

CRICKET AND RATIONAL ECONOMIC MAN

IAN HARRISS

RIVERINA-MURRAY INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

I.

It is only in recent times that cricket has been subjected to any kind of rigorous analysis. Like other sports, it was regarded as mere play. It was an enjoyable form of human behaviour, but one which was irrelevant to a consideration of the real political institutions of society, such as parliament, political parties, bureaucracies, unions and so on. It was thus constituted as a separate, self-enclosed phenomenon in its own right which should clearly be investigated only within its own frame of reference.¹

Sissons & Stoddart have succeeded admirably in showing that cricket and politics were inseparable during the Bodyline series of 1932-33.² Their study, however, does not provide a theoretical explanation of this relationship and thus they do not show that it must necessarily hold beyond the extraordinary circumstances of that series. It is also true to say that their conception of the political sphere is confined to concrete institutions, namely cricket boards and governments.

Recent developments in the social sciences have led to a new conception of the political sphere. In this new conception the formal political institutions of society do not enjoy a privileged position. In the work of Foucault, for example, medicine³ and human sexuality⁴ are seen as profoundly political, while for Habermas science and technology⁵ are viewed in a similar manner. Structures of consciousness, and their political implications, are potentially everywhere.

Cricket, however, is yet to be examined from this perspective. The aim here is thus to use cricket as a vehicle for exploring the

broader relationship between social change and consciousness. The result, it is hoped, will lead to an improved understanding of cricket as well as society, for as C.L.R. James asked: "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?"⁶ James was sufficiently astute to appreciate that the answer "involves ideas as well as facts."⁷

II

Until the late nineteenth century cricket retained many of the features of a game dominated by the landed gentry. It was a game that emphasised appearances, manners and style rather than objective quantification. This reflected the values of the landed elite which continued to dominate English society well into the nineteenth century.⁸ However, "after 1870" the British economy "had already advanced a considerably way towards becoming a predominantly industrial society"⁹ and it was in the period 1870-1914 that the values appropriate to technico-bureaucratic capitalism gained the ascendancy. These values involved the use of instrumental reason, technological and scientific rationality, objective evaluation and quantitative analysis. They also include a continuous, marginal calculation of means and ends according to the demands of optimal efficiency. There emerged what can be called the new mental economy.

The game of cricket became saturated with these new values from the end of World War One. Aesthetics and style became subservient to the new values of scientific reasoning. The game was now played according to the principles of cost/benefit, risk/reward analysis. Technique, efficiency and quantitative rationality had become dominant. Style and flair were fine, but how could they be objectively assessed? Runs in the book, on the other hand, could be assessed according to these positivist criteria. Cricket was now played according to what Habermas would call "technical cognitive interests."¹⁰

The literature of cricket provides an abundance of evidence to support this transformation, though the period from 1890 to 1914 is a complicated one, for the emphasis on style and aesthetics sat easily alongside the new scientific ethos. George Giffen, writing

in 1898, believed that batting was generally "more scientific and more artistic" than it had been a quarter of a century earlier. Leg-hitting, for example, had become "almost extinct" whereas "hundreds of runs" were "made with the glide."¹¹

It is interesting to note that the values of aesthetics and style were hegemonic. Although they emanated in England they were adopted to a greater extent in Australia. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that an Australian cricketer's financial survival did not depend on his scores. Thus Victor Trumper was able to bat with reckless abandon. His batting was dangerous and unmethodical, although an object of beauty. Runs were not his main concern; nor were they the means by which he was judged. Indeed, his batting average of 32.8 in Anglo-Australian tests was mediocre and would probably have denied him a position in the Australian teams of the Bradman era. Trumper's ability to amass huge scores, however, was never questioned. England's captain, MacLaren, said that "if Trumper chose to bat carefully he could go in on Monday morning and stay there till Saturday evening."¹² Trumper's approach to the game bordered on the casual, as if making huge scores was against the spirit of the game. This attitude seemed to apply to others as well himself. When he ran out Bardsley for 219 in a match against Essex in 1909, Bardsley asked him in the pavilion: "Did you think there was a run in it, Vic? Trumper replied: 'No. How many do you want Curly? Aren't you satisfied with 200?'"¹³

