to bear the price of a seat in rented tents', Guha, *Corner of a Foreign Field*, p. 174.

up.[67] A diagram showing the area of scoring shots in the oval was also one of the first of its kind.[68] These media technologies managed to synthesize the aesthetic of Nayudu's personality with empirical description of his performance. The signs became popular within the public culture of celebrity consumption. In comparison with other cricketers, Nayudu's portraits came out the most in Indian newspapers in the 1930s, socially reinforcing his personality, resulting in increased popularity.[69]

The respect Nayudu commanded seemed only to grow with time. *Bombay Chronicle* reported his century in the Festival Cricket Match in 1937 with great excitement:

> Major C. K. Nayudu, once again, as on the first day of the match, was the idol of the huge crowd. Whether 'C.K.' played a ball, sent down a delivery or did some fielding, everything was cheered. Going out after tea on Sunday, he was literally mobbed by youthful admirers, each wanting to tap their hero on the back. Evidently they forgot that the Major's broad shoulders carried a covering of human flesh and there was a limit to slaps of appreciation. When stumps were drawn, Nayudu had to run to the Club House to avoid being shouldered. The crowd was not to be outdone fully and they refused to disperse unless Nayudu came out. The Major had to appear three times on the Club House top dock before the thousands, who called for 'Nayudu', decided to tread their way back.[70]

The next day's paper reported how flower sellers had a field day as Nayudu reached yet another of his sparkling centuries. They bought tickets, and settled in the crowded galleries with loads of garlands. As Nayudu inched towards his century, garlands were lapped up at fancy prices. As soon as Nayudu reached his century with a deft cut, running

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[67] *BC*, 30 Dec 1937, p. 1.
[68] Ibid., p. 3.
[69] Nayudu retained his 'aura' since the systems of mechanical reproduction were not fully developed yet to domesticate and trivialise the exclusivity of an image over a wide area. Walter Benjamin critically discusses 'aura' in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt, New York: Schocken, 1968.
[70] *BC*, 27 Dec 1937, p. 8.

the ball through the slips, the entire ground dashed to the pitch and buried him neck deep under heaps of flowers.[71] The paper carried out a picture of a man with a child in his left arm and a garland in his right, hurrying to embrace Nayudu.[72] The picture illustrated the height of fan culture – the man thought nothing of precariously hanging a baby in one arm and beating the rush of people to honour his idol. The Hindu Gymkhana Club House was packed to capacity with over 15,000 people including a large number of women jostling for space. While Nayudu was batting, Mushtaq Ali scored a majestic 135 on a wearing track in the Pentangular final in another corner of the city. The match which used to generate tremendous excitement in Bombay was now played to sparsely populated stands in the newly built Brabourne Stadium.[73] Clearly, the appeal of Nayudu had by now moved beyond the confines of cricketing rationality.

This is not the crowd that cheered every good display in complete disregard of the cricketer's creed in the 1920s. The situation had changed as political differences between the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha incited communal tensions among the masses. The Hindu Gymkhana did not operate along communal rhetoric or even tried to invoke religious symbols to build up its fan following. But the cricket field is an interactive public space, not detached from social tensions. Mushtaq Ali insisted in his autobiography that cricketers were largely free from communal prejudices, but the masses were not the same disciplined spectators of the earlier years who looked at the game from a strictly sporting perspective. They had now, to quote Ali, 'deteriorated to rabid partisans who could, with the slightest provocation, be

[71] Ibid., 28 Dec 1937, p. 1.
[72] Ibid., p. 8.
[73] Ibid., The Muslims pulled off a victory over the Europeans by an innings and 91 runs.

transformed into communal rioters of the worst category'.[74] Supporters of the Hindus boycotted the Pentangular final and watched an exhibition match. In fact, with the Hindus staying away the next Pentangular tournament did not generate much enthusiasm either.

During the 1939 Pentangular, the newspapers cried the familiar lack of public interest for the third year running. The Muslims took on the Rest in the first semi-final. All curiosity evaporated as the Muslims steamrolled over the Rest in a matter of two days and a few hours. Hardly 500 were present in the second afternoon.[75] In contrast, no less than 12,000 people daily watched the second semi-final, played between the Hindus and the Parsis.[76] The turnout skyrocketed in the final as the Hindus took on the Muslims. With the future of anti-colonial movements delicately poised on the Congress-Muslim League rift, at least 30,000 spectators attended the game as the contest heated up.[77] On the decisive third day, the authorities closed the gates long before the start to prevent overcrowding as all the stands were already full to utmost capacity. 40,000 watched as a resilient Vijay Merchant helped the Hindus comfortably chase down a challenging target.[78] The tournament did not generate communal animosity, but the roster of spectator participation makes one wonder whether communal affinity was a factor behind Nayudu's enormous popularity. Did he, a strict vegetarian and devotee of the goddess Kali, represent and directly feed the communal pride of the Hindus?[79] Support from the largest community in Bombay, which formed the largest body of consumers as well, might have contributed towards building Nayudu's legend, the captain and the best player

[74] Mushtaq Ali, *Cricket Delightful*, Calcutta: Rupa, 1976, pp. 142-3.
[75] *AmBP*, 21 Nov 1939, p. 9.
[76] Ibid., 24 Nov 1939, p. 11.
[77] Ibid., 26 Nov 1939, p. 12.
[78] Ibid., 27 Nov 1939, p. 12.
[79] Eskari, *C.K. Nayudu*, p. 45.

of the Hindus. The same community, however, stayed away from the 1941 Pentangular final in which the Hindus trounced the Parsis. Incidentally, Nayudu was not in the squad. The turnout hardly exceeded 3,000 in the final afternoon.[80] Communalism or not, Nayudu's popularity stood unmatched.

Corporate houses lost no time in identifying Nayudu as the cricket fans' ultimate object of desire. He was not the first Indian sportsman to capture the space of advertisement, but attracted more commercial attention than his contemporaries. He was no match fo the hockey player Dhyan Chand in international renown but made more headlines or endorsed more products than the latter did. Several factors worked in Nayudu's favour. Firstly, having played most of his cricket in Bombay in front of the largest crowd of consumers and advertisers in the country was an advantage. Major Dhyan Chand, on the contrary, played most of his memorable matches in front of foreign admirers. The people sharing the same cantonment with Dhyan Chand could watch him practice but the pre-television Indian public outside the camp could only read his feats in newspapers or catch occasional glimpses in the few exhibition matches he played in India. Moreover, since hockey or football was secondary in importance to cricket in Bombay, it was taken for granted that the most popular cricketer would rank higher in public demand and corporate preference. The tenet of a successful business venture is to satisfy the taste and needs of target consumers. Entrepreneurs promptly realized that they would have to accede to the socio-cultural requirements of consumers to make profit. The high visibility and acceptability of Nayudu's performances guaranteed him unparalleled popularity. The person responsible for changing the mien of a batsman was bound to

[80] *Hindustan Times*, 27 Dec 1941, p. 8. The Hindus made 474 in the first innings. The Parsis responded with two innings of 203 and 309. The Hindus knocked up the remaining 41 runs without losing a wicket.

draw notice of advertisers. He singularly attracted a lot of spectators who were not interested in cricket before watching him play.[81] If the selection were to be limited to sportspeople, he would be the first choice in any brand's strategy of developing a band of loyal customers.

One of his first assignments was promotion of the Tea Market Expansion Board. The advertisement, 'TEA for Stamina', showed Nayudu executing a cut shot, with a haloed cupful of tea superimposed on the turf between his bent knees (Figure 2.4). The caption reads,

> 'I have always found a good cup of tea a great refresher during a game of cricket... I strongly advocate this beverage to those that partake in any strenuous game. Tea is the only drink I love. I cannot do without my tea in the morning and evening.'[82]

Among other products, Nayudu promoted Bathgate's Liver Tonic. He was reported as having said, 'I have found that a morning dose of Bathgate's Liver Tonic banishes sluggishness and keeps me 100% fit for the day's play. I recommend it to all cricketers and, in fact, to all sportsmen.'[83] Health drinks and tonics, the products which sought to relieve physical weakness and mental stress, had evoked sportspeople as brand ambassadors the most frequently. As Douglas Haynes shows in his research on *Bombay Chronicle* advertisements, advertisements of these products exploited the urban middle class professionals' anxiety regarding the risk of physical debility ruining their occupational prospects as well as undermining their social responsibilities. He has further argued that tonic advertisements in late colonial India conjured up images of a healthy

[81] N.S. Ramaswamy, *From Porbandar to Wadekar*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1975, p. 54.
[82] *AmBP*, Nov 25, 1939, p. 13, Tea had brought out a brochure, 'Now for a Cup of Tea', a collection of similar quotes from leading sportsmen on the utility of tea for enhancing endurance and stamina during and after games. The brochure was to be delivered on request sent, along with a cut out of the Nayudu coupon, to the Commissioner of the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board, Calcutta.
[83] Guha, *Corner of a Foreign Field*, picture 10.

body—the 'body social'—which, apart from remedying physical inadequacies, sought to establish links with the 'body politic' that Indian nationalists were trying to liberate from colonial allegations of weakness.[84] Referring to Nayudu's remarkable physicality which was transformed into an arena where the home-grown confronted the exotic was a good selling strategy.

In a brilliant marketing move, Nayudu's fame was used to promote Hindi films too. An incident from his life was used to advertise a V. Shantaram film produced by Prabhat Chitra. The text read:

NAYUDU Was Surprised

The Press reported that Major C. K. Nayudu was surprised when he discovered at the last minute that he was dropped out of the Test team. The reports stated that NAYUDU had sealed his lips on the incident.

How much more surprised – and shocked – should NIRMALA be when she, too, discovered at the last minute that she was marrying the wrong man! She sealed or concealed nothing; but declared open war against those responsible for the mean trick.

It was an uneven battle – an innocent lone girl pitted against Tradition, Society and Wealth. She fought with the fiery strength of the woman's heart, and the result was –

'The Unexpected'

Hindi – Duniya Na Mane – Hindi[85]

[84] Douglas Haynes, 'Creating the Consumer? Advertising, Capitalism, and the Middle Class in Urban Western India, 1914-40', in Douglas E. Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, and Haruka Yanagisawa eds., *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 202-8.
[85] *BC*, 18 Dec 1937, p. 3.

This is perhaps cricket's first tryst with the Bombay film industry. It sought to bridge the two worlds that would later emerge as two of the biggest industries in India. The makers of *Duniya Na Mane* (The World Doesn't Care) took it for granted that the radio or newspaper had penetrated domestic spheres well enough to communicate to average movie-going people the news that Nayudu had been excluded, without even being informed, from the unofficial second 'Test' against Lord Tennyson's visiting MCC team at Bombay. The newspaper-reading people knew about the courage Nayudu showed in clashing with the administrators of Indian cricket.[86] Here the distributors cashed in on the image of Nayudu as a courageous man who never showed any 'ticklish period' on the field of play, and made an attempt to authenticate Nirmala's trial by comparing her narrative with that of Nayudu.[87] The text emphasized Nayudu's failure to redress his distress, contradicting, in certain terms, the vigorous image upheld in other advertisements and reports. Nirmala, on the contrary, was vested with the courage to rebel against her society. In effect, the advertisement promoted the superiority of cinematic reality showing that a film could accomplish what cricket could not. It acted on the prefigured idea that Nayudu was bold and his boldness was well-known, and configured Nirmala as a cinematic character which fed off and multiplied the depth of Nayudu's real-life character. This victory of the simulation over the worldliness of cricket was 'unexpected', and it raised the business quotient of *Duniya Na Mane*.

[86] Maharajkumar of Vizianagram or Vizzy in short, captain of the India team in the 1936 tour of England, brought against Nayudu false charges of being aloof and uncooperative. Shute Banerjee was denied his maiden India cap for refusing to abuse Nayudu at the breakfast table. Nayudu's performances argued his case against the princely intrigues and reclaimed his dignity.

[87] Talyarkhan brings his expertise in captivating the radio audience into words while describing Nayudu in a nutshell, 'That is the batsman who knows no time limit, no ticklish period – each ball on its merits and to hell with the pundits!', 'C.K. Nayudu As We Knew Him', p. 59.

Conclusion

Sport is an ideal vehicle of promotional culture because in many ways it mirrors the idealized version of capitalism—the hallmarks of which are competition, achievement, efficiency, technology, meritocracy and consumerism.[88] Furthermore, sport ascribes strong spatial, cultural and social identities that are necessary to create and sustain a consumer base. The carefully crafted narrative of Nayudu as a hero was a powerful stimulus for public imagination. Apart from being a sporting hero, in terms of competitiveness and sensibility he exemplified some of the forces at work that produced the new professionalized spectator sport. With Nayudu on the move, the narrative of the game always demanded the audience's attention, reinforcing cricket's soap-opera appeal. Feeding the readers their favourite hero as a role model, the media capitalised on Nayudu's social persona. Biographical sketches of Nayudu were products of collective social endeavour towards creating a standard of respectable, virile social and sporting behaviour. This is why Nayudu was primarily required—to guide the fledgling sporting culture and the newly emerging middle class in a colonized territory. His images in all their strengths and limitations accomplished this duty.

Nayudu's long career spanned a vital phase when Indian cricket was transformed into an institutionally coordinated public spectacle from a privately maintained pastime. Frequent international tours and surge in domestic competitions set up a competitive framework for cricket around which a public sphere developed. Growing media interest

[88] Steven Jackson, David Andrews and Jay Scherer, 'Introduction: The Contemporary Landscape of Sport Advertising', in Steven Jackson and David Andrews eds., *Sport, Culture and Advertising: Identities, Commodities and the Politics of Representation*, p. 10.

and coverage, coupled with corporate sponsorship of cricket tournaments and endorsement contracts to players, reconstructed cricket as a site of consumption which required heroes for its marketing. Attributes to Nayudu, amplified by the numerous reports and biographical sketches, justified not only his star status, but moved beyond the bat-and-ball game to construct his persona as a 'totem' which symbolized the dreams of his society.

The audience addressed in the sport media was evidently male, and the widespread recognition of India's first cricket hero was based on the literary amplification of his masculinity and the consequent nationalization of his body. Men, however, were not the exclusive consumers of cricket. Although the early sport press made allusions to the presence of female spectators, cricket-watching women became a matter of routine reflection especially in the 1950s as women's agency of leisure became a contested site. The next chapter takes up the depiction of female spectators to ponder over the issues associated with women's consumption of cricket.

Figure 1.1 Cricket Times

The Times of India, 21 Jul 1934, p. 19 .

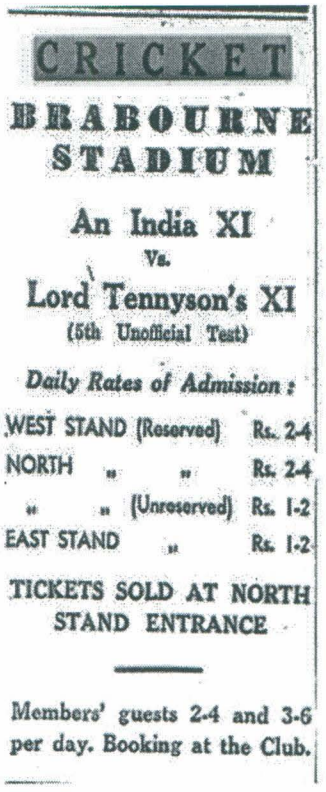
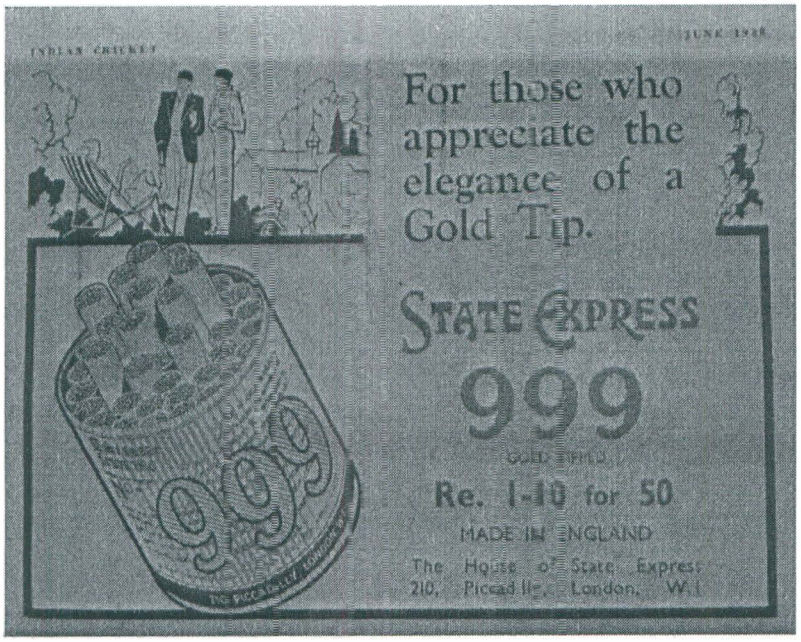


Figure 1.2 Braboune Stadium

The Times of India, 7 Feb 1938, p. 13.

Figure 1.3 Gradidge's equipment. *The Times of India*, 8 Oct 1897, p. 7.



1.4 State Express 999. *Indian Cricket*, Jun 1938, p. 487.

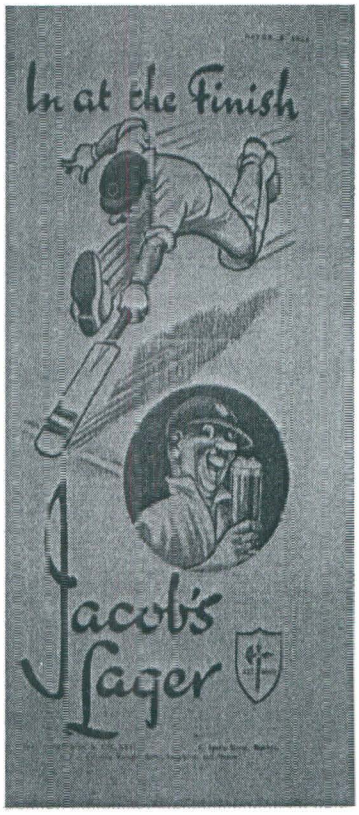


Figure 1.5 Jacob's Lager. *Indian Cricket*, Oct 1936, p. 13.