Macartney, whose career spanned the years 1907-26, was in the same mould as Trumper. He too, regarded art and style as the essential features of batting. A.G. Moyes, who discussed batsmanship with Macartney, described his attitude as follows:

He looked on batsmanship as something more than merely making runs. There had to be a risk and a challenge about it to make it worth while; the runs had to be made properly or they were not worth another thought.¹⁴

Cricket, in other words, was a game in which style and aesthetic appreciation were more important than the objective measurement of runs accumulated. The game was played in a daring spirit. Risk taking at times defied rational evaluation and the game was played without ensuring above all else that one was not defeated. "Never again," as Moyes observed, "was the Test match scene to be flooded

with such blinding brilliance."¹⁵

In the period after World War One, however, the transformation was complete. From then on the objective was simply to score as many runs as possible. Style and aesthetics could not be quantified and subjected to objective assessment procedures, and so they virtually disappeared from the game. Cricket was now seen as a collection of technical tasks to be performed according to principles of optimal efficiency.

This is reflected most directly in the number of large scores amassed in the inter-war era, especially from the late 1920s onwards. Whereas only eight double centuries or better had been made in the fifty years of Anglo-Australian test cricket before 1928, in the period 1928-48 this figure had been lifted to forty-four. Bradman, of course, was a significant factor in this phenomenon, but even after allowing for his tally of thirteen double centuries or better, the result is still staggering. The attitude towards the game had changed.

It could be argued against this that the propensity to make higher scores was due not to a change in attitudes but to superior wickets. Giffen, however, had noted a marked improvement in the years before 1898.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it is likely that further improvement did take place in the inter-war era. But this misses the point. The essential fact is that better preparation of wickets was merely another manifestation of the transformation of cricket according to principles of scientific rationality and instrumental reason. Better preparation of wickets indicates a desire for regularity and predictability, thereby facilitating quantified, objective assessment of performance. It signifies a desire to dominate nature, to subject it to human will, to regulate the universe. It is thus consistent with the technical cognitive interests of technico-bureaucratic capitalism.

In any event, there is a good deal of evidence to support the view that the game was played according to the features of this new mental economy in the period after World War One. The statistics for Jack Hobbs, whose first class career (1905-34) spanned the two eras in question, provide striking evidence. If the propensity to convert centuries into double centuries is used as a criterion, and

if not - out centuries are excluded, then it is remarkable to note that Hobbs converted only one century out of 42 into a double century in the pre-war period. In the period from 1914 to 1926, however, Hobbs converted 12 centuries into double centuries from a total of 77, or almost one in six. The period from 1927 to 1934 has been eliminated from this exercise because Hobbs turned 45 in the former year and would probably have been less physically capable of accumulating double centuries.

John Arlott, says of Hobbs that "he never made runs for the sake of runs, nor broke records for the sake of breaking records; and laughter was never far below the surface of his play." Jack Crawford, who played for Surrey in the early part of Hobbs' career and then again in the later part, said that "perhaps in those early years he got himself out trying to do too much." Wilfred Rhodes, who opened the batting with Hobbs in the pre-war period, said that he "could have scored thousands more runs but often he was content to throw his wicket away and give someone else a chance." In his own words Hobbs said that "I never took such risks after the war because I didn't feel I could."¹⁷ The figures suggest that Hobbs couldn't really take the risks with great success in the pre-war period. In the 14 seasons up until and including 1914 Hobbs exceeded an average of 50 only five times, and three of these were in 1913, 1913-14 and 1914. In the 20 seasons from the beginning of World War One until 1933, however, Hobbs exceeded an average of 50 in every season but one.

The likely explanation has less to do with Hobbs' subjective evaluation of his diminished abilities than it has with a different risk preference schedule developed in accordance with the changed attitude to the game that was everywhere around him. It seems reasonably clear that the pre-war Hobbs regarded style, aesthetics and enjoyment above the mere accumulation of runs, whereas the post-war Hobbs placed a greater emphasis on the number of runs scored. Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the example of Hobbs is that it demonstrates a willingness even on the part of professionals in the pre-war period to conform to the code of gentlemanly behaviour and not be seen to be grinding towards a double century. Not that there was anything necessarily wrong with scoring a double century in this early period, but rather that the century-maker be

seen to bat in a cavalier manner after the century mark had been reached, thereby giving the bowler a fair chance.