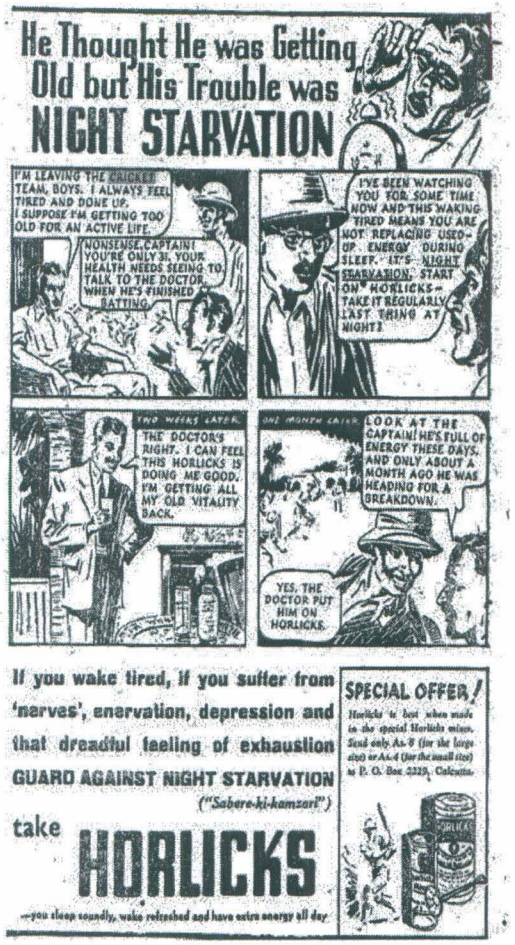
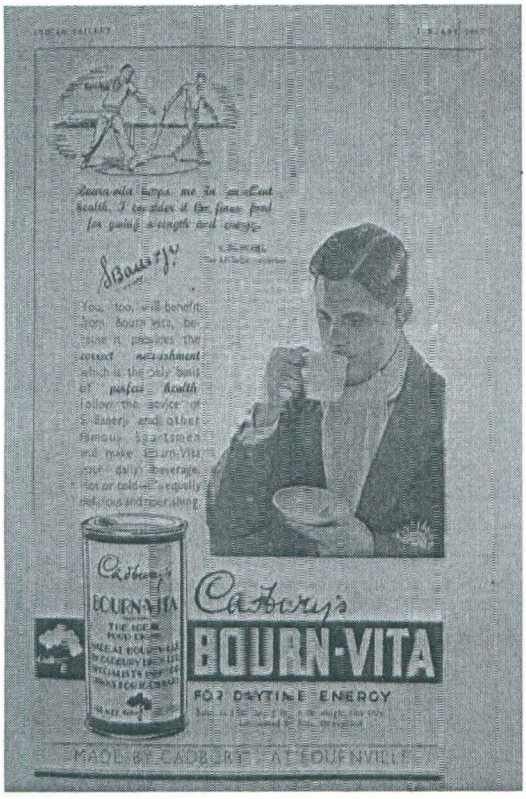


Figure 1.6 Horlick's. *The Times of India*, 3 Jan 1938, p. 19.

Figure 1.7 Kruschen. *The Times of India*, 24 Apr 1949, p. 5.



1.8 Bourn-vita Banerji.

Indian Cricket, Jan 1937, p. 185.

1.9 Bourn-vita Mushtaq Ali.

Indian Cricket, Feb 1937, p. 245.

1.10 Bourn-vita Bhaya.

Indian Cricket, Mar 1937, p. 305.

Figure 2.1 C.K. Nayudu commemorative stamp

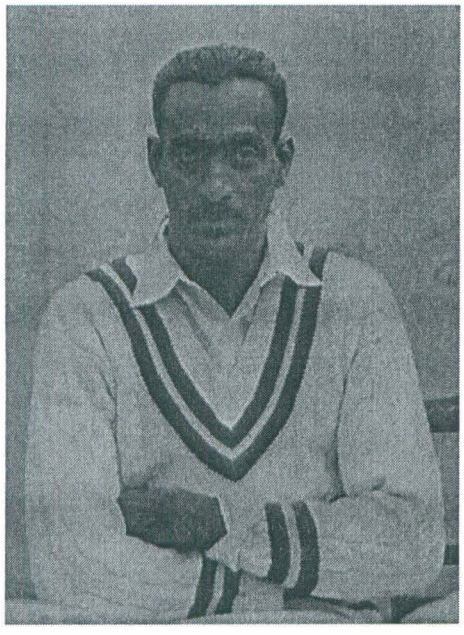


Figure 2.2 Cricketer Nayudu

Figure 2.3 Colonel Nayudu

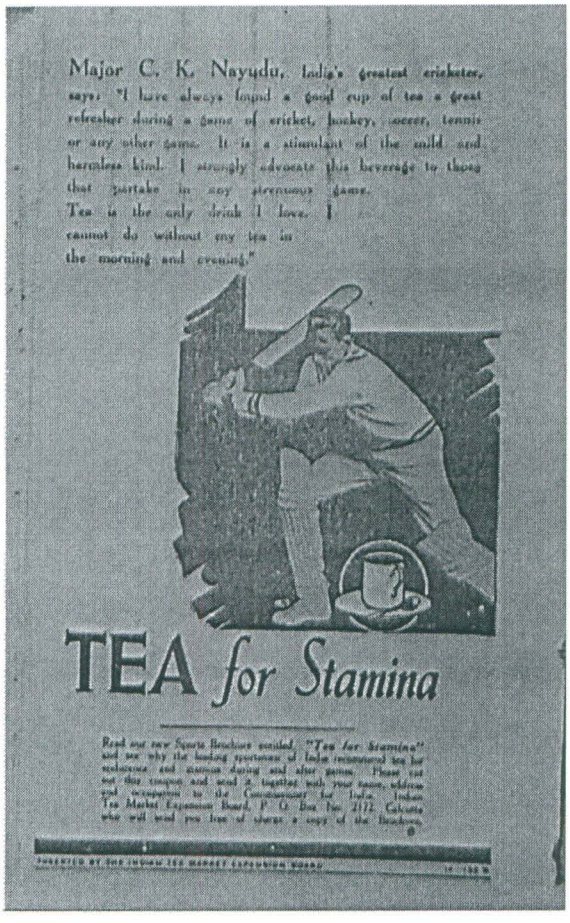


Figure 2.4 Advertisement for TEA

Figure 3.1 'wools of the entire flock of sheep' Two ladies, two lifestyles, same stadium *Anandabazar Patrika*, 7 Jan 1967, p. 9.

Figure 3.2 'not the zeal to see but the urgency to show' The 'modern' woman at the Eden Gardens *Anandabazar Patrika*, 5 Jan 1967, p. 4.

Figure 3.3 Sharmila Tagore (left) and Anjoo Mahendroo, fiances of M.A.K. Pataudi and Gary Sobers respectively, watching the 1967 Eden Test a day after the riot. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 4 Jan 1967, p. 1.

Figure 4.1 Dozens of policemen and home guards beating Sitesh Roy. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 1.

Figure 4.2 Reconstruction of gallery on the Rest day. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 3 Jan 3 1967, p. 1.

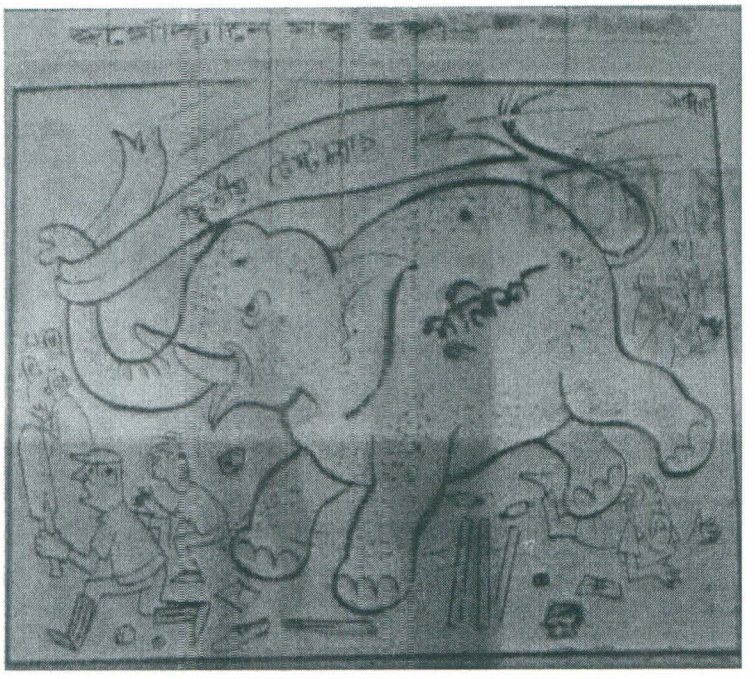


Figure 4.3 An elephant gone insane – the police. *Dainik Basumati*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.

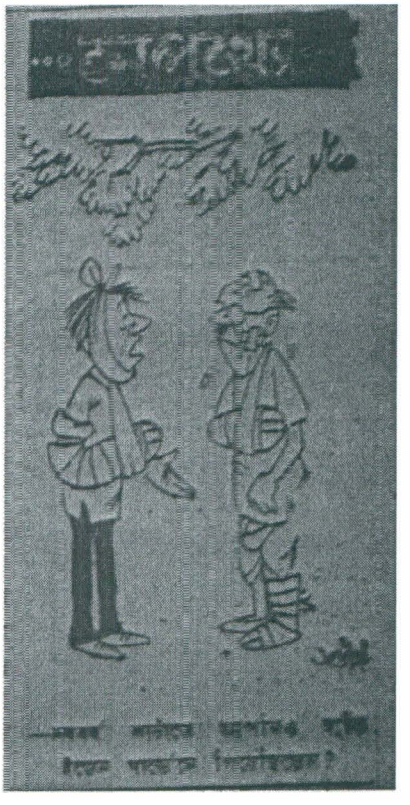


Figure 4.4 'Even you had gone to the Eden Gardens to celebrate the New Year?' *Dainik Basumati*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.

Figure 4.5 Manager Prior Jones and cricketers Lance Gibbs and Wesley Hall inspecting the pitch for likely damage. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.

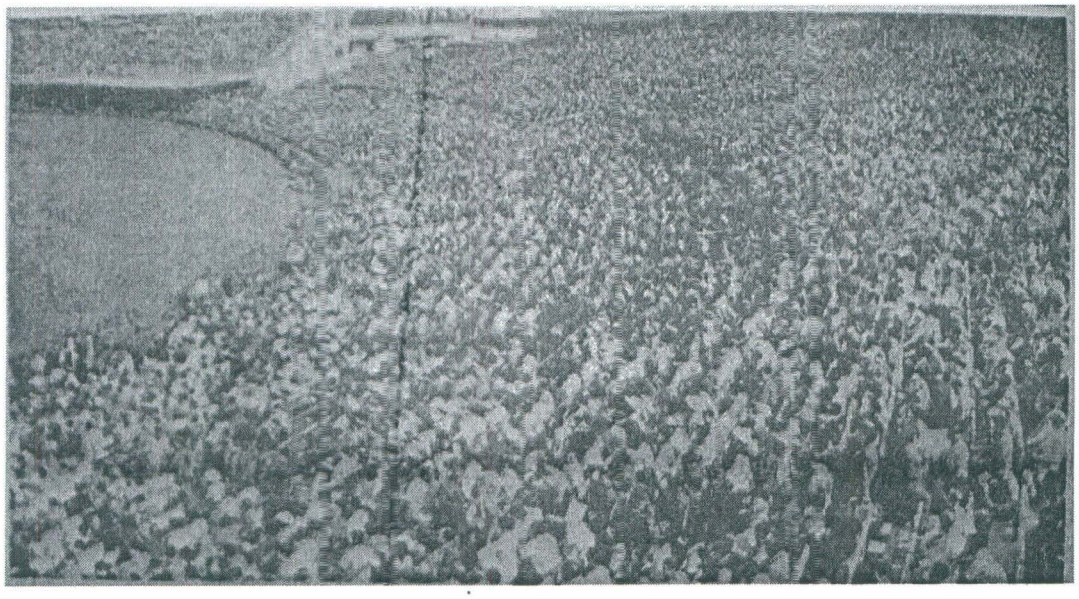


Figure 4.6 The gallery with glory restored. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 4 Jan 1967, p. 1.

CHAPTER THREE

'One Sweater and Two Mufflers. Yours?': Female Spectators in Vernacular Cricket Writings

During the India-MCC Test match at the Eden Gardens in 1962, *Hindustan Standard* published a front page cartoon which displayed two women, seated at the back rows, chatting and knitting sweaters in complete apathy to the match in progress. The rest of the spectators, all depicted as male, were shown to be totally absorbed in the game. The caption, speculating what one of the women might have been asking to her companion, was: 'One sweater and two mufflers. Yours?'[1]

The cartoon expressed the general attitude to women cricket spectators at the Eden Gardens, Calcutta in the 1950s-60s. Female spectators were ridiculed, accompanied by cartoons, in newspaper columns for occupying seats with little knowledge of the sport. However, women refused to accept this stereotype. One of them, for instance, wrote a sharp letter to Sankariprasad Basu, author humorous pen pictures of women at the Eden Gardens, accusing him of considering 'women as ignorant fools when it comes to cricket, but my experience tells me that quite a few women understand what cricket is.'[2]

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[1] *Hindustan Standard*, 2 Jan 1962, p. 1.

[2] Sankariprasad Basu, *Cricket Omnibus I*, Calcutta: Mandal Book House, 1976, p. 419. All transations from Bengali sources are author's, except otherwise mentioned.

This chapter studies representations of women's experience at cricket grounds hoping to add a new dimension to existing debates on women, leisure and domesticity. As one of the most ideological of sports, the game of cricket has evolved its own philosophy in which women have been assigned particular forms of involvement alongside men. Literary, visual and oral representations have sustained or reformulated this gender divide. Over the last three decades feminist scholars produced substantial empirical works and rich theoretical paradigms to explain women's experience in sport and similar outdoor activities. Most of these works have drawn inspiration from Michel Foucault's analysis of power in which power is described as not only an institution or a structure, but rather a social practice which emanates from and is exercised through innumerable points, rather than a single political centre.[3] This approach to power has been used extensively in studies of social movements, arguing that one of the most important aspects of these struggles in contemporary society was the way in which these have contested subjectification. The advantage of this approach to the study of sport, culture and society is that it allows one to overstep the conventional analysis of politics at the level of the state or the ways in which, for example, governments, and by extension men, use sport as an instrument of nation-building. Recent works, however, criticise the adoption of such a broad Foucauldian approach to the history of body/sport for having over-emphasised identity politics and failing to connect with other struggles for recognition such as the one for autonomous space.[4]

Works of Jennifer Hargreaves in particular epitomise the complexity and diversity of women's experiences of sport and male-female dichotomies. She moves well beyond

[3] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, New York: Vintage, 1988.
[4] Nancy Fraser, 'Re-thinking Recognition?', *New Left Review*, 3 (May/June), 2000, pp. 107-20.

the boundaries of white middle-class feminism to encompass the sporting experiences of, for example, Muslim women and black South African women.[5] One of the themes explored in relation to women's sport has been the representation of gendered bodies in sport through the media and, for example, how the body is used in displays of sexuality. Such media representations arguably deny women independent agency or marginalises lesbian or homosexual sports coverage.[6] Historians of cricket have not been altogether apathetic to this trend of analysis; scholars such as Philippa Velija and Dominic Malcolm have explored the status of women cricketers in the UK from various perspectives.[7] But while female athletic bodies and outlooks have been comprehensively researched, female spectators have hardly been a point of discussion despite the extensive attention historically accorded to them by journalists, humourists and male partisans.[8] This chapter addresses this research gap in the context of women cricket spectators in Calcutta.

A number of studies have addressed the problematic liaison between domesticity, social space and women as historical subjects in colonial India. The woman's question, as Geraldine Forbes observes, was one of the most serious public issues in the nineteenth-century India which arbitrated not what women wanted but how they could be modernized in keeping with male ideas of civility.[9] The encounter of pre-colonial forms of domesticity with new ideologies reinvented prevalent notions of marriage, family and

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[5] Jennifer A. Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports*. London: Routledge, 1994.
[6] Grant Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 224.
[7] Notable among the studies are Dominic Malcolm and Philippa Velija, 'Female Cricketers and Male Preserves', in Michael Atkinson and Kevin Young eds., *Tribal Play: Sport Subcultures and Countercultures*, London: Elsevier Press, 2008, pp. 217-34; Velija and Malcolm, "Look it's a Girl": Cricket and Gender Relations in the UK', *Sport in Society* 12 (4-5), 2009, pp. 629-42; André Odendaal, 'Neither cricketers nor ladies': Towards a History of Women and Cricket in South Africa, 1860s-2000s', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 28 (1), 2011, pp. 115-36.
[8] *Sport and Its Female Fans*, edited by Kim Toffoletti and Peter Mewett, due to be published by Routledge on 25 July 2012, is going to be the first book-length contribution to women's experiences of sport fandom.
[9] Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 12.

responsibility in the context of a colonial 'native' public sphere. In the changing socio-cultural milieu of the 'new colonial metropolis' of Calcutta, the position of women became a yardstick of Indian men's social status. The colonial critique of gender relation in India generated in the minds of literate Bengalis worries not only about the position of their women but also about their ideas about the family and the new nation. One of the most notable developments in the civil society was the emergence of the *bhadramahila*, conceptualised by the elite patriarchy as the confluence of the traditional Hindu woman and the enlightened Victorian lady. A number of journals and instruction manuals were published for the purpose of training them as good mothers and housewives.[10] The domestic position of these women, however, was unstable. It changed as encounters with various types of colonial policies and politics continually modified women's relations with men, giving rise to new agencies, innovations and restrictions. Scholars have interpreted the cultures of gender relations from various perspectives including class, caste, marriage, labour, nationalism, migration, ethnicity etc.[11] What this chapter perceives as a conspicuous lacuna in the historiography and seeks to redress is men-women interaction as expressed by participation in outdoor activities such as spectator sport, one of the most gendered of social pursuits.[12]

This chapter provides a historical background of women's presence in sport grounds. It uses memoirs, newspaper columns and general cricket literature to locate

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[10] Meredith Borthwick, *Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849-1905*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 5-59.