If the transformation in consciousness during the inter-war period can be detected in an established individual player like Hobbs, then it is unmistakable in the new breed of players, such as Hammond, Ponsford and Bradman.

In the inter-war period batsmen approached the science of batting like cautious investors searching for the most rational way of accumulating money. Indeed, they began to think of their selection of shots and technical development in the same way that an investor would evaluate his or her portfolio of investments. It was as if they had invested their technical capital in a portfolio of strokes, with each component to be assessed according to a risk preference schedule. In other words, batsmen began to conduct a risk/reward, cost/benefit analysis of each stroke in their portfolio and in many cases chose to eliminate those that did not yield a return.

Douglas Jardine had clear views on the desirability of this tendency, as the following series of quotations indicates:¹⁸

Batsmen, for their own as well as for their side's good, have tended, and, in my submission, rightly so, to eliminate dangerous shots from their repertoire.

for ordinary purposes and in ordinary circumstances certain shots prove to be an all too expensive luxury in individual cases.... A little clear thinking and honest analysis will soon prove to any player which of his shots over a season are a gamble which is or is not worth taking.

I imagine that one of the best examples of a player adapting his methods to modern conditions is Hobbs. Though I cannot speak from personal knowledge, there can be little doubt that by the reduction of much of his pre-war brilliance on the off-side Hobbs added much to the soundness of his play and the total number of his runs.

Walter Hammond was a fine example of the new breed of inter-war batsmen who developed their technique in precisely this manner. In the 1928/29 test series against Australia he scored over 900 runs, though mostly by driving as he shunned the hook and many other leg-side strokes.¹⁹ Hammond, it seems, arrived at this state of optimal technical efficiency by making substantial alterations

to his style. In the early 1920s he was "all swift aggression, even on the verge of recklessness". He hooked ferociously "time after time" and was capable of playing strokes that were "blinding to the eyesight, . . . all kaleidoscopic and thrilling to the romantic vision." Unfortunately, however, brilliance was no longer enough to guarantee selection in a Test team. Safety and consistency were now valued above brilliance, and objective evaluation took precedence over aesthetic appeal. It was now a cricket world in which "the great batsman for the purposes of Test matches... was he who stayed in for hours and compiled large quantities of runs, not necessarily by commanding and beautiful strokes but by the process of attrition". Hammond soon made all of the adjustments that were essential for success according to these criteria. He was so successful, in fact, that until Bradman arrived on the scene no one batsman had amassed runs in Test matches with his "insatiable appetite... austerity of purpose and disciplined technique." Hammond had eliminated all but his safest strokes and in so doing made an "ordered concession to the mathematical and mechanical." It was now only in matches of relatively little importance that Hammond displayed "flashes or flickers of his proper brilliance."²⁰

It was Bradman, however, who transformed batting from an art to a science. The striking feature of the literature on Bradman is that he was noteworthy for the sheer enormity of the runs he accumulated rather than for the style or brilliance with which he batted. Indeed, most of the men who played with both Trumper and Bradman declined to rate Bradman as Trumper's equal. Ryder, who was Bradman's first Test captain, said that "he would rather watch Trumper or Macartney make a typical hundred rather than Don make two hundred, because, when compared with their artistry (especially Trumper's), Bradman's technique was more machine-like."²¹

The ascendancy of Bradman saw the final triumph of runs over style, of science over art, of objective measurement over subjective appreciation, of instrumental reason over play. He was not only an accountant at the wicket; his entire approach to batting was based on a rational calculation of statistical probabilities. This is nowhere more evident than in his decision to accept continued poor performances on rain affected wickets. This defect in his batting has been widely debated by cricket experts, but all seem to

agree that Bradman possessed in abundance the technical qualities essential for success on such wickets. The reason for his poor scoring rate was his refusal to compromise his machine-like technique on the relatively rare occasions on which he encountered such conditions. Bradman calculated that the overwhelming majority of his innings would be played on good wickets, where his ability to score consistently was unquestioned. Why jeopardise this success-rate by making a series of short-term adjustments for the odd occasions on which he would encounter a sticky wicket? Such adjustments could not be justified on either a cost/benefit or risk/reward basis according to Bradman's estimate of statistical probabilities. Bradman didn't believe that the investment of his time and effort would provide an adequate long term rate of return. Indeed, the return may even have been negative if the required modifications had in fact impaired the smooth operation of Bradman's machine-like batting technique in statistically normal circumstances. Robinson's comment that "other Australian batsmen have told me that they think sticky wickets take the science out of batting" is also significant.²²

It was in the inter-war period that the concept of 'building an innings' became paramount. The batsman came to the wicket with a clear strategy. The thought uppermost in mind was to get himself 'set', to play himself in, to get a good sight of the ball. This early part of the innings was characterised by tight defensive play, with the straight bat kept close to the pad. The essential thing was to minimise risks until one was firmly established. Neil Harvey's advice in 1961 is the most concise expression of what had been evident in cricket coaching for quite some time:

The safest way to get over that critical first period of twenty minutes is to restrict your scoring shots. This does not mean you should not play any shots at all. No, it means simply that you dispense with hitting across the line of flight so early in an innings. Such strokes as the square cut and hook should be avoided until you get a really good sight of the ball. Once this is accomplished, these particular strokes become wonderful scoring shots. Settle yourself by playing straight down the line in preparation for a big innings. This early restraint is really worth while because once one is established, it becomes possible to play all the shots in the book.²³

The science of batting, in other words, became a metaphor for a middle class life of capital accumulation. There is now doubt, moreover, that this approach to batting became very widespread in the years after World War Two. Colin McCool, a member of Bradman's great 1948 team, complained of the rigid attitudes adopted by coaches in this era:

As a result of their efforts, the game has become dominated by a standard type of player completely lacking in brilliance and imagination. They all play their shots the same way, and you can tell as soon as one of their number takes his place at the crease how he will react to each type of delivery from the bowler.²⁴

Bowlers and captains responded to these changes with a similar use of instrumental reason. The leisurely and genteel aspects of the game were giving way to a ruthless use of technique. Cricket was now conceived as a set of technical problems to be overcome by the effective application of reason. The values of an emerging technico-bureaucratic form of industrial capitalism were now quite remote from those of an eighteenth century English landed class.

III

Bodyline, of course, was the most extreme expression of these new values. Its most extraordinary aspect was its blatant challenge to the conception of cricket as a game played by gentlemen who embodied the values of sportsmanship. Bodyline was conceived as the most effective means of dealing with 'the Bradman problem'; it was a technical solution to a technical problem. In his 1930 tour of England the young Bradman had shown himself to be a run-making machine capable of dictating the result of an entire series of Test cricket. He had, however, revealed one flaw in his technique. When faced with a short, sharply rising delivery Bradman had demonstrated a reluctance to place his body directly in line with the flight of the ball. It was the revelation of this minor flaw that led directly to the birth of Bodyline.

The reasoning behind Bodyline was sound. A series of fast deliveries aimed directly at the batsman's body would unsettle him and make uppermost in his thoughts the physical protection of his

own body. The most important technical aspect of Bodyline, however, was the placement of fielders in positions both behind and just in front of the wicket on the leg side, some in close and some on boundary. The effect of this field placement was to alter completely the risk/reward profile of any shot that the batsman sought to play. Any attacking shot had reduced chances of reaching the boundary because of the fieldsmen near the fence, and if the ball was hit in the air then the batsman had a very high chance of being dismissed. A defensive shot had little chance of scoring runs and a high probability of yielding a catch to the fieldsmen close to the wicket. And if the batsman managed to avoid the path of the ball and let it pass he was also unable to score. The statistical probabilities were all in favour of the string of fast bowlers. The longer the batsman stayed at the wicket without scoring the greater were his chances of being dismissed.

Bradman's response to Bodyline was quite rational. By using his quick eye and numble footwork he was able to move away to the leg-side and slash the ball with a high degree of success through the gaps in the off-side field. Bodyline, however, had forced Bradman to adopt a new risk preference schedule. He was prepared to accept a higher level of risk in the shot he chose for any given ball, even when the spinners were operating. It was important within the constraints imposed by Bodyline that he take every opportunity to score runs, whether or not Larwood was bowling.