[11] A useful resource for scholarships on gender relations in India would be Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar eds., *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: A Reader* 2 vols., New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007.

[12] Some good studies to have addressed this gendering of sport include Cara C. Aitchison ed., *Sport and Gender Identities: Masculinities, Femininities and Sexualities*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2007; Jennifer Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity*, London & New York: Routledge, 2000; Ilaine Hartmann-Tews and Gertrude Pfister eds., *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective*, London & New York: Routledge, 2003.

female spectators in two historical phases: before the 1950s i.e., at a time when gender boundaries were comparatively tightly marked out, and in the 1950s-60s, i.e., when women's agency became a topic of intense discussion. 1950 has been used as a watershed for the purpose of illustrating specific developments in terms of gendered spectatorship. While dealing with the colonial period, it contextualises the reactions to cricket-watching Bengali women in light of the colonial ideological import. In the next section, it traces the succeeding portrayals of female spectators, the debates connected to it, and the consumption patterns that played a significant role in the representation. By doing so, the chapter hopes to analyse gender politics in the vernacular sport press and contribute to the understanding of representations of gender relations in urban Bengali society.

Details of the numbers and categories (age, social class, caste, sex) of spectators and statistics of ticket prices in past matches either do not exist or are inaccessible. A quantitative analysis of these factors towards understanding the transition of spectatorship would have had immense sociological and historical value. But this potential could not be fulfilled since the sources required to calculate the proportion of female to male spectators or to ascertain the number of married/ unmarried, accompanied/ unaccompanied women were not available. So textual analysis of journalistic and literary accounts, along with oral interviews, is the only recourse to interpret how the gender relation in stadium events changed over the time period in question and the ways in which these changes correlated with gender and family structures in the larger society.

Origin of the Gendered Cricket Gallery

In nineteenth-century England, boys were supposed to become men through disciplined physical exertion, but the girl-to-lady transition was not presumed to be achieved in the playing field. Whoever transgressed this dictum was considered a troublemaker with suspect sexuality.[13] Such philosophies were propagated through the educational discourses of public schools, so successfully that the paradigmatic 'respectable urban housewife' became accustomed to experiencing the spectacle from outside the field. Even this spectatorship was allowed up to a certain point, filtered by protocols of behaviour. As Hargreaves has pointed out, the women reduced to the role of watching and praising men's physical antics inside the prohibited space actually reinforced men's superiority over women.[14]

The invisibility and marginal status of women in cricket is strongly linked to the fact that cricket, self-consciously constructed as 'the gentleman's game', is historically one of the most dogmatic of all sports. A strong influence which shaped its cultures was patriarchy which was at its height in mid- to late nineteenth-century Britain when the game assumed its modern character and spread to the colonies.[15] Cricket came to be seen as the gentleman's highest code of honour. Female cricketers, one historian observes, were considered trespassers in the hallowed field.[16] Inclusion of women with equal rights as men would have directly challenged the male control of sporting space and subverted

[13] Odendaal, 'Neither cricketers nor ladies': Towards a History of Women and Cricket in South Africa, 1860s-2000s', p. 116.
[14] Jennifer Hargreaves, 'The Victorian Cult of the Family and the Early Years of Female Sports', in Eric Dunning, Joseph Maguire and Robert Pearton eds., *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994, p. 73.
[15] Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, London: Aurum Press, 1999; Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001.
[16] Kathleen E. McCrone, *Playing the Game: Sport and Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914*, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1988, pp. 142-3.

values of Muscular Christianity and the 'imperial mission', upon which the ethos of cricket was based. Female cricketers could barely claim the denied space and failed to upstage the image of cricket as a game dominated and regulated by 'gentlemen'. Ironically, women spectators carved a comfort zone for themselves in more ways than one.

While sportswomen were dismissed for lacking athletic body-mind harmony and other qualifiers of outdoor sports, female spectators were judged by entirely different parameters. Spectatorship hardly threatened their domestic, feminine attributes—the loss of what was so zealously guarded against. Moreover, spectatorship offered women the chance to sport their feminine aesthetic well within the boundaries of modesty and propriety. Women in the peripheries, Greg Ryan claims, generally enjoyed a wider range of opportunities and experiences within their prescribed roles as wives, mothers, daughters and sisters. For most of the nineteenth century, women maintained a purely supporting role within the male sporting community, being called upon to 'launch boats, donate trophies and provide victuals for participants'. Some believed that women's presence as spectators lent a civilising and festive atmosphere to sport.[17]

The practice extended to India as well. Mrs. Lemans, wife of the Times group's chairperson, presented the winners' prize at the conclusion of the inaugural Times of India Challenge Shield.[18] Ladies were singularly invited to the dinner dance organised in honour of the touring MCC team at the new ballroom at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, the ticket of which cost a princely Rs. 12.[19] In colonial India, female spectators in cricket

[17] Greg Ryan, *The Making of New Zealand Cricket 1832-1914*, London: Frank Cass, 2004, p. 21.
[18] *The Times of India*, 8 Oct 1930, p. 11.
[19] Ibid., 1 March 1934, p. 7.

grounds came commonly from elite families, and sat in special, secluded tents. Parsi women were a regular at cricket grounds since the 1890s. A rather amusing Bengali short story by Brahmanyabhusan and Kshama Bandyopadhyay, the title of which loosely translates as 'The Poet Laureate and Cricket', describes an imaginary cricket match played at Gomoh sometime in the 1930s at the behest of none other than Rabindranath Tagore![20] The match was said to have been attended by local women, dressed in saris worn the Marathi way. Also present were the great dancer Mani Behn, the famous motor racing specialist Rajkumari Sharmila, the daughters of the Gaekwad family, the Rajkumari of Burdwan and many other women from royal or business families. Presence of women evidently increased with the gradual shift of the site of play from open, unpretentious grounds to the built environment of stadiums. According to an estimate, women made up twenty-five to thirty per cent of the crowd at the newly built Brabourne Stadium (1938 onwards) whereas they constituted not more than five per cent of the spectators at the erstwhile Bombay Gymkhana ground.[21]

Women Spectators in Calcutta before the 1950s

The history of organised cricket in Calcutta goes back to 1780. It remained an exclusively British activity for a long time. The 'natives' formally took to cricket in the 1880s, when members of the educated middle class established clubs to play the game regularly. A number of princes and landlords came forward to sponsor cricket, and the game

[20] The story appeared in *Masik Basumati* in the June 1956 issue and was subsequently reprinted in many collections. Basu, *Cricket Omnibus II*, Calcutta: Mandal Book House, 1976, pp. 370-5.
[21] Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1979, p. 117.

flourished under their patronage. In the 1910s, however, football outstripped cricket in popularity. On one hand, easy accessibility of playing equipment and field as well as simple laws helped football's growth. On the other, the 'Englishness' of cricket, manifest in the patrons' and players' costumes, etiquettes and attitudes towards the game as opposed to the more indigenised, barefoot tradition of playing football, estranged cricket from the 'cultural self' of the common people.[22]

As a couple of princely patrons, namely Nripendra Narayan of Cooch Behar and Jagadindranath of Natore, died in quick succession in the 1910s, the progress of cricket in the province suffered a major blow.[23] The competitive football tournaments became more attractive than the cricket leagues. The usual cricket matches, barring a few tournaments, were friendlies between clubs or colleges or other institutions. An attempt to revive interest in cricket was undertaken in the mid-1930s. Commenting on the second Maharaja of Cooch Behar Cup in 1936, *The Statesman* reported that Bengal was taking more interest in cricket than ever before and any movement which will help to improve in the standard of the game deserved encouragement.[24] Yet spectators were few, and mostly male. Among the most regular women spectators in Calcutta were the ladies from the illustrious Ray family, keen to watch their relatives in action.[25]

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[22] Boria Majumdar and Kausik Bandyopadhyay, 'From Recreation to Competition: Early History of Indian Football', *Soccer & Society* 6 (2), 2005, p. 137.
[23] Edward Docker, *History of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Macmillan, 1976, pp. 8-9.
[24] *The Statesman*, 19 Nov 1936, p. 12.
[25] The Rays are one of the most famous families who have contributed significantly to Calcutta's cultural heritage. Upendra Kishore Ray Choudhury was a notable author and held patents for a number of important innovations in print technology. His son Sukumar Ray was a celebrated children's author, and his son, Satyajit Ray, probably the most internationally acclaimed filmmaker from India. Saradaranjan Ray, called the 'W. G. Grace of Bengal' for physical similarity, was the first Indian college principal to promote sport as a part of the curriculum. His brother Kuladaranjan Ray was a leading Indian cricketer in his time. They are the most prominent among other family members.

Lila Majumdar, one of the cricket enthusiasts and later a celebrated children's author, recounted in an interview with Sankariprasad Basu that Saradaranjan Ray was opposed to the idea of girls going out in the open to watch a game.[26] But Kuladaranjan, his brother, had no stomach for such discrimination. He lived far from Majumdar's place, but hardly ever failed to arrive at their house before a match and troop everyone off to Eden Gardens in a bus or a taxi. Once the girls would reach the ground of Sporting Union, the club their family patronised, Saradaranjan would cordially usher them towards comfortable chairs under the tent. A cricket match involving European civilians and Bengali upper class men in colonial Calcutta was still the grandiose affair as described by George Johnson in the mid-nineteenth century. Narrating a match at the *maidan*, Johnson wrote,

> On the Cricket Ground stand two spacious tents, not like the paltry affairs bearing that name in England, but lined with fancy chintz, furnished with looking glasses, sofas, chairs and each player's wants are supplied by his turbaned attendants whether it be a light for his cigar, iced soda water or champagne.[27]

The situation remained much the same in the 1920s except that Indians now gained entry as players and patrons. The scene resembled the festive cricket matches in Britain more than the competitive first-class county cricket. The attendants brought lemonades and young European gentlemen stepped forward to help ladies at the merest hint. Sometimes the affection bordered on the wrong side of passion. Birkmeyer was one of the smiling volunteers whom Majumdar remembers. A pot-bellied, middle-aged gentleman from the Calcutta Club, Birkmeyer once proposed, pointing to the gaggling ladies, 'Oh god! I shall

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[26] Basu, *Not Out* (1965), in *Cricket Omnibus II*, p. 99.
[27] George W. Johnson, *The Stranger in India* or *Three Years in Calcutta* vol. II, London: Henry Colburn, 1843, p. 62.

look after them'. Unsure if his tone conveyed anything not cricket, Saradaranjan grimly mused, 'Not with anything strong I hope!'[28]

Once inside the tent, the women were isolated from the rest of the spectators. Common people were not allowed near the tent, which was scarcely more than an extended inner household. Aside from permitting women to watch the proceedings, men were often reluctant to allow them to actively participate in any aspect of the match—evident from Majumdar's story in which the cricketer brothers insisted that their sisters return home for lunch so that they did not sit down to dine with the others players.[29] Men's compulsion to maintain the status quo triumphed over women's urge to be involved in a daylong lived experience of cricket.

Speaking of a forgotten housewife, Lila Majumdar takes us to the greatest of cricket fans among the women in the Ray family – her aunt Mrinalini Devi, mother of the famous Bengal players Kartick, Ganesh and Bapi Bose.[30] Majumdar takes pity on male cricket-lovers who were deprived of the critical comments that Mrinalini Devi made to the family sitting around her. Importantly, contrary to the stereotypical image of cricket as an exclusively male domain, cricket had become a point of conservation among women, at least in the upper class families where cricket was an essential part of daily life. India's fielding, Majumdar rues, would have improved beyond recognition had the players been privy to the drills which Mrinalini Devi recommended.[31]

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[28] Basu, *Not Out*, p. 100.
[29] Ibid.
[30] She could have been the first woman cricket analyst in India had microphone been invented and sport editors commissioned women to write on cricket!
[31] Basu, *Not Out*, p. 101.

The amount of cricket knowledge among colonial women is difficult to estimate since it seldom spilled out of the household and was noticed in the male public sphere that dominated the discourses of colonial cricket. Enthusiastic women watched silently; they did not speak or write about cricket though a few among them, namely, Lila Majumdar and Sukhalata Rao were gifted and widely read authors. Maybe they did not feel the urge to publish. It is more likely that they were not permitted to infiltrate canons of cricket writing or tarnish the sanctity of what was seen as the pursuit of moral manliness.[32] Furthermore, Majumdar's accounts suggest that patriarchal sentiments dominated spectatorship. It was similar to the Victorian paradigm of rational, knowledgeable manliness, around which much of upper class domesticity in late colonial India was organised.

Women's leisure was something the society disliked. Shudha Mazumdar once accompanied her elder sister to a late night drama at the Minerva Theatre, after which she could not enter her parents' place for a month.[33] Aloo Bamjee, a pioneer of women's cricket in India, attended her first cricket match only after marriage since her orthodox father did not consider it proper for a maiden to enter a stadium.[34] In an article published in 1940 titled 'The Modern Girl', Krishna Hutheesing criticised the society's tendency to make value judgments without actually understanding the necessity of women's recreation. Usually the epithet 'modern' was used interchangeably with 'decadent' to describe young women who were 'frivolous, gay, pleasure seeking and not serious

[32] Nabaneeta Dev Sen remarked that if a woman writer tried to venture out of her family life into territories regarded as male, every obstacle would be placed to block her path, Susie Tharu and K. Lalita eds., *Women Writing in India: The Twentieth Century*, New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1993, p. 206.
[33] Shudha Mazumdar, *A Pattern of Life: The Memoirs of an Indian Woman*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1977, pp. 111-13.
[34] Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p. 118.

minded', therefore a 'drain on society'. The modern girl's attitude to pleasure had changed significantly. The author remarked,

> Pleasures are more conspicuous than they used to be, and girls who have to work in offices or at other jobs, desire some sort of recreation during the evenings. All young girls cannot be expected to sit at home after a hard day's work and read books, though there are always exceptions.... But those young people who like a little gaiety and frivolity should not be condemned unless they make a fetish of it.[35]

Pradip Bose thinks that the colonial urban society stressed the relationship among man, woman, and child as a unit, creatively constructing the family as a sanctuary where colonialism could not infiltrate.[36] Tanika Sarkar takes a different stance when she says that early nationalist males envisioned the family as a sovereign state per se to be governed by the patriarch.[37] The common thread linking these arguments is that women were 'guarded against' socializing with Europeans as much as they were not permitted to interact with other men in a bid to uphold the family's honour. A reading of the historical literature on womanhood in late colonial India suggests that domesticity then became the *raison d'être* though which notions of modernity, progress, and new nation were reimagined. The colonial state sought to consolidate its claim of benevolence by passing acts to reform domesticity. The Indian intelligentsia, on the contrary, used the logic of domesticity and its newly conceived role for women and children to establish its

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[35] Krishna Hutheesing, 'The Modern Girl', *The Statesman*, Sunday, 21 Jan 1940, p. 6.
[36] Pradip K. Bose, 'Sons of the Nation: Child Rearing in the New Family' in Partha Chatterjee ed., *Texts of Power: Emerging Disciplines in Colonial Bengal,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp. 118-44.
[37] Tanika Sarkar, 'Rhetoric against Age of Consent: Resisting Colonial Reason and Death of a Child-wife', *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4, 1993, p. 1870.

autonomous agenda of hegemony over the family unit.[38] It is this disposition which pressed the cricketers to control their sisters' adventures in the ground.

Writing on the gender politics in lived experience of cricket, Sudeshna Banerjee speculates that the idea of informed spectatorship was effectively invested with the social discourse representing intellect and knowledge as male traits, as opposed to the supposedly feminine properties of uncontrolled emotion and passion.[39] This male-female dichotomy, she argues, becomes evident in the 1950s and 1960s when women's unmistakable visibility in the viewers' stands in Indian cricket grounds threatened patriarchal monopoly over cricket. Since the male bastion were not in favour of women reordering the stadium space, discursive strategies in the form of public comments, literature and newspaper editorials were used to dissuade women from infringing the gender divide in cricket.[40] Banerjee singles out Sankariprasad Basu, perhaps the most brilliant of cricket writers in the Bengali language, as the spearhead of this attack. The next section analyses works of Basu and other writers to identify the nature of the so-called patriarchal politics in the sport press, and the shifts in women's spectatorship.

Women Spectators in Calcutta in the 1950s-60s

Sankariprasad Basu envisaged cricket as a holistic expression of the arts and sciences of life. He closely watched and commented on female spectators in his columns for

[38] Swapna Banerjee, 'Debates on Domesticity and the Position of Women in Late Colonial India', *History Compass* 8 (6), 2010, p. 462.
[39] Sudeshna Banerjee, 'Fleshing Out Mandira: Hemming in the Women's Constituency in Cricket', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 21 (3-4), 2004, p. 481.
[40] Ibid.

Anandabazar Patrika, the most widely circulated morning daily in Calcutta, which were later collected in his books on cricket. Basu's comical pen-pictures of female spectators and audiences for cricket matches and commentaries, Banerjee argues, come across as representations of women as an emerging, but unthinking and ignorant, category in cricket enjoyment.[41] The problem with Banerjee's otherwise agreeable article is that her conclusion is based on the casual reading of one out of Basu's seven books on cricket. I shall analyse his other books as well to arrive at a more complete understanding of Basu's complicities in gender politics. .