The interesting but often overlooked point about Bodyline is that, although it succeeded in reducing Bradman's aggregate of runs, it did not do so by dismissing him for low scores more than other bowlers did for the entirety of his career. In the 1932-33 test series he was dismissed for 15 runs or less on two occasions out of eight, which is virtually identical to the proportion of his dismissals within that range throughout his career. Where Bodyline succeeded was in its dismissal of Bradman for scores of between 50 and 100, which it did on three occasions out of eight innings, with another dismissal for 48. This is nothing short of extraordinary. The explanation, however, is clear. By forcing Bradman to shift onto a different risk preference schedule Bodyline had made him bat in such a way that scores of 200 or over had become a statistical impossibility. It was simply out of the question to bat in the

manner dictated by Bodyline and amass a huge total. The risks Bradman had to take had been increased dramatically and his smooth, machine-like technique had been disrupted. Bodyline, in other words, was an efficient technical solution to a technical problem. It was the perfect expression of the application of techno-scientific, instrumental reason.

This interpretation suggests that Bodyline was not an aberration, but a logical extension of trends that were evident in both society and cricket itself. These same forces, however, were symptomatic of a developing crisis in Western liberalism, for they implied a suspension of moral questions in the interests of objective, value-free, technical reason. The aim of Bodyline was to wear down the batsman through a war of attrition. With its constant threat of serious physical injury it was similar to trench warfare. This approach to the game was the antithesis of everything that cricket had ever stood for. The aim of playing cricket had never been to bludgeon the opposition into submission, but to engage in a contest of subtlety and deception. Bodyline, if it had been allowed to continue in operation, would have meant the death of cricket. Its application of absolute scientific rationality, free of other constraints, had reduced the game to a limited, repetitious form of combat.

Bodyline, however, was a logical extension of the 'leg theory' introduced by Fred Root in 1926. Root, an English medium-fast bowler, aimed to pitch his deliveries around the leg stump, preferably swinging in the air even further down the leg side. This type of bowling offered the batsman little chance of making a scoring shot. He was left with little option but to try and steer it away to the leg side from off his pads. With either seven or eight fieldsmen placed strategically on the leg side the batsman had the odds stacked heavily against him. The aim was to wear down the batsman until his concentration broke and he took desperate risks in order to score runs. Leg theory, in other words, was a technique developed after bowlers had made a shrewd estimate of the risk/return situation confronting the batsman.

There were many other ways in which cricket began to adopt the methods and values of a technico-bureaucratic capitalist society. It is possible, for example, to detect in the statistics an intensification of the division of labour within the team. In Anglo-Australian Tests up until 1930 the feat of 50 runs and seven wickets in a Test had been achieved 31 times, or once for every four Tests. In the following 29 Test matches the feat was accomplished only once. It seems that batsmen and bowlers expended their efforts in refining their technique in one area of specialisation rather than in placing their positions in the team at risk by spreading their abilities too thinly.

It is interesting to note, however, that in Anglo-Australian cricket the two batsmen who have demonstrated the greatest refusal to conform to the demands of the new mental economy have been Keith Miller and Ian Botham. Their defiance has been more apparent than real, however, for the fact that they have both been capable of holding their positions in test matches as bowlers has meant that they have been relatively free to accept a higher risk element in each facet of their play. Their portfolio of technical capital, in other words, has simply been more diversified than is that of the normal player. Nevertheless, their popularity with the crowds has undoubtedly been due to the fact that they have been seen as *throwbacks* to an earlier era of cavalier, unrestrained play.²⁵

The new mental economy of cricket brought with it a number of other changes. It is not within the scope of this article to engage in an extended discussion of these changes but it is possible to mention them briefly. One of the most significant of these was the gradual decline of the spin bowler, especially the leg-spinner. One of the delights of cricket had always been the contest between batsman and slow bowler. The spin bowler had a number of subtle variations and relied heavily on deception. His aim was to outwit the batsman. The batsman, for his part, responded with aggression. By dancing down the wicket to meet the ball the batsman extended his range of attacking shots, but also increased his chances of being dismissed, especially either stumped or caught. In turn the bowler would often respond by throwing the ball even higher in the

air, hoping to entice the batsman even further down the wicket. If the batsman failed to convert the delivery into either a full-toss or half-volley then he risked being stumped when the ball turned and passed his bat.

The statistics demonstrate with startling clarity that this aspect of the game gradually disappeared in the age of technique and risk/reward analysis. Blackham, Australia's wicket-keeper from 1877 to 1894, dismissed 40% of his victims by stumping them. This figure had declined dramatically to 9% for the career of Grout, who kept wickets for Australia from 1957 to 1966. In the contemporary era Marsh has dismissed only 6% of his victims by having them stumped. Batsmen had decided that it made much more sense to play spin bowlers from the batting crease. The principal mode of batting was now to defend one's wicket above all else.

This made life very difficult for the slow bowler. It was no longer possible to bowl as before, with a high risk of losing accuracy for the batsman was now prepared to hold his ground and wait for the inevitable loose delivery, which he then sought to punish severely. It was a new era of percentage cricket. It was no longer possible for a spin bowler to maintain a place in the Australian team and concede 57 runs from every 100 deliveries, as Mailey had done in the period 1920-26. Grimmett, whose Test career spanned the years between 1920 and 1936, conceded only 37 runs from every 100 deliveries.

And just as there was little unrestrained exuberance and beauty in Bradman's batting by way of comparison with that of Trumper, so it was the case that "there was perhaps nothing of beauty about Grimmett's bowling except its remorseless accuracy and tantalizing persistence." Indeed, whereas Mailey was 'one of the most profligate of bowlers', and was 'always prepared to give away four runs, or a series of fours, in order to get rid of a good batsman', Grimmett 'gave nothing away'. While Mailey believed that "if you spun the ball hard enough it would do something different, no matter where it pitched", Grimmett was so concerned with maintaining accuracy that 'rarely did he bowl a loose one'. Indeed in this new economy of cricket 'Mailey was the prodigal' and Grimmett 'the miser'.²⁶

It was O'Reilly, however, who possessed all of the qualities essential for the spin bowler's survival in the modern age of test cricket. He had a long approach to the wicket and pushed the ball quickly through the air, thereby giving the batsman little time in which to decide upon his stroke. This increased O'Reilly's own margin of error as far as accuracy was concerned. He was, in any event, an extremely accurate bowler, as his record of only 33 runs conceded from every 100 deliveries demonstrates.

O'Reilly's attitude to the game differed remarkably from that of his predecessors. He played test cricket at a time (1932-46) when spin bowlers were neither prepared nor allowed to gamble on the prospect of 'buying' wickets by deliberately throwing the ball high in the air in order to encourage the batsman to play attacking shots. O'Reilly certainly did not see a boundary as a signal to tempt the batsman into further displays of aggression, as those before him had done:

He took a hit for four as a personal affront. He slammed the next ball down as fast as he could, as if to break the batsman's leg.²⁷

It is doubtful, of course, that attempts to 'buy' wickets could have succeeded against the new breed of restrained, run-hungry batsmen, with their aversion to taking unnecessary risks.

O'Reilly, in any event, assessed each batsman's portfolio of strokes and bowled accordingly. While Hammond, for example, had reduced his own risk exposure by eliminating most strokes on the leg side, O'Reilly had calculated that he could keep Hammond quiet 'by bowling on his leg stump'.²⁸ Cricket was now seen as a set of technical tasks to be undertaken within certain known constraints, perhaps the most important of these being the expected behaviour of one's competitor. In this sense cricket began to be played in a way that games theorists would understand.

Grimmitt and O'Reilly represented the peak of spin bowling achievement in the Test cricket arena. It is somewhat ironical, however, that their predominance was a product of the very forces at work within the game which, when carried to their logical conclusion, would ensure the virtual disappearance of the spin bowler, especially the leg-spinner who relied so heavily on the use of his wrists.

Grimmett and O'Reilly stood at the crossroads of these forces, reflecting many of the contradictions in the game at that moment in time. Their attitude and accuracy were reflections of the tendency in the game towards efficiency and risk minimisation. This application of instrumental reason, however, had not yet developed to the point where the heavy use of leg spinners was itself seen as irrational. Logically, of course, the use of spin bowlers increases the number of balls bowled at the batsman in any given unit of time, since spin bowlers approach the bowling crease from a shorter distance. This means that the batting side has the opportunity to score more runs in any given unit of time, assuming that the scoring rate off each type of bowling is similar. It also means, of course, that each fast bowler has less time between each of his overs. This in turn means that the fast bowler is less able to recover from his previous burst of energy, thereby impairing his efficiency. Grimmett and O'Reilly, however, played at a time when the spin bowler was under pressure from the forces of rationality and cost/benefit, risk/reward analysis, and yet it was also a period of time when the spin bowler was still regarded as an accepted and essential part of the game. They thus each bowled over 400 balls per game in which they played. Even Benaud, the only other great leg spinner to follow them, only bowled 270 balls per game.