Basu's earlier books gave literary expression to what was a growing popular reaction in the 1950-60s—that women did not have the intellectual capacity to understand cricket. This was a common complaint that nearly every woman in a cricket gallery had to bear. Banerjee cites a woman author, also a devotee of the game, who used to be publicly taunted with intricate questions about the technicalities of the game and had to overhear the remark that women, invariably ignorant about the game, were unjustifiably blocking tickets and depriving male connoisseurs of much-deserved cricket viewing.[42] Basu does not blame a woman directly; he writes hilarious stories about female spectators, especially about their dresses and habits.

He writes of a lady, sitting in the posh 35-rupees season ticket stand, changing her *sari* during the lunch and tea breaks and emerging brand new every session. She even changed her hairdo as frequently as the captain shuffled his bowlers on the field.[43] He allegedly overheard an old man imploring a maiden to put on some more clothes to ward

[41] Ibid., pp. 481-2.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Basu, *Ramaniya Cricket* (1961), in *Cricket Omnibus I*, Calcutta: Mandal Book House, 1976, p. 175.

off the chilly breeze hitting her frame.[44] A lady forced by her husband and son to accompany them, wove each of them sweaters while the latter were watching the match.[45] His funniest contribution is the versed satirising of two ladies in the winter of early 1967 (Figure 3.1):

> This lady's pullover/stripped all the Himalayan sheep bare/ another one hover/ like an ascetic, there,/ with nominal clothes and no care.[46]

Another of his embellished ladies, who mistook the end of the first day's play for the end of the match and kept asking her companion about the winner even though the match was far from drawing to an end, is commonly cited as the paradigm of women's abject knowledge of cricket.[47]

Shibram Chakraborty, the peerless humourist, observed in women spectators not the zeal to see but the urgency to show. He convicted the ladies guilty of using the cricket stadium as a ramp to flaunt the best designs in their wardrobe, if not to attract cricket-watching men then at least to tease their female counterparts (Figure 3.2).[48] Evidently quite a few authors alongside Basu criticised this putative exhibitionist tendency.

Banerjee finds covert hints in these writings that women could not enrich cricket appreciation. It is true that there were oblique references to how women came to the grounds to show themselves off physically, or to do mindless activities such as knitting or eating. But categorising such writings as reflection of the period's male discourse

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[44] Basu, *Eden-e Shiter Dupur* (1960), in *Cricket Omnibus I*, Calcutta: Mandal Book House, 1976, p. 79.
[45] Basu, *Ramaniya Cricket*, p. 150.
[46] Translated by Anirban Bandyopadhyay. The original four lines are real treat:
Himalaya-meshpal koriya nishesh/ Ek nari lomoboti poriache besh/ Onyo nari tapaswini pottimatro gaye/ Huhu shite hihi hasi thotete goraye. Sankariprasad Basu, *Anandabazar Patrika*, 7 Jan 1967, p. 9.
[47] Basu, *Ramaniya Cricket*, p. 149.
[48] *ABP*, 5 Jan 1967, p. 4.

disregards the plurality of responses from the public sphere around cricket. A special issue of the *Amrita* magazine compiled as many as twelve essays on women in cricket. While some essays, notably those by Jayanta Dutta and Pushpen Sarkar, appreciated the women who went to the ground ignoring the society's conservations, some others, particularly those by Mukul Datta, Nabendu Pal, and Tathagata Mitra, ridiculed women for the so-called silly things they do at the ground.[49] The collected essays demonstrate that the status of women spectators was actually a matter of debate and a topic ripe for public consumption.

The main point that Banerjee's criticism of male monopoly seems to have missed is that a number of women came forward to mock their vain counterparts too. Monica Bandyopadhyay shares some side-splitting stories in an essay in *Mahila*, a women's magazine, on her experience of watching the India-MCC Test match in 1961. She writes,

> I had no idea that the stadium could be a place to study. After taking my seat, I found quite a few girls keeping their pretty faces buried in glossy film magazines the entire day. Had they decided to study at home, a few cricket lovers would have been able to sit and watch the game.[50]

During the match, she overheard the lady sitting next to her confiding to her brother that Barrington, who was actually fielding at 'fine leg', would better start bowling instead of hovering at 'mid on'. The two fielding positions are half the ground apart, which is evidence enough of the lady's level of appreciation and her compulsion to show off. In another instance, a Marwari lady, having been woken up from her siesta by a commotion following Tony Lock's superb catch to dismiss Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, whimpered,

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[49] *Amrita*, Dec 1969.
[50] Monica Bandyopadhyay, 'Mahilader Cricket Preeti' (Women's Love of Cricket), *Mahila*, 1961, collected in Siddhartha Ghosh ed., *Cricket Elo Banglae* (Cricket in Bengali), Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 2002, p. 118.

looking appalled at the sight of the prostrate fielder, 'Hay Ram! Why is he lying down? Is he hurt?'[51] Then, when the tiny Ramakant Desai hit a glorious six, an unusual occurrence in those days, an ageing grandmother started shouting, 'Can't you see where you are hitting? If the ball lands on my head and crushes it, will you pay the doctor's fee?'[52]

The crown, according to Bandyopadhyay, goes to the young girl who went gaga over Nari Contractor's performance in the match, while the record books affirm that Contractor scored four and eleven in the respective innings, and it was one of the shoddiest performances in his career.[53] Nearly every cricket-writer made fun of the fact that women turned up in large numbers to watch the cricketers they were physically attracted to.

Bandyopadhyay concludes her essay with scathing remarks. The contest among women to pit one's culture and physicality against another, she says, betrays their lack of knowledge and sophistication rather than substantiating the claims. Women who do not understand the game should not even step inside a stadium. They have no right to pretend as cricket enthusiasts and deprive authentic cricket fans of the space to sit.[54] She redeems the 'proper' cricket-woman by attacking the 'improper' ones, in an obviously liberal dichotomous fashion. Being published in a popular women's magazine, the article had the chance to communicate the cricket pedagogy to a sizeable section of women.

Reading Basu's other works clarifies that he did not necessarily believe in men's superiority in matters of cricket appreciation. He might have portrayed women as

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid, p. 119.
[54] Ibid.

superficial, cacophonous spectators more interested in knitting and dressing up seductively, but he dutifully chastised ignorant male followers and admired women who understood cricket. In the same book in which he lampoons women spectators the most, he sketches one of them as knowledgeable. Banerjee observes that Basu makes certain qualifying remarks about her sexuality in this regard. He eagerly emphasized her difference in matters of dress and disposition, possibly implying that she had the intellectual ability to control her sexuality unlike most women who were supposedly ruled by their physicality. At the same time, he clarified that the woman did not unnecessarily masculinize herself—by not wearing men's clothes and flaunting masculine mannerisms. Rather she was present in the grounds as a 'human'. It is striking that the moment the author accepted this woman's knowledgeableness, he grants her the ability to transcend female sexuality and attain what is clearly a higher stage for the author—that of the human. But 'the human', as a higher state of consciousness than the purely female, unmistakably signified the supposedly male possession of intellect and judgement.[55] The girl wanted reservation of her right to watch a live match much the same way as the Government of India was then protecting new, fledgling industries by limiting maximum output of bigger enterprises. Women's interest in cricket, she persisted, should be nurtured rather than ridiculed.[56] Basu held up his hands in reply, saying that cricket literature cannot flourish without jocular references to women. So, for the sake of his trade, he would not leave women alone.[57] He thereby confessed having written those humorous anecdotes to address the market demand which was primarily male.

[55] Banerjee, 'Fleshing Out Mandira' p. 481.
[56] Basu, *Ramaniya Cricket*, p. 155.
[57] Ibid, p. 156.

A bizarre story appears in the last of Basu's cricket books. Rain interrupted the play on the first day of the Test against Australia in 1964. As the groundstaff were making a heavy weather of the water-logged areas, a lady offered to help them with her hair drier.[58] The story most probably is apocryphal, but it leads to speculations regarding the nature of women spectators. The lady, as is clearly borne out, was wealthy enough to afford and fashionable enough to carry such an appliance in a cricket match. The probability of that lady breaching the soft mud of the outfield to talk to perspiring groundstaff borders on the impossible. Secondly, the story holds that she understood the crisis, got involved, and wanted to expedite the sopping up process so that play could be resumed without much delay. Here Basu either scoffs women's presumptions, or announces the coming of the cricket-educated women he had previously hinted.

In his later works Basu conceded that an increasing number of women were being initiated into the game with every passing year. They were improving fast enough to dispel the long-held idea that they lacked knowledge of the game. Possibly the feedbacks of his female readers urged him to change his stance. In 1965, Rita Mitra complained,

> I study in class X. Once during a Duleep Trophy match, I overheard two gentlemen talking among themselves. Either they don't understand cricket or they don't recognise players from this country. One of them asked, pointing at Durani, 'Does this lad bowl good enough to play Tests regularly?' His friend asked him who it was, to which he replied, 'Why? Prakash Poddar?' Why do these people go to the stadium – is it to watch the garnished girls you describe?[59]

Rina Bose, in 1967, wrote about her encounter with an elderly man who blamed the presence of women for the decline in the quality of cricket. She requested Basu to launch

[58] Basu, *Sara Diner Khela* (1976), in *Cricket Omnibus II*, Calcutta: Mandal Book House, 1976, p. 319.
[59] Basu, *Cricket Omnibus I*, p. 418.

a protest against such offensive remarks,[60] In a joint letter, four women students from the Calcutta Medical College in 1968 congratulated Basu for exposing the sham of female cricket fans whose 'stupid' actions give the entire community a bad name.[61]

Although lampoons of women dominate Basu's writings, he criticises male chauvinists at places, saying that the scrawny youths dancing in the galleries looked more effeminate than the ladies. Just as the unemployed have no right to question women's capability to work hard, the ticketless or cricket-less fools, he says, should not mock women's love of cricket.[62] Examples of uninformed gentlemen and a diatribe against ignorant male supporters in his works certainly do not concur with Banerjee's criticism of Basu as the archetypal woman-basher. Basu seems more intent on building committed spectatorship around cricket than on satirizing women to increase his marketability.

A significant aspect of these writings is the differentiation of live viewers and radio listeners. While the behaviour of women spectators was under continual scrutiny and funny episodes were offered for public consumption, the ones who stayed at home listening to radio commentary were praised and were shown to have often surpassed their husbands in knowledge of cricket. Narayan Gangopadhyay, in a short piece called 'Paribarik Cricket' ('Cricket in the Family'), draws a dramatic picture of his sister-in-law intently listening to the Bengali radio commentary of a Test match while knitting a cardigan, and then dumbfounding him by appreciating a boundary the stylish Rohan Kanhai hit through the 'square leg' region of the field.[63] The new household was significantly more liberal towards allowing women to evolve beyond their traditional

[60] Ibid., pp. 421-2.
[61] Ibid., p. 422.
[62] Basu, *Not Out*, p. 253.
[63] Ibid, pp. 349-50.

roles as silent consumers. The liberalism was arguably complimented by the fact that listening to radio or reading newspapers increased women's knowledge without them having to shed domestic inhibitions and go out in the public. Even more astonishing is the sister-in-law's daughter storming into the room yelling about the bet she and her friend had wagered on the previous day's play, which she had won. In one stroke, the male privilege of public gambling had gone up in smoke too. Such occurrences of family bonding over a sport or girls' freedom to use money might not have been too unfamiliar, but were being articulated for the first time.

Jayanta Dutta's *Rupasi Eden-er Rupasi Cricket* ('Glorious Cricket at Beautiful Eden') is a dialogue between a young man who possesses an encyclopaedic knowledge of and passion for cricket, and his curious girlfriend.[64] The man shares a number of anecdotes through which he tries to explain to his partner the philosophy of cricket—which is essentially the Victorian paradigm of the elite sport. The lady turns out to be an attentive and receptive listener. She patiently sits through stories of honesty such as that of Wally Grout, who threw his wicket to amend the umpire's decision in his favour on a previous occasion which he thought was an injustice to the bowler. She asks her beau to repeat the story of the noble Jack Hobbs, who more than once walked away simply to honour the opponent's claim that he was out despite being sure of his being 'not out'. She asks keen questions and in the end emerges a knowledgeable lady. Not once has her femininity been disputed. Her womanliness is rather well documented in her reactions to the 'bodyline' strategy, where the bowler aims to hit the batsman's body to intimidate

[64] Jayanta Dutta, *Rupasi Eden-er Rupasi Cricket*, Calcutta: Karuna Prakashani, 1964.

him into making a mistake, or to Len Hutton batting England to safety with a broken right arm.

Nowhere is this transition in reporting of women more evident than in Achintya Kumar Sengupta's writings. In the report of the Test match between India and Australia in 1964, he mentions a gossip among friends which moved to and fro between cricketers and a lady called Jayanti who apparently hunted for a promising relationship in the stadium. Clad in sparse clothing, Jayanti's 'tireless efforts' had proven futile so far, prompting one of the friends to speculate on the advisability of an 'attireless effort'.[65] Compared to his earlier style of reporting, Sengupta's representation of woman in *Mriga Nei Mrigaya* (Hunt without the Deer) sounds austere.[66] The last chapter in the book describes a discussion among four cousins, one of whom is a girl, who try to determine the best performances in cricket. The girl contributes the least, but comes up with value judgments at every instance. Not once is her judgment clouded by the cricketer's looks or ethnicity. Sengupta gives her the liberty to enjoy the discussion. Although she does not have the autonomy to direct the course of conversation as forcefully as her cousins did, her persona comes across as amply conversant with cricket.

The evident shift in the 1960s was the broadening of horizons of female cricket fans. The muffled voices of the yesteryears' housewives now started reaching the outer house of fandom. Ajita Chakraborty, the second ever woman psychiatrist from India, had gone to London to study medicine in 1951 with the opinion that outdoor sport is a male activity. On return to India in 1960, she was surprised to see too many urban women

[65] *ABP*, 21 Oct 1964, p. 6.
[66] Achintya K. Sengupta, *Mriga Nei Mrigaya*, Calcutta: Anandadhara Prakashan, 1965.

excited about cricket while people in the UK were losing interest in the game.[67] An interview with Ila Sinha, sister of Prasad Sinha, the first ever Bengali umpire to officiate in a Test match, was illuminating.[68] She started going to the stadium with her father, later with brothers and cousins. Interacting with brothers who played for Sporting Union, and reading the family's collection of cricket books augmented both her historical and technical knowledge of cricket. She could identify fielders from her seat in the crowd, which even the legendary radio commentator Ajay Bose sometimes failed to do.[69]

In the 1960s, cricket penetrated the household actually through radio commentary in Bengali by the famous quartet of Ajay Bose, Kamal Bhattacharya, Premangshu Chatterjee and Pushpen Sarkar. The audience-friendly radio coverage demystified a lot of cricket terminology, strategy and jargon for women (as well as men). They came to recognise cricketers and started appreciating the details of the game. Girls chatted about cricket in whatever way it concerned them. It did not have to be technically correct or concern the techniques of players—debating the degree of good looks among cricketers was a popular pastime among girls. Writing on the conjugal fantasies of young Bengali women in the 1950s-60s Calcutta, Manisha Roy states that besides Hollywood stars, they were attracted to the physical smartness of cricketers and tennis players.[70] She narrates an interview in which a woman confesses her desire for Gregory Peck and adds that her friend Nina liked the cricketer Naresh Kumar.[71] Roy forgot to mention that Naresh Kumar

[67] Ajita Chakraborty, interview with author, 26 Oct 2011. She was not exactly a cricket follower, but a key witness to the opening up in the 1950s nonetheless.
[68] Ila Sinha, interview with author, 1 Jul 2011. The experience of watching Test matches at the Eden Gardens for fifty years makes her the grand old lady of the stadium.
[69] Ajay Bose, *Akashe Cricket Bani*, Calcutta: Falguni Prakashani, 1971, p. 2.
[70] Manisha Roy, *Bengali Women*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 (first edition 1970), p. 59.
[71] Ibid., p. 69.

actually was a tennis player (fuelling I suppose some suspicion about knowledge of sports even among highly educated women).

In a Brajada story by Gour Kishor Ghose, we get a glimpse into the household of a High Court judge. His only daughter plans to garland the dashing batsman Budhi Kunderan on the cricket field and then collapse on his lap, unconscious. But her dream cannot materialise unless she gets a ticket. Her father, a man of stature, is not able to procure one either. To pressurise her father into action, she goes on a hunger strike![72] This degree of enthusiasm, evident in real life incidents as well, expanded cricket's domain by opening new topics of discussion and creating new consumers for the game. The question is: to what extent do these stories reflect the changing social inclination, or were they designed to achieve this effect for other purposes?

Towards a History of Women in the Vernacular Cricket Writing

According to Basu, three types of women were to be found in the stadium:

[72] Brjada is a most interesting parody of the uninformedly garrulous middle aged Bengali male who thought nothing of delighting his informal chat colleagues with absurd stories of his heroic exploits, lifting the willing suspension of disbelief doctrine to heights unheard of. Each of Brajada's stories beat the others in their absurdity of plot and logic. In one story for instance, Brajada is seen to advise Tagore on how to write poetry and win a boat race and the hands of a pretty Kashmiri princess at the same time; in another he mesmerizes Matahari the spy who came to live with him as a puppy by the sheer force of his personality; in a third, he picked lack of coordination in the movement of a Scottish regiment trained by no less the Lord Kitchener himself, in a retrospective display of the famed nationalist bravado. 'Gul' or weaving translogical yarns by middle aged Bengali men has been acknowledged as a most popular narrative genre by some of the best of Bengali writers. In this Syed Mujtaba Ali may be said to be a predecessor of the creator of Barjada, Gour Kishore Ghose. Incidentally, Ali published his 'gul' stories under the pseudonym 'Gulamgir' as in the Alamgir of Gul. Gour Kishore wrote his Brajada stories under the pen name Rupdarshi (the observer of forms) Gour Kishor Ghosh, 'Saptam Gulpo', *Brajadar Gulpo Samagra*, Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1996, p. 40.

1. The old and middle-aged upper class women who exploited the stadium as a space to socialise and to sustain social status by participating in lived cricket experience.

2. The very few women who actually understood cricket.

3. The well-dressed girls whose cricketing desires were limited to fancying handsome young cricketers, the type which prompted Peter May to station the good-looking cricketers in the outfield in front of stands full of girls to garner support in a foreign country.[73]

Interviews with a number of women spectators help understand why they preferred cricket to other sports and why the late 1950s-early 1960s marked the break with the past. A major factor was the Eden Gardens' central location and easy accessibility from all parts of the city. In the cricket stadium women could play out domestic roles such as knitting or managing the food basket besides watching the game. The sanitation facilities at the Eden Gardens were horrible. The semi-permanent stands were imperfectly engineered, inconvenient for sitting or walking from one side to another. Still the picnic tradition of the adjacent public garden, also named after the Eden sisters who donated the plot of land for sporting activities, was maintained.

If women decided to watch a live match, the principal options would be football and cricket, counting tennis, badminton and wrestling out for not being so spectator-friendly. Wealthy women went to watch polo matches with the family. Football was still the favourite game in Calcutta. But skirmishes among rival fan groups or even fans from the same club before and after nearly every big match made participation physically risky,

[73] Basu, *Ramaniya Cricket*, p. 150.

and women were especially advised not to attend football matches. Watching a cricket match was argued to be logically safer since it did not promote aggressive masculinity like other body-contact sports. Violence among spectators, if any, was more verbal than physical barring a few occasions, and the atmosphere resembled that of a get-together than an intense contest. This image of cricket as a safe, leisurely and festive sport could persuade even the most disinterested lady to join the ranks of her cricket-going family members or friends. Obsession over a cricket player was another factor.[74] A few women were introduced to the game early in their life by fathers and brothers, or because it was the main dinner conversation and there was no escape.[75] Many wives had begun to share their husbands' curiosity in cricket. While some of the women were forced to participate, others were genuinely inclined to stadium-going. One of my respondents even said that men and women bonded well inside the stadium. She criticised the exhibitionist tendency in modern men—manifest in body painting or jingoistic slogans—as inimical to cricket appreciation.[76]

The emerging cycles of consumption in the 1960s diminished the earlier gender divides to some extent. The changing texture of family life along with the family-oriented character of cricket explains the shift. It was not an objective condition though; not all families were comfortable about letting the daughter go to the stadium with a group of friends, and certainly not alone.[77] But cricket watching as a family outing was in vogue.

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[74] Manjari Mukhopadhyay and Sanchari Roy, interviews with author, 30 Jun 2011. They were college students in the 1960s.
[75] Chitra Narayanan, 'The Indian Spectator: A Grandstand View', in Boria Majumdar & J.A. Mangan eds., *Cricketing Cultures in Conflict: World Cup 2003*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 205.
[76] Ila Sinha, interview with author, 1 Jul 2011.
[77] Basu, *Cricket Omnibus 1*, p. 421.

Judith Walsh points out a shift in family relationships in late colonial India when, inspired by colonial modernity, the younger generation of Indian men conferred greater authority of the household to their wives, undermining the customary exercise of power by the earning male. She further argues that women found this newly conceived romantic, dyadic husband-wife relationship elevating their position, and complied without defiance.[78] The companionate household was a significant departure from previous home environments where authority prevailed over affection. In the new, cohesive family units, members shared leisure interest more than at any other previous historical period. Women were drawn into previously denied leisure consumptions. It is tempting to suggest 'democratisation of the family', following Indrani Chatterji's question over a previous historical period, but men-women interaction in matters related to the public space, i.e. watching cricket suggests that such relationships was ambivalent rather than democratic in the context of newly independent India.[79]

What links most of the female spectators' experiences is the symbolic/actual presence of male mediators between women and cricket. A regular male spectator revealed in an interview an immediate reason why men did not want women to be in the ground. Men treated the stadium as a place to exercise liberty from household prohibitions. Women's and even elders' presence in the vicinity impeded free swearing and smoking among groups of friends.[80] Such opposition to women's presence effectively empowered them as a voyeur who did not directly engage with male domain but violated

[78] Judith Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.
[79] Indrani Chatterjee ed., *Unfamiliar Relations: Family and History in South Asia*, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, p. 5.
[80] Soumyen Mallik, interview with author, 30 Jun 2011. A person who has not missed a single day's international cricket at the Eden Gardens since 1955.

it by mere physical occupation of space and gaze. On a different note, the men might have been concerned about their wives spying on their holiday activities, which often surpassed the norm of 'gentlemanly' behaviour. This unconscious empowerment reflects men's concern about the possible loss of authority over social space. It does not seem coincidental that the tendency to mock women's presence in cricket became a stock response in the 1950s-60s as women spectators and commentary listeners suddenly encroached upon the undisputed male preserve of watching and understanding cricket. In the nineteenth-century learned, active women were few and far between. Now a profusion of educated, modern women increasingly questioning male preserves compounded the problem.[81] But was it really a problem?

Analysis of the newspaper columns suggests two significant developments in the 1960s: firstly, women entering territories of knowledge which had been deemed inappropriate and unnecessary for their kind and secondly, their increasing consumerist role in the contemporary society. The very idea that women might acquire non-prescribed knowledge was problematic. It had led to numerous debates in the public spheres for over a century. As women's access to education increased, they started negotiating with the long-established traditions through what has been described by Geraldine Forbes as the ideology of 'social feminism'—combining their assertion of rights with traditional familial expectations and obligation.[82] The 'new women' of the 1960s overgrew the domestic stereotypes and shared men's social pursuits, often encouraged by men themselves. It was rather the women with questionable knowledge of cricket who the newspapers lampooned.

[81] The public debates around the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, which empowered women by entitling them to claim divorce and inherit a part of paternal property, is a notable point in this discourse.
[82] Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 7.

This complexity is further illustrated with reference to the debates about appropriate clothing for the women spectators. Clothes were a significant part of constructing the ideal upper-class/caste woman. In the colonial period, the aesthetic form and moral content of a *bhadramahila* or the ideal lady, a scholar has argued, was informed by nationalist discourses of creating the ideal female in response to colonial critiques of 'animality and sensuality of Bengali/pagan women in particular'. The colonial texts labelled Indian men as sexually depraved, who derived pleasure out of tormenting women. These accorded European reformers the power to liberate women. The Indian intelligentsia undertook moral reform projects to counter colonial judgments of their innate incapability to self-improve. One of the outcomes of this conflict over this subjectification was Indian men's greater control over all aspects of women's life, which came to include sartorial reforms. To be considered a 'lady', a woman had to comply with the sartorial-moral enterprise of the elite patriarchy. The sexually chastened women's body became an icon for the emerging aspirations of Bengali culture and nationalism.[83] Women then started reclaiming the agency of draping one's body as nineteenth-century ideologies lost their relevance in the late colonial and postcolonial period. In the 1960s, a number of sexist taboos were relaxed, with spatial variations, in the wave of worldwide counter-culture movements. The demands for greater individual freedom outweighed the social constraints of the previous age by deviating from the norm. Hitherto hindered spaces of recreation opened up, most notably cinema and theatre. This is precisely the

[83] Himani Bannerji, *Inventing Subjects: Studies in Hegemony, Patriarchy and Colonialism*, New Delhi: Tulika, 2001, pp. 125-9.

point which came under criticism—women achieving autonomy of their body and leisure interest.[84]

The family of a woman had its peculiar opinion on the morality of going to certain places for certain pursuits. Conservative households considered an independent woman a bad woman. Singing in a night club for livelihood was considered equal to prostitution but singing in concerts to drunken public of the locality until midnight marked musical talent. Keeping late nights, smoking and drinking alcohol, dressing in Western attire as opposed to Indian outfits, and even having male friends in some cases characterised suspect morality. The so-called prudery over moral behaviour was waning, but not all prohibitions died out quickly. Groups of women in cinema halls or sport grounds or political rallies sometimes raised concern about physical safety but not moral questions as much as before, but the sight of a solitary woman in a public assembly such as this sent the moral alarm ringing.

Some agents of consumption, such as newspaper columnists, fetishized the women for profit. Contrary to the usual masculinization of female sportspersons, female spectators were invariably portrayed as physically graceful, elegant beings. They did not have to be heterosexual, but feminine, and their femininity was utilised to advertise a stadium event and increase the latter's marketability. The body was central to this

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[84] Amitav Ghosh narrates the general male tendency to draw a line to women's liberty in the 1960s rather precisely in *The Shadow Lines*. He describes a man's objection to his niece's wish to dance at a night club after having accompanied her all the way and even ordering drinks:

> Listen, Ila, Robi said, shaking his head. You shouldn't have done what you did. You ought to know that; girls don't behave like that here.
> What the fuck do you mean? she spat at him. What do you mean 'girls'? I'll do what I bloody well want, when I want and where.
> No you won't, he said. Not if I'm around. Girls don't behave like that here.
> Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*, London: John Murray, 2011 (1988), p. 66.

process; as a dressed and ornamented object it was used to visually signify gender.[85] In addition to adorning signs of gender, such as clothing, make-up and hairstyle, bodily gestures articulate and affirm one's gender role.[86] As we have observed, mainstream cricket writings used all possible gender stereotypes to describe women's involvement with the game. The news media made a business out of exaggerating women's irrationality, using images of women spectators to decorate the print page with feminine grace. They often focused on women's role as a transgressor, not only of the cricket field but of conservative societal norms, aiming to draw male readers—both casual and critical.

At a time when India lost more matches than they even came close to winning, the descriptions of spectators often elicited more interest than the match itself. The second day's play during the India-England Test match in 1964, for instance, was too dull to make attractive copies. So Achintya Kumar Sengupta started describing what two girls might have understood from the day's play, producing a piece of humour that would light up the cricket fan's morning.[87] Newspapers highlighted female celebrities attending a match to attract male readership. They covered every movement of Sharmila Tagore and Anju Mahendroo, the prospective brides of Tiger Pataudi and Gary Sobers, the respective captains of India and West Indies, during the Test match in 1967 (Figure 3.3).[88]

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[85] Carrie Paechter, 'Reconceptualising the Gendered Body: Learning and Constructing Masculinities and Femininities in School', paper presented at British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, 11-13 September 2003. loc. cit. Jayne Caudwell, 'Femme-fatale: Re-thinking the Femme-inine', in Jayne Caudwell ed., *Sport, Sexualities and Queer/Theory*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 146.

[86] Caudwell, p. 146.

[87] *ABP*, 31 Jan 1964, p. 1.

[88] *Dainik Basumati* even sent a reporter to Sobers' hotel room to check what he was doing with Mahendroo. This is certainly the lineage from which today's paparazzi or page three journalism was born. *Dainik Basumati*, 7 Jan 1967, p. 8.

Until the late-1960s, most of the Eden-going women were depicted as having little or no personal agenda of spectatorship, acting mostly in their family's and friends' accord, with the primary desire to flaunt. Authors such as Basu admitted to having written amusing stories of women spectators for the sake of literature or to create a profitable niche for their writings, though this chapter shows Basu's agency to have been far deeply rooted in the desire to uplift knowledge of cricket.[89] Women were frequently accused of blocking seats of men cricket lovers. Black market of tickets scaled new heights in the 1960s, further eliminating the lower-middle class people from Eden Gardens' concrete stands, while upper-middle class women with the right connection and financial solvency to afford the high price went to the stadium in droves.[90] These ticketless people tried to feel good by reading match reports in newspapers, and consumed the cynical portrayal of fashionable, upper-class women whose presence, they had reasons to believe, made the tickets scarce, depriving them of the tactile enjoyment of cricket.[91] But the sarcasm gave way to acknowledgment of agenda, and the metaphors were withdrawn as soon as women emerged as potential consumers of newspapers.[92] As women grew in understanding the game, they earned their credibility as bona fide cricket fans. By the early 1970s the jokes and cartoons came to a halt, never to return again.

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[89] Basu, *Ramaniya Cricket*, p. 156.

[90] Not all of them had the right connections, as is evident from the story of the High Court judge's daughter.

[91] Basu sympathises with a friend who annually spent a lot of money buying black ticket for his wife, *Ramaniya Cricket*, p. 154.

[92] Female literacy percentage in West Bengal jumped from 20.79 in 1961 to 26.56 in 1971 and to 34.42 in 1981, while the male average grew from 47.69 to 57.03 in the twenty years. I could not track the gender breakdown of newspaper readership in that period. Considering literate people read newspapers, I presume the number of women now reading newspapers was significantly higher than ever, and the press could not risk losing them as readers by publishing comical reports. *http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/g/z/EI/0ZEI0401.htm*, accessed on 21 Dec 2011.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to analyse literary mediation of cricket spectatorship to shed light on how cricket writings used gender stereotypes to broaden the ambit of their circulation. Like most other outdoor sport, the stress on male physicality is a persistent theme in cricket. The domain of sociability as players, administrators, and consumers is fundamentally male as well, where women were incorporated in very specific capacities. Women had for long been declared physically and mentally incompetent to play cricket. Those who did conform to the prescribed qualities were labelled 'masculine'. But women spectators were a different proposition. Journalists and advertisers took no time to observe and remark on this new phenomenon in ways that framed it in a distinctly patriarchal manner which nonetheless left enough space for women to seek out new subjectivities.

The periodic creation and utilization of 'femininity' of spectators certainly failed to regulate the entry and/or conduct of women within or outside the cricket stadium to the extent it would have liked. Initially, during the colonial period, the extent to which they could participate in a stadium event depended on the normative acceptability of women's actions. The prohibitions slackened as some women acquired knowledge of cricket from experiences of listening, watching and reading about the game, and also became an important sector in the consumer society. The knowledge should ideally have enabled them to vindicate the criticisms, but such self-rehabilitation was seldom realised in practice. As a result, the behaviour of women spectators in general continued to be seen as a charade of a noble game. This image was stabilised as an objective social situation. A few educated women militated against this portrayal. They initially solicited the support

of men but gradually grew independent, which is acknowledged in contemporary writings. It is arguable that men still implicitly controlled the gendered space primarily because they were the agents who created, maintained and revised the gender hierarchy. The literary representations of women ratify the stadium as a structured hierarchy of fields whose essence was one of struggle rather than autonomy of existence. At the same time, these narratives and their rebuttals kept the structure of the fields open to revision.

CHAPTER FOUR

'The Battle of Eden Gardens': Spectators, Readers and the Sport Press in Calcutta

> With a heavy heart we inform you that Indian Cricket, our most venerated goddess, died wilfully at five past eleven on Thursday at the Eden Gardens. Only 35 at the time of death, she was surrounded by more than 60,000 local and foreign devotees... her pain was not prolonged, lasting for a mere sixty-five minutes between ten to five past eleven in the morning...[1]

The 'death' occurred on 1 January 1967 at the Eden Gardens, Calcutta where a riot, one of the most dramatic to have ever broken out on a cricket field, devastated the stadium in a little over an hour. It was the second day of the second Test match between India and West Indies which started on 31 December 1966, and was to end on 4 January 1967. Seating problems had caused a few disruptions during the first day's play; on the second, the spectators broke into a major clash with the police. Officials of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) fled at the first opportunity, and the police were chased away with bamboo poles pulled apart from the stands. The canvas roof was set on fire, and state properties attacked even outside the ground. About 200 persons, including 52 police personnel, were injured.[2] Play resumed after two days as officials, retired players, journalists and managers succeeded in persuading

[1] A letter from 'cricket-lovers of Calcutta' to the editor of *Anandabazar Patrika*. All translation from Bengali in this chapter is author's. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 7 Jan 1967, p. 9.

[2] *Hindustan Times*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 4. The RWAC administered first aid to 158 people, while 36 were hospitalised, *Jugantar*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 6.

the teams to get on with the game. West Indies eventually routed India by an innings and 45 runs. The West Bengal government set up a Commission under Justice Kamlesh Chandra Sen to inquire the causes of the riot and to suggest remedies to prevent similar incidents. The committee released a 180-page report along with 4,000 typed pages of evidence, based on interviews with 74 witnesses and 181 written statements, on 30 August 1967. The press was briefed on 13 September and selected recommendations published the next day.

'Spectator violence' is often used as an umbrella term which refers to various types of violence in the context of sport. The history of spectator violence in organised sports in Calcutta goes back to 1925 when, during a football match against the Mohun Bagan club, a few supporters of the Dalhousie Club invaded the field after the referee had banished one of their players. Studies by Paul Dimeo, Boria Majumdar, Kausik Bandyopadhyay and recently Amitava Chatterjee have established instances of football-related violence as a logical culmination of various historical processes, traditions and events in Bengal.[3] Political ascendency of the Muslims in the provincial assembly and the subsequent communal riots increasingly polarised football spectators in communal lines in the 1930s-40s. In a sharp contrast to the celebrations following Mohun Bagan's famous 1911 win, Mohammedan Sporting's unique record of five straight League wins in 1934-38 met with muted response from the Hindu majority among football spectators. Hindu-Muslim clashes were reported

[3] Paul Dimeo "'Team Loyalty Splits the City into Two": Football, Ethnicity and Rivalry in Calcutta', in Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti, eds., *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, Oxford: Berg, 2001, pp. 105-18; Boria Majumdar and Kausik Bandyopadhyay, *Goalless: The Story of a Unique Footballing Nation*, New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2006; Amitava Chatterjee, 'Spectator and Violence: Football in Colonial and Postcolonial Calcutta', *Soccer & Society* 12 (5), 2011, pp. 689-700.

after nearly every significant match involving Mohammedan Sporting and another major club.

The conflict between East Bengal and Mohun Bagan supporters scaled epic proportions in the post-Partition years as the two clubs came to symbolise identities of the refugee *bangal* and the resident *ghoti* respectively. While football victories offered the *bangal* a chance to avenge their territorial dislocation and subsequent humiliations in quest of livelihood, the *ghoti* ostensibly looked forward to chasten the migrants who were becoming a dominant force in local politics and job market. Fan rivalry reached its nadir during a rather unimportant League match in 1980 in which sixteen spectators died in a stampede.