The rate at which leg spinners took wickets also reflected the new attitudes to the game that were adopted by both batsman and bowlers. Mailey, for example, took a wicket from every 60 deliveries, whereas Grimmett took one from every 87 deliveries, O'Reilly from every 77 deliveries and Benaud from every 88 deliveries.

After Benaud the spin bowler ceased to be a major part of a team. The leg spinner, in particular, became virtually extinct. The record book is littered with rejected leg spinners, such as Philpott, Sellers, Jenner, O'Keefe and Higgs. The case of O'Keefe is a fascinating one. When he burst into the Australian team in the 1970-71 Test series against England he was a sensation. At the age of 21 he seemed to have a marvellous future ahead of him. An examination of film footage over the following years, however, reveals that his bowling action suffered from a pronounced tendency to drop his left shoulder in the final delivery stride. This meant

that he lost all of the advantage of body pivot that is so essential to the leg break bowler.²⁹ O'Keefe, instead, began to bowl with only his right arm and shoulder. While this undoubtedly increased his accuracy it also negated his ability to bowl a leg break. There is an irony here. In his attempt to survive the game's enormous economic demands for efficiency O'Keefe was forced into a style of bowling that directly negated his objective, and indeed his existence, as a leg break bowler. The simple fact was that the naturally risky but attacking style of a wrist spinner could not survive the new risk/reward imperatives of an efficient, scientific game based on cautious bourgeois principles.

V

The principles and values by which cricket was played changed during the period 1870-1939 not because of factors endogenous to the game itself, but because of major changes which had taken place in society. Cricket is a human construction within which the economic, social and political structures of society, are given symbolic meaning, even if for the most part this is done unconsciously. Since the transformation of society was a gradual process, the game of cricket during the period 1870-1914 reflected the ambiguities, tensions and contradictions inherent in the emergence of an industrial society dominated by the middle-class values of objective achievement and instrumental reason. Thus players like Trumper played alongside others like Bardsley. In the period after World War One, however, the process of change accelerated both in society and on the cricket field. In these years there is no doubt that the aforementioned values achieved hegemony.

NOTES:

1. An earlier and briefer version of this paper appears in G. Lawrence & D. Rowe, *Power Play* (Hale & Iremonger: 1986). I am grateful to Richard Cashman and Wray Vamplew for helpful comments.
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9. T. Kemp, *Industrialization in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: 1969), 180.
10. J. Habermas, 'On Theory and Praxis in our Scientific Civilization' in *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Viertel (London: 1947), 264.
11. G. Giffen, *With Bat and Ball* (London: 1898), 213, 222-223.
12. Quoted in R. Robinson, *From the Boundary* (London: 1950), 255.
13. *Ibid.*
14. A.G. Moyes, *The Changing Face of Cricket* (Sydney: 1963), 44-45.
15. *Ibid.*, 53.
16. Giffen, *op.cit.*, 213-214.
17. J. Arlott, *Jack Hobbs* (Harmondsworth: 1982), 12-13, 68, 93.
18. D.R. Jardine, *In Quest of the Ashes* (London: 1984 ed.), 74, 77-78.
19. P. May, *Peter May's Book of Cricket* (London: 1956), 19.
20. N. Cardus, *Close of Play* (London: 1956), 20-22.
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23. N. Harvey, 'Planning an Innings' in J. Pollard, *Cricket the Australian Way* (Melbourne: 1961), 13-14.
24. C. McCool, *The Best Way to Play Cricket* (Sydney: 1961), 8-9.
25. I am particularly grateful for some googlies bowled to me on this matter by Richard Cashman.

26. Moyes, *op.cit.*, 80-81.
27. Robinson, *Between Wickets*, 95.
28. Cardus, *op.cit.*, 20.
29. For an insight into the importance of the leg spinner bowling with his left arm high and in a side-on position, see R. Benaud, *Richie Benaud's Way of Cricket* (London: 1961), 67-68.