It is surprising that while the two communities flared up so frequently in East Bengal-Mohun Bagan football matches, the same people rarely settled scores during cricket or hockey matches involving the two teams.[4] Nearly every incident of crowd disturbance in cricket matches in India has reportedly occurred in international matches, provoked by either or a combination of the following: India's miserable on-field performance contrary to built-up expectation, poor umpiring decisions which can potentially result in India's defeat, and organisational indiscretion which infringes the entitlements purchased against a valid ticket.[5] The riot of 1967 provides an interesting entry into the mechanisms of cricket riots not

[4] To understand this puzzle, it is crucial that one moves out of the 'poor man's game' versus 'gentlemen's game' categories and study why football was more acceptable as a community symbol than cricket which was far widely reported, advertised, spectacular and hence desirable to the metropolitan, rising middle-class in the 1950s-60s, as the earlier chapters have demonstrated. One way to answer this paradox would be to explore the dynamics of early socialisation of a person into a certain sport – the making of a sporting habitus – as manifest in familial relations, educational institutions and material cultures of a society.

[5] One of the most violent riots in local matches reportedly took place after Bengal and Nagpur Railways (BNR) beat Mohun Bagan in the CAB knock-out tournament final. As soon the match ended in BNR's favour, a number of spectators started throwing brickbats into the ground and the pavilion, breaking glass panes, and clashed with the police too. After mounting a baton charge to control the rioters, the police arrested a handful of 'young delinquents'. *The Times of India*, 16 Apr 1963, p. 10.

because of the episodes of violence but due to the public debates raised in its aftermath. Contemporary newspapers published different and often contradictory opinions on the circumstances and nature, namely, possible managerial causes, government inaction, police inefficiency and other topics related to the riot. The endeavour to establish their respective investigations as authentic, however, was arguably meant to address the readers' collective sensibility about cricket. An aesthetic of loss was created, transmitted and sustained. Loss was defined in a number of interlocked templates—honour, property, sport, tradition—and posed against the organisers' insensitivity. This aesthetic assumed different contours in each of the local newspapers, bringing into question the instrumentality of the news media in the construction of public discourses of a sport riot.

Whereas the last three chapters demonstrate the efforts of the press to build a society of sport spectators and consumers around exigencies of nationalism and consumerism, this chapter illustrates that the press often had to consider local requirements and political allegiances at the risk of fracturing its committed consumer base or trying to build new ones. I start with a brief description of the riot, integrating reports from three local, vernacular (*Anandabazar Patrika, Dainik Basumati, Jugantar*) and three national, English (*Hindustan Times, Statesman, The Times of India*) dailies. I use the concepts of 'topophilia' and 'sportscape' to study how cricket matches at the Eden Gardens forged social relations such as community, ethnicity and civic pride, and analyse the 'blame game' in this context to grasp how newspapers dealt with this subjectivity. Reading of the representations reveals a polemical exchange between national and international press in which one disputed the knowledge of the riot as produced by the other. I historicise the broader structure of

contemporary international cricket to understand this conflict in terms a paradigm shift in world cricket whose contours were to become clear a little later.

The Riot in Newspaper Reports

West Indies had come to tour India as the super power in world cricket. The home team were no match for them in any department of the game. After winning the Bombay Test and other tour matches quite comfortably, they set foot in Calcutta for the second Test match slated to start on 31 December 1966.[6] On the first day, reported *The Statesman*, obstructions in front of the sightscreens had delayed the start and set off a series of interruptions. Spectators encroached on the field of play at one end of the ground, sat six rows deep inside the boundary ropes cramming the area in front of the sightscreen.[7] The police, apparently ill-advised, let in anybody who carried a camera along with a photographer's pass, while some checkers failed to identify valid gate-passes and harassed even bona fide pass-holders including visiting journalists.[8] Many people could not get into the ground. Shute Banerjee, a former cricketer who also endorsed Bournvita in 1937, found his seat occupied and sat on the turf.[9] CAB officials issued an apology along with an appeal to the people not to misuse gate passes from the second day onwards.[10] But the events turned out differently.

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[6] The Bombay Test was played on 15-19 Dec 1966.
[7] The sightscreen is an extremely important piece of the cricket ground. It secludes the batsman from the ambient distractions and helps him to concentrate on the bowler. If spectators obstruct the batsman's line of vision by moving around the sightscreen, the police are entitled to evacuate them.
[8] *The Statesman*, 1 Jan 1967, p. 16.
[9] *ABP*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.
[10] Ibid, 1 Jan 1967, p. 9.

Newspapers reported that Eden Gardens could house 57,000 spectators, but 59,020 tickets had been issued officially.[11] The actual turnout was even bigger. People started milling in since daybreak. The stadium was visibly overcrowded as the day's play was going to start. People were still entering showing tickets that looked valid. When the umpires took the ground, a great confusion over sitting arrangements was raging almost all over the stadium. Many could not find their seats in the crowd. Many had to forego their seats, which were already occupied by others having tickets of the same number. At around 10 a.m., about 150 of the spectators who could not find space to sit in the Rs. 25 gallery scaled the American fences and squatted along the boundary line. Constant movement blotted portions of the boundary ropes out of view. Some people sat in front of the sightscreen. At this the police personnel sprang into action; but instead of asking the people to disperse as they did on the previous day, they charged at them with bamboo staff. People retaliated with bricks and crackers. Tear gas shells were shot at the overcrowded parts of the stands. It appeared to have subdued the spectators, some of whom now fluttered white handkerchiefs as a gesture of peace. Some players were stretching on the field; others were coming out of the dressing room. Play was about to begin.

Meanwhile, a middle aged gentleman named Sitesh Roy entered the ground to plead with the police to stop hurling teargas shells in the tiers where women and children were concentrated. As he demanded to see the Deputy Commissioner in charge, another officer put him under arrest. Spectators saw him falling down unconscious as about a dozen police

[11] Ibid, 6 Jan 1967, p. 10, it published a break-up of how many tickets were issued to which group. The Inquiry Commission arrived at a bigger figure. Gary Sobers grossly misrepresented facts. He wrote that the stadium had seating arrangements for 30,000 while the number turning up on that day swelled up to 40,000, which is 20,000 less than what the investigation report count, *Twenty Years at the Top*, London: Macmillan, 1988, p. 117.

constables beat him and then dragged him away (Figure 4.1). At the same time a rumour circulated that the police has beaten Ghulam Ahmed, the ace cricketer, to death.[12] The people picked up anything they could get hold of and attacked the police. Weapons were made out of bamboo poles torn from the temporary stands. Some picked up tear gas bombs and hurled those back at the police. In three minutes, so wrote *Anandabazar Patrika*, the 1,500 police and home guards posted in the stadium were chased out.[13] In less than ten minutes, chairs and benches had been piled up and set on fire.

As the canvas awnings were set on fire, cricketers left the field and gathered in the dressing room. As smoke from the burning stands entered the packed dressing room, some of them started running to their hotel while the others left in cars or a heavily guarded team bus. While the spectators did not target the cricketers, they attacked the security personnel on the way. People filed out of the ground and turned their anger on public property. They torched the tent of the Sporting Union club. It was reported that some ruffians took advantage of the mayhem and attempted to break open shops in nearby Dharmatala. The fire brigade dealt with the stadium situation most efficiently despite obstructions. A crack Gorkha regiment was called out to restore order. They cleared the remaining spectators, police and home guards, and handed an empty stadium back to the police. The spectators themselves were desperately looking for friends or brothers lost in the turmoil. Most of the CAB officials were smuggled out of the stadium in cars and buses in which they lay prostrate until reaching safe

[12] *Jugantar*, 5 Jan 1967, p. 4.
[13] Ibid., 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.

hideout. A.N. Ghosh, the president of the CAB and N.C. Colay, the secretary, went underground.[14]

Having realized that Calcutta's future as a Test venue and thus the possibility of earning revenue was in jeopardy, the West Bengal government took some unprecedented steps to ensure resumption of play in better conditions.[15] A joint committee consisting ex-players and officials from India and West Indies was formed. They persuaded players to continue the game after a Rest Day. The Rest day was utilized for repairing the gutted stands and seats (Figure 4.2). The BCCI announced bonus for each player to ensure their participation, something Ray Robinson compared to the danger money added to workers' pay packets.[16] Prafulla Chandra Sen, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, assured maintenance of law and order. He instructed the CAB to withdraw 5,000 vendor passes and restrict the sale of day tickets. He sent a government official to Sitesh Roy's house to convey his regret.[17] The High Court issued several warrants against the CAB to confiscate account registers, ticket distribution lists, passbooks and other documents. West Indies eventually won the match.

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[14] *HT, ABP, TS, TOI*, 2 Jan 1967.

[15] Local officials tried to persuade the West Indies players to continue with the match. When that failed, they started to threaten them. Sobers wrote that when the players were in favour of abandoning the match and returning home a local official responded: 'If the people know where you are going, the bus might be stopped on the way to the airport and set on fire with you inside'. Sobers, *Twenty Years*, p. 118. The official cast the spectators in an image completely different from the one created by contemporary accounts – the one of abiding love for cricket and cricketers. This misrepresentation brings out the organisers' apathy towards spectators, who were vilified to scare cricketers into playing.

[16] Ray Robinson, *The Wildest Tests*, Sydney: Cassell, 1979, p. 77. The bonus of Rs. 100 lifted the Indian players' Test fee to Rs. 600.

[17] *ABP*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.

Topophilia and the Genesis of Grievance

It is ironical that while the Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University was reading out the convocation address sent by P.B. Gajendragadkar, the Vice Chancellor of Bombay University, regarding the challenge posed to Indian democracy by the politics of violence, the other part of the city literally lit up in flames.[18] The mauling of Sitesh Roy reportedly incited the spectators into action. It is not every day that a crowd go ballistic when an old man is openly beaten up. The spectacle was unique because though the late-1960s was a period of widespread political unrest across the state and lathicharge in football grounds was a common sight, the cricket stadium witnessed such brutality for the first time. Yet, as newspapers emphasised, three groups bore the brunt of popular anger—the CAB, the police and the home guards, and public properties such as state buses and road signs—and nothing related to cricket had been destroyed. Parts of the gallery and the CAB club house were ruined but the actual playing arena suffered little damage. Dressing rooms, cricket kits forsaken in the haste of escape were found intact.[19] In hindsight, the riot resembles a well-directed protest instead of an aggregate of isolated skirmishes in an urban backdrop. The act of disparate groups of people sharing the same logic at the same time is surprising, but quite possible considering the characteristics of spectatorship.

The conditions of watching Test cricket at any stadium in India in the 1960s were not even close to comfortable.[20] But such inadequacies as proper sitting space or toilet did not

[18] *TS*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 7; Jadavpur University is located to the south of Calcutta.
[19] Robinson, *Wildest Tests*, p. 77.
[20] P.N. Sunderasan reviewed the stadiums during the 1969 Test series against Australia as, 'While the galleries were jampacked – only at Madras one could discern a sense of comfort among the spectators in almost all the stands – many more clamoured for admission, with a nasty stampede in Calcutta even resulting in loss of lives.

deter cricket followers. Spectators had personal or group agendas to fulfil. Evidently from the ethnographic research of the previous chapter, some treated the cricket match as an entertaining outing; some derived aesthetic pleasure from the game's intricacies; some were forced to go along with friends and/or families. The day of the riot, incidentally, was the first day of a new year—a holiday enjoyed with friends and family. 60,000 odd cricket-lovers decided to forgo picnics or other festivities to watch the game of cricket. Even after succeeding in the near impossible task of procuring a ticket, several hundreds of people could not even enter owing to the poorly managed ticket distribution and checking system. Quite a few found that their seats were occupied by people bearing tickets of the same numbers; some found that the seat number punched on their tickets do not exist; some could not go close to their seats in the congestion; while those who managed a seat found an average space of eight inches or less to perch on.[21] Personal resentments united people from many walks of life.[22] The logic of this union operates at many levels of emotions.

The first emotive logic was the sense of deprivation. The Test series was scheduled to take place in the winter of 1965 but was postponed due to the war with Pakistan. Cricket-lovers waited for two long years to watch India clash with the emerging giant of cricket—West Indies. In theory, possession of valid ticket or pass authorized one to watch live action in an orderly manner. The demand for tickets to international cricket matches in Calcutta

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There is an urgent need to put up stadia to accommodate the growing number of enthusiasts', 'A Close Series', *Indian Cricket 1970*, Madras: Kasturi & Sons Limited, 1970, p. 38.

[21] *ABP*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 1.

[22] A particular way of looking at the sudden bonding of unknown people would be Leon Mann's theory of 'force typology' which suggests that riots occur when many people simultaneously feel "frustration, outlawry, remonstrance, confrontation, or expression" the same way. Leon Mann, 'Sports Crowds and the Collective Behaviour Perspective', in J.H. Goldstein ed., *Sports, Games and Play:Social and Psychological Viewpoints*, 2nd edn., New Jersey: Erlbaum, 1989, pp. 229-30.

always exceeded the supply. This raised the value and price of tickets, adding to the sense of entitlement and privilege of those within the stadium. Sujit Mukherjee shares a story in his delightful autobiography that once a friend of his left Calcutta for a fortnight to escape the barracking of his friends since he could not purchase a ticket to a Test match.[23] Tickets generally were not very cheap, not the least in international meets. If one took the family to a match, the cost went up. Overspending often burdened a fan with an obsession to reap the maximum enjoyment out of the match. When one's monetary or aesthetic investments went up in smoke because of the managing authority's fault, one felt cheated of his/her rights. Everything from scarcity of tickets to mishandling of crowds added to this feeling of deprivation.[24] When the fantasy falls flat, the fan is driven to despair. Mental turbulence sparks resignation in some, retaliation in others. When the majority of the spectators retaliate, violence erupts.

Secondly, a large number of spectators treat the historical experience of a stadium event as a prize to die for. A good game often assumes the form of a pilgrimage. Historical documents and programmes are produced by organizers, memorabilia are purchased by spectators, and sometimes even bits of stadium are taken home as mementoes.[25] After the event, newspapers document the history and popular opinion is expressed on radio and television. Each popular treatment of the stadium event heightens the sense of its historical import. Stadiums are often associated with seminal moments in a person's life. They are

[23] Sujit Mukherjee, *Autobiography of an Unknown Cricketer*, New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1996, p. 161.
[24] Timothy S. O'Connell and Brent Cuthbertson eds., *Group Dynamics in Recreation and Leisure: Creating Conscious Groups through an Experiential Approach*, Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2008, p. 155.
[25] Henning Eichberg, 'Stadium, Pyramid, Labyrinth: Eye and Body on the Move', in John Bale and Olof Moen eds., *The Stadium and the City*, Keele: Keele University Press, 1995, p. 323.

sacred places, inducing in fans what Yi-Fu Tuan has termed 'topophilia'—a love of place.[26] Participation in collective history of a place implies a much deeper and specific meaning for individuals. This paradigm of making history is periodically created and recreated during a stadium spectacle. These processes are not insignificant, isolated affairs; these create a larger experiential context for individuals, groups and communities by:

> Demonstrating through routine and repetitive action that one belongs to a certain place, in a certain time; that is to say, one is specific in a temporal spatial 'historicity'; one creates history rather than just being created by history; and history is created by the body substantial. The crowd may be an historic product, yet, in its crowding together – such as at the stadium it dismisses the product-likeness and recreates it(self)...as an historic being making its presence known and making a great fuss about it.[27]

The Eden Gardens is one of the most distinguished cricket stadiums in the world in terms of quality of sporting arena and passionate participation of spectators. Berry Sarbadhikary called it the 'Worcester of the East', historically the second oldest cricket ground in the world with a record of continuous play.[28] Since it is the only international cricket stadium in the state of West Bengal, the region's cricket-lovers have no alternative recourse to enjoy international cricket unless they visit the stadium. Most of the spectators at the Eden Gardens have been moulded by years of active participation in the game and appreciation of its heritage—a fact attested by most international cricketers and commentators. Frequent visits become part of a spectator's sense of routine and repetitive action. The stadium event makes history and encapsulates the spectator in the process of making history. An individual often

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[26] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

[27] Niels K. Nielsen, 'The Stadium in the City', in John Bale and Olof Moen eds., *The Stadium and the City*, Keele: Keele University Press, 1995, p. 34.

[28] Berry Sarbadhikary, *My World of Cricket: A Century of Tests*, Calcutta: Cricket Library, 1964, p. 20. The oldest is Vine Ground, Seven Oaks, Kent, but it has not staged a single Test match.

forms part of a larger group of friends, club mates or people met during the course of the match. The normative structure of the stadium is one of unity of purpose among the crowd and emotional bonding with the players representing the crowd. If this structure of a stadium is violated on the occasion of a disappointing event, this unity takes either a retributive or a regenerative role. The experience of 1 January 1967 was characterised by retribution.

Thirdly, a chaos in the spatial dimensions intensified the problems. Regarding the relationships between individual and collective space both inside and outside the stadium, Tuan says:

> Inside a packed stadium other humans are welcome; they add to the excitement of the game. On the way home, driving along the clogged highway, other humans are a nuisance... The stadium has a higher density of people than the highway, but is on the highway that we taste the unpleasantness of spatial constraint.[29]

This is a way in which stadium events create followers who socially constructs and maintains a normative sense of public space while trying to accommodate fellow spectators in its realm of the stadium. The cricket spectators of Calcutta have remade the landscape of Eden Gardens as a 'sportscape', a space devoted to sport and its followers, vibrant with the impact of their participation.[30] They have shaped the ways in which Calcutta's culture inscribes, uses and understands the space. Space itself plays a constructive role in human affairs. One is conditioned in such a way that any disturbance in the space one occupies makes him/her react to it. Strikes and conflicts throughout the city, aggravated by student agitation and food

[29] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 64.

[30] The concept of 'sportscape' comes from John Bale. As modernity started fastening its grip on the globe in the late nineteenth century and transformed sport, along with all manner of other social practices, sport literally remade particular landscapes into spaces devoted to sport. Bale, *Sportscapes*, Sheffield: Geographical Association, 2000, p. 4.

crisis, had created a disorder in the urban space for several months leading to the Test match. Any demarcation between the spaces of the stadium and the city collapsed as double-booking and overselling of tickets caused overcrowding and the consequent violence.

Students of the University of Calcutta had been sitting in mass picketing since 10 October 1966, demanding immediate revocation of rustication orders, allegedly due to political linkages, on students of various colleges,. The syndicate meeting decided to close the university indefinitely from 8 December onwards, until the students would come to an agreement.[31] The University opened again on 19 December. Students were prohibited from taking out processions. They were arrested en masse on being found flouting the rules. Some Presidency College students put up a picket against the rustication of seven meritorious students who were charged with not paying hostel bills and creating ruckus in the college premises. They besieged the Principal on 6 December urging prompt justice. The demonstration was broken by lathicharge and tear-gas, and the college closed down till further notice. Students smashed college properties and clashed with the police in bursts. None of the arrested students could be bailed.[32] The Naxalite movement of the late 1960s was lurking in the background, waiting for an orifice to pour forth. The state government was facing a severe financial crisis. It ran out of money to pay the salary of the teaching and non-teaching staffs at the university.[33] To counter the growing insurgent tendencies the government banned every kind of meeting around the office localities of central Calcutta. 64 employees were arrested for breaking the rule. A massive fight broke out at the Sealdah

[31] *ABP*, 3 Dec 1966, p. 1.
[32] Ibid., 11 Dec 1966, p. 1.
[33] Ibid., 8 Dec 1966, p. 1.

station among commuters and rail police.[34] Scarcity of water affected the outskirts. Tram workers Association called a strike on 10 December. They had been regularly dispatching deputations of their demands to the Chief Minister but a resolution was far off. State bus workers called strike from 13 December. The government issued charge sheet to every participant.[35] Writers' Building, the administrative centre, became a site of agitation; four clerks were arrested.[36] Food crisis was so rampant that while the match was on, two thousand ton rice arrived from Hyderabad.[37] It would not be far-fetched to suggest that most of the spectators going to the match were afflicted by the social crisis.

Construction of Culpability in Local Newspapers

The legacy of a sport event is determined by its immediate impact on spectators and long-term effect on society. Newspaper reports play an important role in the latter through perpetuating the collective history of a sport event. Reports assist stadium spectators to expand their understanding of the history they have helped to create and enable followers who were absent in the stadium to engage with the collective history.[38] Local newspapers played a key role in shaping the discourses of the riot by offering a range of outlooks on the police, the state government, the CAB, team selection politics, Bengali culture and sporting spirit. The responses, I argue, were underpinned by their respective political perspectives:

[34] Ibid., 10 Dec 1966, p. 3.
[35] Ibid., 15 Dec 1966, p. 3.
[36] Ibid., 21 Dec 1966, p. 1.
[37] Ibid., 5 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[38] Chris Gaffney and John Bale, 'Sensing the Stadium', in Patricia A. Vertinsky and John Bale eds., *Sites of Sport: Space, Place, Experience*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 37-38.

Anandabazar Patrika favoured liberal democracy as practiced by the Congress government, *Dainik Basumati* reflected the radical left politics which was to culminate in an armed resistance in a few years, while *Jugantar* supported the liberal left headed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which demanded constitutional amendment towards better governance.

Pre-riot tensions caused by the exclusion of Subrata Guha

West Indies, backed by superior performers, were all set to trample the Indian teams towards resounding victories in every match of the series until they tumbled at the practice match at Indore against the Combined Central and East Zones, 25-27 December 1966, just before the Calcutta Test. In the first innings, West Indies batting collapsed against the medium pace bowling pair of Subroto Guha and Chuni Goswami. 'For the first time', wrote *The Statesman*, 'the touring West Indian cricketers ran into some trouble...'[39] Guha was tipped repeatedly by all the dailies to play the second Test.[40] Formalities were completed early in the third morning, when, as the triumphant headline read, 'West Indians Meet Their Waterloo'.[41] Having performed even better in the second innings, Guha made a strong case to be included in the Indian team for the second Test starting three days later on 31 December 1966.[42] For many of the cricket lovers in Calcutta and elsewhere, Guha, who had been bowling consistently well in the Ranji matches, seemed the best bet to demolish West Indies batting.

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[39] *TS*, 26 Dec 1966, p. 14.
[40] *All the dailies* include *Anandabazar Patrika*, *The Statesman*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India* and *Tribune*, papers from all over India. Even non-Bengali sport-writers felt that Guha should play in the Calcutta Test.
[41] Ibid., 28 Dec 1966, p. 16.
[42] Ibid., 28 Dec 1966, p. 16.

However the euphoria began to collapse on 30 December as the team selectors overlooked him in favour of Bishen Singh Bedi, a young left-arm spinner. The selection was not universally approved. In Calcutta, a few supporters took out a protest march in front of Great Eastern Hotel, within one kilometre of the Eden Gardens.[43] 'Rumbles of disappointment', *The Statesman* reported on 31 December, the day the Calcutta Test started, 'have been heard over the exclusion of Subroto Guha, whose four for 64 and seven for 49 at Indore seemed to have staked his claims'.[44] Such news disappointed many, and might have ruffled a few feathers. People cheered when Guha fielded as a substitute on the first day. Some even thought that the decision had been upturned; that he was playing and would bowl India to a victory.[45] However, this was not to happen. People went home frustrated at yet another lacklustre display of bowling on the first day.

In the next morning, reports of Guha's exclusion and subsequent public reaction in Bengali newspapers crossed boundaries of cricket logic. Dattu Phadkar wrote in *Dainik Basumati* that had he been picked, Guha would have done better than any of the bowlers on display.[46] 'Sriamitav' shared in the same paper an apocryphal story that a gentleman had uttered a soliloquy, addressing Pataudi, that 'You're going to be our son-in-law in two days; how could you overlook the boy from Bengal for the Test'.[47] *Jugantar* hinted at selection conspiracy against Guha.[48] Even the correspondent of *Anandabazar Patrika* asked if

[43] *ABP*, 31 Dec 1966, p. 1.
[44] Ibid., 31 Dec 1966, p. 10.
[45] Chiranjib, 'Darshak Charit' (Character of the spectator), *ABP*, 26 Jan 1967, p. 12.
[46] *Dainik Basumati*, 1 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[47] Ibid, 1 Jan 1967, p. 6.
[48] *Jugantar*, 1 Jan 1967, p. 1.

cricketing performance was indeed the selection criterion.[49] Such reports, it can be guessed, had instilled a sense of deprivation in the minds of a few ahead of the second day's play. Writing in the *Hindustan Times* two weeks later, Saradindu Sanyal, a former cricketer, hinted at the role of 'anti-Bengali conspiracy' rumours in the build-up to the riot.[50] Re-opening a subject after a time lag clearly shows how deep-seated the problem was.

Although the selectors had justified Guha's exclusion on cricketing grounds, the dismal performance of his replacement, and that of the team as well, stoked the debate over selection policy. It is speculative if Guha would have performed better than others, but the language of newspaper reports certainly provoked readers to think so. It did not seem hard for people to believe that India would have played better as a unit with Guha in, had the oversight of selectors not intervened. Injustice against Bengali cricketers is a recurring theme in Indian cricket lore. Any Bengali cricket-lover can anecdotally and statistically prove that at least ten Bengali cricketers were overlooked by selectors in favour of lesser talents from other states. The incident of Guha went down as an addition to the number of selection victims.[51] It did not help that the Chairman of the Selection Committee was a Bengali—Bechu Datta Ray—since seemingly even he was suspected to be involved in the Guha conspiracy. Incidentally, the tent of the Sporting Union, the club he headed, was set on fire during the riot.[52]

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[49] *ABP*, 1 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[50] *HT*, 15 Jan 1967, p. 12.
[51] For a nice summary of this 'injustice' see Ramachandra Guha, '*Jore* Ball in Bengal', in *The States of Indian Cricket*, Ranikhet: Black Kite, 2005.
[52] *ABP*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.

Police

Jugantar alleged that far from effectively controlling the situation, the police provoked violence by insensitive treatment of the entitled spectators.[53] An Anglo-Indian police officer who had incidentally ordered the lathicharge on Roy was singled out for criticism. Not only was he accused as the prime culprit, but his ethnicity was posited as the agent leading to abuse of power. Being an outsider, the daily argued, the officer failed to empathise with local sentiments and misunderstood popular expectations.[54] Moreover, the report suggested, none too subtly, that the person embodied the ruthless colonial police officer and the police force resembled the colonial constabulary which unleashed indiscriminate brutality on order. The report also brings to focus the marginality/duality which has historically characterised treatment of Eurasians in British and post-independence India.[55]

The police arrested twenty-five people who were professionally as distinct as an advocate, an income tax officer, a film star and a corporate employee. In a petition for their unconditional release, the defence lawyer argued that the event could have become another Jallianwala Bagh massacre.[56] An image of the colonial invasion of Indian society was

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[53] *Jugantar*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 4.
[54] Ibid, 2 Jan 1967, p. 6.
[55] Although politicians such as Gandhi tried to involve people from all walks of life in the nation-making, the Anglo-Indians had mostly remained outside the ambit of this constructive pluralism. Their ongoing popular representation as alien to Indian society and as residue of the colonial encounter was manifest in *Jugantar*'s allegations.
[56] *Jugantar*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 3. In 1919, a committee under Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt prepared a bill which aimed to provide the government additional coercive power to combat revolutionary terrorism in India. Widespread protest demonstrations against the bill's implementation rattled the administration in a number of cities. On April 13, in Amritsar, people flouted the martial law and gathered at Jallianwala Bagh, an enclosed garden, for discussing the issue. Without the merest provocation, General Dyer, head of the local police, commanded his troops to open fire on the mass of unarmed people, killing 379 people officially. Dyer later regretted that had he not ran out of ammunition, he could have taught the Indians a better lesson. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947*, New Delhi: MacMillan, 2007, pp. 190-1.

resurrected. An editorial published after the match took a more moderate stance. It demanded probe into the retreat of the police, expressing doubt over their training to handle critical situations.[57] *Dainik Basumati* called for strict disciplinary action to be taken against the guilty police, who it compared to the mythical 'monkey army in Lanka' or a mad elephant (Figure 4.3).[58] Otherwise, it evoked colonial imageries to decry the police action. It said that the police violence paralleled the torture on freedom fighters during the British rule. Such occurrences, it reported, are rare in a civilised world.[59] Such an act of remembering the colonial trauma accomplished two distinct functions: firstly, it fulfilled a nationalist duty by recovering a history of colonial violence, and secondly it criticised modern-day polity for having failed to advance far from the bitter past (Figure 4.4).

The police issued an official statement in *Anandabazar Patrika* to absolve the negative image. The statement labelled the crowd as vandals. It praised the police's sense of responsibility and courage in spite of being heavily outnumbered and facing casualties. It foregrounded a timeline which indicates that the police were aware of every development and in complete of control of the situation. It condemned the CAB for three lapses which led to the riot—sale of excess tickets, failure to curb unauthorised entry with various badges and flawed engineering which made parts of the field invisible from the top rows of the gallery, resulting in overcrowding of the lower stands. The police claimed to have tried to pacify rioters with folded hands and had resorted to tear gas only when they were comprehensively overpowered. Even when beaten and bruised, rescuing people from possible stampede

[57] *Jugantar*, 6 Jan 1967, p. 4.
[58] *Dainik Basumati*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 4.
[59] Ibid., 2 Jan 1967, p. 1.

reportedly topped their priority.[60] Clearly the police projected themselves as victims of crowd violence and unsung heroes of the day.

The atrocity against Sitesh Roy was completely ignored. The account, a surprisingly precise summary of the spread of violence across a large area, reads as more authentic than the witness and journalistic accounts which overlapped and contradicted one another too often. The police evidently needed self-vindication since public opinion was firmly against it. That this report did not inspire confidence even in *Anandabazar Patrika* is evident from other reports published alongside the timeline which did not mince the tone of criticism.[61]

State politics

Following the riot, the major newspapers published critical opinions of important political actors. In the *Anandabazar Patrika* a range of associations and people such as the Mayor, the High Court Bar Association, members of the opposition in the municipal corporation, the Congress and the Motor Dealers' Association (of which Sitesh Roy was a member) condemned pitiful mismanagement by the CAB and police arrogance for causing the riot. They filed petitions or conducted signature campaigns demanding immediate punishment of the guilty. *Jugantar* expressed the opinions of the moderate left leaders. Nihar Mukherjee, the secretary of the Socialist Unity Centre of India, issued a statement condemning police action.[62] About twenty councillors of the opposition including the UCC secretary Samar Rudra, the leader of the Progressive Urban Bloc Kumar Dutta and Nirdal Bloc's

[60] *ABP*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 7.
[61] Ibid, 3 Jan 1967, p. 3.
[62] *Jugantar*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 6.

Shyamsundar Gupta protested against police hostility.[63] *Dainik Basumati* represented the radical left wing by publishing the statements of Prasanta Chatterjee, a councillor of the municipal corporation, Bhabani Shome of the Communist Party, D. Guha of the Socialist Unity Centre, Ashok Dasgupta of the Praja Socialist Party and Dilip Roychoudhury of the Workers' Party.[64] Furthermore, to show its concern for the common people, it published three readers' letters daily over a period of three days between 11 to 13 January. The political profiles of each of these newspapers came out in sharp relief in the list of people they gave vent to. *Jugantar* and *Dainik Basumati* held Congress, the ruling party, responsible, though the latter's role in the fiasco was not made clear. *Anandabazar Patrika* critiqised the police as the failure of a state apparatus but carried no outburst against the government as such.

Arabinda Basu, in a letter to *Dainik Basumati*, mentioned that tickets of 45-60 rupees were being distributed through the Congress party office in exchange for a donation of Rs. 200-300/- to their fund. A number of the CAB officials who were contesting the general elections on behalf of the Congress had been dispensing tickets to the power brokers in their constituencies, leading to shortage of saleable tickets.[65] An editorial disapproved the government's decision of calling the army to control the rioters, stating that,

> The Congress leaders have regularly summoned army machine guns instead of police rifles to stifle the Language movement and other political demonstrations. The army should be called into action as the last resort when the police fail to safeguard public life and property... the police actually aggravated the crisis by exerting undue force in the name of control...

[63] Ibid, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[64] *Dainik Basumati*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[65] Ibid., 2 Jan 1967, p. 4.

Therefore calling the army was not only ridiculous, but could have broken people's trust in the army.[66]

The CAB

A primary reason of the riot was inefficient event management. In the mid-1960s the Eden Gardens could accommodate not more than 39,000 people. Increasing demand of tickets led the CAB to set up new concrete galleries so that the stadium held more spectators. A dispatch sent to S.N. Sen, the Deputy Secretary in charge of sports, Govt. of West Bengal, informs that the CAB planned to accommodate a total of 52,000 people on the combined existing and new galleries.[67] The construction work continued for more than a year before being hastily wound up only two days before the match.[68] The engineers were not satisfied with the design and quality of construction. S. Bandopadhyay stated that the galleries were built with the concern to give the minimum or near minimum comfort to the maximum number of spectators. Comfort was sacrificed in tread space and aisle space to put in as many seats as possible.[69] After inspecting the stadium following the riot, B.N. Banerjee, the government architect, criticised the CAB saying that the seats, aisle space, lavatories and exits in most of the newly erected sections were inexcusably below standard and inadequate.[70]

A.N. De, the CAB architect, testified that work was started with the plan to provide seats for 34,746 people in the new construction. But as the work progressed, the demand for tickets rose so rapidly that he was forced to compromise with the standard so that 70,000

[66] Ibid.
[67] *Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, p. 24.
[68] Ibid., p. 32.
[69] Ibid., p. 33.
[70] Ibid., p. 35.

bodies could be hosted. He admitted that the gallery was built temporarily and haphazardly, and it would be a shame to call it a stadium.[71] The CAB allotted 16 inches space to reserved seats and 14 inches in the unreserved seats i.e. for blocks meant for Rs. 25 season tickets and daily tickets.[72] B.N. Banerjee calculated on the basis of the recognised standard of 18 inches seating space per person that 46,752 people might possibly be seated in the galleries excluding the NCC block. On the basis of 16 inches in reserved blocks and 14 inches in other blocks the total accommodation would be 55,244 excluding the NCC block.[73] As reported by the CAB, excluding daily tickets and including vendors' badges, 51,452 tickets were issued per day. Adding the number of 8,450 daily sales the number goes up to 59,922 tickets, of which 58,122 were supposed to seat, 3000 beyond the accommodation provided in the galleries.[74] About 3,000 or more than half of the badges issued to vendors and staffs were reportedly used by fashionable gentlemen and ladies. The NCC printed and sold tickets independently. Adding the 3,311 people sitting on their block, the total crowd on 31 December 1966 amounts to 66,233.[75] Use of a defective printing machine resulted in a series of tickets bearing the same number as one another and seat numbers which did not even exist. Slipshod printing and distribution of tickets without reference to the actual arrangement, lack of proper guidance to ticket-holders, and clumsy checking by the Congress Sevadal volunteers and the police caused the overcrowding, concludes the report of the Inquiry Commission.[76]

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[71] Ibid., p. 37.
[72] Ibid., p. 36.
[73] Ibid., p. 46.
[74] Ibid., p. 46.
[75] Ibid., p. 47.
[76] Ibid., p. 51.

Even though journalists did not have access to these data, they created a sense of loss using witness accounts and damage reports. They brought alive the psychological and social impact of the riot, creating expectations and demands for action to prevent any further repetition. Generally the extent to which expectations are fulfilled, and the force with which they are demanded, depends very much on the political circumstances of the tragedy and those affected.[77] The state government's urgency to resume the match met with some favourable comments, but the apathetic behaviour of the cricket authorities was continued to be criticised even after the Test ended. Sympathy for the victims became an agenda of the sport press. *Anandabazar Patrika* drew a poignant picture of Aalo Majumdar crying while talking about her missing brother Pradip (12) and sisters Anupama, Nilima and Swapna. Other teenagers namely Prakash Kumar Jaini (15), Swapan Ghosal (16) and Santimoy Chatterjee were reported missing.[78] Dhiren Deb's car was reportedly stolen from the parking.[79] The newspapers fulfilled their commitment to the public by empathising with them. But they had missed one tragic incident which would have incriminated the police without redemption. As revealed to me in an interview, an expectant mother slipped while hurrying down the choked stairs, fell, and died a few days after in a hospital.[80]

Having been construed as an escape from the realities of life, cricket as such was not targeted by the state authorities who monitor every leisure or artistic pursuits for hint of threat to its existence. Cricket was left to the organisers and consumers to regulate their

[77] Martin Johnes, 'Heads in the Sand: Football, Politics and Crowd Disasters in Twentieth-century Britain', in Paul Darby, Martin Johnes and Gavin Mellor eds., *Soccer and Disaster: International Perspectives*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, p. 10.
[78] *ABP*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.
[79] *Jugantar*, 5 Jan 1967, p. 4.
[80] Susmita Dutt, interview with author, 20 Dec 2011.

safety themselves. The minor accidents that did take place were normalized by both the press and the organisers as what inevitably happens when a large and excited crowd throngs a stadium. Cricket was run by gentlemen whose full-time professions lay elsewhere, mainly in business. They were far from knowledgeable about crowd management themselves, and did not bother to employ experts experienced in handling critical situations. Instead, the burden of maintaining law and order fell upon the police who were not trained to control riots which carry different connotations from political protests or communal discords. The CAB's lack of commitment to ensure safety of consumers indicates that organisation of cricket as a business enterprise was yet to sink in, but the negotiations and public opinion signalled the sprouting of the cricket industry which later grew to be a leader in world cricket.

Creation of a Saviour

One of the most abiding memories of this Test was a heart-warming tale of patriotism. The Indian and West Indian flags were flying over the National Cricket Club pavilion, the roof of which caught fire. People noticed but were unwilling to hazard their lives to save the national flag. The common rendition goes that Conrad Hunte disregarded the risk and climbed up the flaming tiers to save the West Indian flag. Gary Sobers wrote that no one among the West Indies cricketers dared to venture out of the smoke-filled dressing room while Hunte went out and rescued the flag single-handedly.[81] This story has become a parable of patriotism,

[81] Sobers, *Twenty Years*, p. 118.

used as a reference regarding the role of sport in development of character and its manifestation at the required moment.

But PTI the news agency added a twist to this familiar tale by reporting that it was not Hunte who salvaged the flag. He shouted to the local manager of the West Indies team to try to save the flags, 'which were more precious than their lives'. The local manager took down the flags and gave them to Hunte.[82] *Jugantar* mentions a man who heard Hunte's plea of help and took down the fags.[83] Clive Lloyd said that he had left the ground early in a Morris car. He did not consider the flag-saving deserved a mention in his autobiography.[84] What makes his stand contentious is his difference with some of his seniors, a group which possibly included Hunte.

In his autobiography, Hunte says that he started climbing the flagpole to retrieve both the flags but a uniformed policeperson urged him not to risk his limbs and volunteered to take the flags down.[85] So, to trust Hunte's memory, an anonymous policeman saved the nation's prestige in front of the world. Neither any newspaper nor the police endorsed this perspective. Newspapers could have deliberately disavowed a solitary good work by the police to sustain their point of criticism. But the incident did not appear in any of the police testimonies too, which is why we must ask why was this incident narrated without official confirmation, which is very unlikely considering the media's plunge for scoops, and why, of all the West Indies players, was Hunte chosen to be a patriot?

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[82] *HT*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 10.
[83] *Jugantar*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.
[84] Clive Lloyd with Tony Cozier, *Living for Cricket*, London: Star Book, 1983, p. 28.
[85] Conrad Hunte, *Playing to Win*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971, pp. 111-123.

Dickie Dodds, Hunte's mentor, admits that he was the conscience of the team. His moral force gave the whole side an ethos.[86] Different from the average sporting heroes, Hunte was known more for his ethical righteousness than cricketing exploits. His autobiography, *Playing to Win*, had a full chapter on Gandhi's contribution to humanity and more praise for teammates' efforts than his own centuries. His habit of leaving uplifting messages around the dressing-room often irked team mates. A brilliant orator, he was involved in anti-colonial resistance in Jamaica. So the image of Hunte as a moralizer had predated the turn of events. In the chaos of fire and brickbats, the sight of a dark man climbing up the pole might have tricked the witnesses into believing that it was Hunte pulling off another patriotic job. Every crisis moment calls for a hero. Since Hunte fitted the description most appropriately, the public made him their hero – someone to stand for patriotic and sporting spirit amidst the quagmire of greed and indifference.

Arguably, the memory of the flag-saving was 'reinvented to meet ideological objectives'.[87] Local vernacular newspapers like the *Anandabazar Patrika* supported the version of Hunte saving the flag.[88] They found in it a morality tale to remind the belligerent public the ethos of good citizenship and civic pride. The appeal was heightened by the connection of an ex-colonial who risking his life to save his country's honour in a foreign land. At one level, the tale served to enlighten the 'cricket-lovers of Calcutta'; at another, matching a resolute foreigner against an inefficient state sent a wake-up call to the

[86] Obituary, *Wisden Almanack*, 2000.
[87] Edward W. Said uses Foucault's power/ knowledge arguments to explain how social memories are promoted to meet ideological objectives, 'Invention, Memory, and Place' in W.J.T. Mitchell ed., *Landscape and Power*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002, 2nd edn., pp. 242-44.
[88] *ABP*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.

government, reminding the administrators that future disavowal of the entitled spectators may result in similar public humiliation.

News War between England and its Former Colony

The chain of incidents rippled foreign press too. *The Statesman* brought out a collection of comments made in British newspapers which had unequivocally lambasted the BCCI for poor event management. Most of the British dailies carried out the story in the front-page and splashed pictures of the 'battle of Eden Gardens' across five columns. E.M. Wellings, a leading British cricket commentator, wrote in the *Evening Standard* that mismanagement and financial greed were responsible for the riot. Speaking from first-hand experience of Test match tours in India, Wellings blamed the officials for dangerously overcrowding the ground—which he mentions to be common to almost every Test ground in India. Nobody knew how many tickets were sold but invariably the turn out for Test matches was obviously greater than the official figures. Spectators, he says, were 'packed like sardines and some with tickets never get into the ground'.[89]

Even during the Calcutta Test of England's 1964 series in India, Wellings mentioned, the police sought to manage overcrowding by chasing spectators around the outfield and past sightscreens, trying in vain to find them seats in the packed galleries, and delayed the game. Wellings described the events at Calcutta as the most serious riot in the history of the game. Not even the bottle-throwing outbreaks at Georgetown in British Guiana during England's

[89] *TS*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 14.

tour of West Indies in 1954, he reports, could be compared to this Calcutta riot.[90] Beneath a blow-up of a radiophoto of the bonfire on the pitch, *The Sun* commented sardonically that at least the West Indies and India have got their own home-grown ashes to play for.[91] Another photo carried the caption that good cricket like this sparks life in a dull audience.[92]

Behind these sarcastic comments, Indian dailies argued, lay the satisfaction of humiliating Indian cricket which was then poised to take over the English as the biggest venue of cricket.[93] Berry Sarbadhikary, the noted cricket journalist, answered this ridicule saying that good cricket in the next few days would shut the mouths of foreign critics.[94] While Test matches in England still attracted some crowd, the attendance was meagre compared to the crowd in India. Spectatorship in county cricket matches was going through its leanest patch. People were not willing to commit four days' worth of work for the sake of cricket. England was fast losing its place as the Mecca of cricket. The condition was so bad that the England and Wales Cricket Board decided to improvise with the format of the game to attract crowd. A limit was put on the overs so that both the teams can finish their respective innings in a single day for the game to bear immediate result. So the Gillette Cup, the first limited over tournament, was started in 1964. Purists scorned at the new methods of rejuvenating domestic cricket. Sportsmanship, they lamented, was being replaced by an 'ultra-professional' attitude, something unbecoming of 'cricketers'.[95]

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[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] *ABP*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[93] *TS*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 14.
[94] Ibid., p. 7.
[95] Mike Marqusee's discussion of the crisis of its once 'national game' in England is probably the best, *Anyone but England: Cricket and the National Malaise*, London: Verso, 1996.

In India, on the other hand, public interest surrounding cricket had been increasing in the 1960s. Indian grounds, especially the Eden Gardens, had supposedly preserved the tradition of leisure and passion which was so quintessentially British till some decades ago. Even an assiduous critic such as Scyld Berry, writing in 1982, admitted that though an Indian stadium looked like a 'functioning anarchy', an underlying social organization always existed and made the sport event a success. The riot of 1967, he concedes, had been sparked by provocations that had inflamed reasonable people elsewhere.[96] The outlook, unfortunately, was not prevalent in the 1960s British press. They did not miss the opportunity to criticise the rising non-West. Front-page reporting of an organisational disaster in a match played between two Third World countries brings out their effort to humiliate India as a poor ambassador of cricket.

A definite disjuncture between the national and foreign media could be seen in the way the pitch issue was handled. The Indian and the Anglo-Australian media locked horns in their claims regarding the condition of the pitch. Among national dailies, *The Statesman* reported that the Indian cricket board officials inspected the pitch the day after the riot and found no damage.[97] *Hindustan Times* reported that no less than 200 spectators had cordoned the pitch off to prevent any dent. When a man tried to dig out the pitch with a bamboo pole, he was beaten black and blue by this peoples' army.[98] Bengali dailies presented the incident from different perspectives. *Anandabazar Patrika* admitted that some people had scratched

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[96] Scyld Berry, *Cricket Wallah: With England in India 1981-82*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, pp. 107-12.
[97] *TS*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[98] *HT*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 1.

the pitch in a fit of anger, but they stopped when others pointed out that this was unethical.[99] Sarbadhikary noted that the few minor spots were not likely to have any bearing on the outcome (Figure 4.5).[100] *Jugantar* related that two men wanted to dig the pitch, but others stopped them, reasoning that it would violate the very spirit of cricket which they wanted to restore through the demonstration.[101] *Dainik Basumati* was the only paper which wrote that the pitch was damaged.

While nearly every Indian newspaper found the pitch undamaged barring a few spots, the British media spotted holes staring out of the pitch. As mentioned earlier, *The Sun* carried on its front page a picture of a bonfire on something resembling the pitch.[102] British press criticised the BCCI and the CAB for poor stadium and spectator maintenance. To an extent this criticism dramatized the whole incident. Furthermore, it slyly ascribed a generic inferiority to Third World spectatorship, invoking Neville Cardus' famous dictum that the way a nation plays or appropriates cricket manifests its national character. Whereas the foreign papers continued to stereotype Indian cricket-lovers as zealots, the national media treated the latter as enthusiastic followers and reminded them to uphold the spirit of watching a sport. *The Statesman* reportedly warned its readers that the act of encroaching on the playing field abuses the game's 'highest tradition'.[103] Having admonished the spectators for breaking the ground rules, the Indian dailies sympathized with them too, portraying them as a betrayed lot unlike the British media which mocked the culture of organisation and

[99] *ABP*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 3.
[100] Ibid, 3 Jan 1967, p. 9.
[101] *Jugantar*, 2 Jan 1967, p. 6.
[102] *TS*, 3 Jan 1967, p. 14.
[103] Ibid, 1 Jan 1967, p. 16.

spectatorship in the Third World. The warning that national pride was at stake was so successfully circulated that spectators put on their best behaviour for the rest of the match and were later admired (Figure 4.6).[104]

The players did not demur about the pitch during the match, but Tiger Pataudi, the Indian captain, wrote in a retrospective column much later that they were forced to play on a worn-out track. The scratches on the pitch got worse after the West Indies first innings, causing Indian wickets to tumble quickly, resulting in a crushing defeat.[105] Since it is highly unlikely for Pataudi to be bribed to contradict the conventional representation of his home media, that too after so many years, Pataudi's opposition hinted that the Indian media's reaction was indeed crystallised by the urge to counter Anglo-Australian hegemony over defining the boundaries of playing, organising and writing about cricket. Later accounts often ignored this conflict in reporting and twisted the story at will. Taking Ray Robinson's account for granted, Sriram Veera, for instance, wrote that the spectators gouged holes in the pitch with stumps.[106]

Conclusion

The chapter demonstrates the impact of cultures of spectatorship and political considerations on mediation of cricket. Reporting on the Eden riot, the press stereotyped cricket spectators,

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[104] The correspondent of *Jugantar* wrote, 'Etiquette is cricket's another name. That no one understands this better than the spectators in Calcutta has been put beyond doubt by the ideal way in which they behaved yesterday', 4 Jan 1967, p. 1.
[105] *ABP*, 6 Jan 1982, p. 8.
[106] Sriram Veera, 'That's a Scandal', *http://www.espncricinfo.com/magazine/content/story/456828.html*, accessed on 20 Jan 2012.

especially Bengali ones, as ideal citizens and fans whose principles were corrupted and aesthetic investments in the game of cricket bulldozed by the inefficient police and cricket authorities. Representation of this idealism glossed over the reality of the spectator violence and obscured the few reports on methods to control an unruly mob. Apart from praising qualities of the spectators, the press published notices of injured or missing persons and lost luggage. It appeared to have targeted wider circulation by a coordinated show of empathy with the public.

The spectacle of cricket now became a site where different political opinions clashed. The Bengali dailies not too opposed to the state government published multiple apologies issued by both the CAB and the police and emphasised the government's rearguard action. Left-leaning dailies blamed the riot on the government-CAB nexus. The language used was suffused with political imageries and allusions to anti-colonial struggle and other contemporary events. The common thread was a bad press of the police though the latter found a mouthpiece in a leading daily. National dailies such as *Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* described the demands and fulfilments briefly. Instead, they depicted the event as a national shame and suggested remedies to protect India's image as a sport-loving nation. Mediation of the Eden riot signified a change in the way the press looked at sport. Cricket had overgrown the status of a consumable leisure, and had become an important component of the public sphere.

Epilogue

According to Benedict Anderson, a common practice among 'print-capitalist' authors and editors was the ordering of narratives of events or ideas in a way that would make sense only to their intended consumers who would, in turn, be able to imagine herself within a community without physically meeting other members.[1] This dissertation reaffirmed this reciprocity of the print media and the reading/consuming public. It contextualised cricket's textual dimensions in the history of consumption in India to historicize the sport's popularity in terms of structural changes effected at the level of both the media and the consumers. It also highlighted the ambivalences of consumption of mediated knowledge, especially when dealing with the politicisation of the media.

The first chapter studied the strategic innovations involved in the marketing of cricket and other items to trace the emergence of an urban consumer society in late colonial India. It used visual evidence in addition to the traditional text-based interpretation of sport and material cultures. It was this period when cricket was drawn into the 'main' content of newspapers, and various promotional activities took place as part of the widening circle of its commercialization signalled by entwining with other leisure industries such as films. The chapter showed the sport consumer society to be a terrain produced by a number of processes (cultural projects, anti-colonialism) and attributes (Englishness, masculinity, virility etc.).

If cricket entered commerce in the nineteen twenties and thirties, commerce embraced it soon after. The second chapter therefore charted the formation of a cricket

[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 2006 (1983), p. 44.

hero—C.K. Nayudu—as a collective social endeavour. Nayudu's persona helped create a public sphere around cricket, which in turn shaped its hero as a figure which transcended confines of province, occupation and body limits to become a legend. The rise of Nayudu was steeped in social and (growing sport press and middle class consumption) and political (anti-colonial and ethnic nationalism) situations. Mediated by the agents of consumption, he represented the critique of colonialism and the autonomy of Indian subjectivities.

By the 1950s cricket had moved into the domestic sphere like never before and nowhere is this more clearly visible than in the growing interest women began to take in cricketing affairs. The third chapter therefore explored two overlapping ways in which the men-women interaction over women's participation in public activities may be understood. On the one hand, the encouragement to women to enter into a male preserve—the cricket stadium—may be seen as an aspect of a controlled management strategy of a patriarchal space which nonetheless opened up a new avenue of exploration for women. On the other hand, this could be analysed as a new status-privilege being made available to a limited section of elite women as a means to reaffirm their class position. However, in either case, it certainly afforded sufficient opportunity for some of these women to inscribe on the stadium space their distinct imprint, to the extent that their presence and conduct were noticed and discussed in the printed public space. The genealogy of women's lampoons in the print media exhibits the shifting consumerist agendas in the 1960s.

The cricket stadium therefore emerged as a most contested space by the mid-1960s, involving actors across class, gender, national and intellectual divides. The fourth chapter posited the Eden Gardens as an intermediate space between sport authorities and

sport followers which may be non-hegemonic in theory (forum for collective action, anonymity of spectators etc.) but heteronomous in practice (subject to external influences such as the media). In 1967, a large section of the spectators clashed with the police and home guards following the collapse of their collective/individual aspirations and consumerist entitlements. The event and its aftermath were extensively covered by the media—with the mediation regulated by wider socio-political pressures—and public opinion crystallised. The sport press evidently circulated the cricket field as a space representing the identities of postcolonial subjects. The dissertation charted this textured transition of cricket from a marginally commercial proposition to a politically charged space over a historical phase of half a century or so, and in this the traditional Indian historical divide of 1947 represents no significant watershed.

Memory of any moment or process is collective since organisation, observation, consumption and mediation is always a group action. Remarkable events are shared as exemplary stories, and are thereafter reconfigured and embedded in living societies. The dissertation examined the centrality of some of these mediated stories in the making of an important segment of modern urban India, and tried to hint at some of the practices through which the press and the public transacted the mediation and consumption of leisure. The transaction operated at four levels—entry of commerce and shift in cricket's ideologies, a cricket icon transcending sporting boundaries, cricket remaking the domestic and the public and finally, cricket's relocation at the interstices of other fields of power—which the chapters reviewed in some detail. It postulated cricket as a multisited cultural project, study of which reveals social dimensions of urban India that are otherwise overlooked.

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