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## 'Massa Day Done:' Cricket as a Catalyst for West Indian Independence: 1950-1962

Jonathan A. Newman, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Dr. Don Morrow, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Kinesiology

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'Massa Day Done:' Cricket as a Catalyst for West Indian Independence, 1950-1962.

Thesis format: Monograph

by

Jonathan Newman

Graduate Program in Kinesiology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examined the manner in which West Indies cricket became a catalyzing force for West Indians in moving towards political independence from Britain during the period 1950-1962. West Indians took a game that was used as a means of social control during the colonial era, and refashioned that game into a political weapon to exact sporting and especially political revenge on their colonial masters. Analyses (CDA, narrative analysis, examination of calypsos and cartoons) of the historic cricket tour to England in 1950, the decolonization movement, and the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the team, among other significant indicators and events, revealed recurring narratives that linked the success of West Indies cricket to a readiness for political independence from Britain. These narratives reflected a feeling that “the time was now” for West Indians to forge a political identity for themselves separate from the subservient pupil of the British master. Politicians utilized rhetorical strategies that appealed to feelings of racial unity to fuel their push for political independence. Taken together, the overriding narrative revealed by this analysis applied to selected newspaper articles and political speeches, could be encapsulated in the epithet, “massa day done”. The discourse emanating from the success of West Indies cricket set West Indians on a course toward political autonomy from Britain.

### **Key Words:**

Cricket, West Indies cricket, Decolonization, Frank Worrell, C.L.R. James, West Indian Federation, West Indian Independence, Calypso, Critical Discourse Analysis, Colonialism

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## Glossary

5-wicket haul – When a bowler is responsible for the dismissal of five opposition batsmen in one innings

All-Rounder – A cricketer who is competent at multiple facets of the game, typically batting and bowling.

Batsmanship – The art of batting.

Batting Average – A cricketer’s batting average is the total number of runs he has scored divided by the number of times he has been out.

Boundary - The boundary is the edge of the playing field usually demarcated by a rope or fence.

BWI – British West Indies. “British” was used to signify the territories in the Caribbean colonized by Great Britain, as opposed to the Dutch West Indies (Curacao) or the French West Indies (Guadeloupe). For this thesis, BWI was used interchangeably with “West Indies”.

Calypso - A style of Caribbean music that originated in Trinidad and Tobago during the early to mid 20th century. It may refer to a single calypso song or the genre of music.

Calypsonian – A person who sings calypso songs.

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

Century – When a batsman scores 100 runs during the course of one innings or “at bat”.

County cicket - County cricket is the highest level of domestic cricket in England. It is from these competitions that the English national teams are selected.

Creole - A term that often refers to persons of foreign descent who are born in the colonies. It has both sociological and biological utility as it represents and connotes the blending of cultures as well as persons of mixed backgrounds.

Decolonization – Refers to the undoing of colonialism. It can be understood politically (attaining independence) or culturally (removal of damaging colonial effects.) The term usually refers to the removal, in the years after World War II, of imperial rule over colonies.

Fielding/Fielder – In cricket, fielding is the action of players collecting the ball after it is struck by the batsman, to limit the number of runs that the batsman scores, get the batsman out by catching the ball in flight, or effecting the dismissal of the batsman via a run out.

Hat trick - A hat trick occurs when a bowler dismisses 3 batsmen or takes three wickets with successive deliveries.

Indentureship - An enterprise, after emancipation, that brought workers to the colonies as a means of replacing slave labour, in exchange for free passage. Indentured labourers were usually contracted to work for a set amount of time.

JLP – Jamaica Labour Party

PNM – People’s National Movement

PNP – People’s National Party

Regional cricket – This refers to cricket competitions in the West Indies featuring matches between the colonies.

Stroke/strokeplay – Any one of a number of shots that batsmen deploy while playing the game.

Test cricket - Test cricket is the longest form of cricket and is the highest level at which the game is played.. Test matches are played between national representative teams with "Test status," as determined by the International Cricket Council (ICC). Matches last up to 5 days and are contested between two teams of 11 players each.

The Three W’s – Frank Worrell, Everton Weekes and Clyde Walcott.

WICBC – West Indies Cricket Board of Control

Wicket – The term may refer to: the three stumps and bails that is defended by the batsman, the pitch at the centre of the cricket field, or the dismissal of a batsman.



## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Timeline of Significant Events in West Indies Political Development

Appendix B – “Len Hutton’s Nightmare”

*What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?*

- C.L.R. James, *Beyond A Boundary*

## Chapter 1

### Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methodology, and Methods

*For West Indians cricket has been part of a struggle to escape a history disfigured by racial conflict and legacy of empire. When politicians have failed them they turned to their cricket team for a sense of nationhood.<sup>1</sup>*

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the ways in which West Indies cricket<sup>2</sup> developed into an inspirational force for West Indians that shaped and kindled the independence movement in the Caribbean.<sup>3</sup> During its formative years between 1928 and 1950, the struggles of West Indian cricketers mirrored the region's centuries-long quest to move beyond its colonial beginnings and become independent from Britain. This thesis does not claim that the social and political gains of West Indies cricket led directly to political independence off the field. Rather, through inferential judgments stemming from the analyses carried out in this study, West Indies cricket was revealed to be a contributing catalytic force toward that end.<sup>4</sup> This study interrogated the psychological scarring inflicted by colonialism and the symbolic importance of the first great calypso cricketers, who showed West Indians and the world that they were capable of greatness. The decisive victory at Lords over England in 1950 and the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain<sup>5</sup> in 1960 were cricketing landmarks that catalyzed an already developing quest for independence in the West Indies.<sup>6</sup> Taken together, these socio-political movements formed a lush canvas on which political actors depicted a Caribbean primed to realize the same autonomy off the field that the West Indies cricket team had already achieved within the boundary ropes.<sup>7</sup>

## **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the research process:

1. In what ways did West Indies cricket propel the realization of independence in the Caribbean?
2. In what ways did issues of race and national identity drive the development of West Indies cricket and the movements toward independence in the Caribbean?
3. Through an analysis of political speeches, newspapers and calypsos, what were the political narratives surrounding independence? Which ones prevailed and which were cast aside? Given that no one narrative was inevitable, what factors might explain the reasons one narrative won out over others?

## **Organization of Thesis**

Chapter 1: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methodology, and Methods

Chapter 2: Cultural Imbroglio: Englishness and the Development of West Indies Cricket, from Settlement to Test Status.

This chapter analyzed the formative years of cricket in the West Indies as well as the conditions which gave rise to West Indies cricket as a socio-political force in the twentieth century. After emancipation in 1838, cricket was used, in part, to distil English culture and maintain civility over the newly freed masses. During this period, the colonized had very little access to organized cricket in the region. The struggle to gain access to the game was emblematic of the time, as the colonial white elite maintained control over all facets of post-emancipation society. Concurrently, the dissemination of British culture and the code of cricket

positioned all things English as the standard to which West Indians aspired. Frantz Fanon and Trevor Rhone's writings on the idealization of Englishness situated the role that race played in the formative years of West Indies cricket and West Indian society. The racial conflict precipitated by colonialism, coupled with the subsequent struggle of West Indians to forge an identity for themselves, resulted in a region beset by severe psychological scarring and a belief in its own worthlessness. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* aided in situating this scarring in relation to the development of West Indies cricket.<sup>8</sup> Through an explanation of how colonized peoples idealized whiteness, Fanon showed how a feeling of inferiority was cultivated over time.<sup>9</sup> It was this inferiority that would be challenged when independence movements were later mobilized and the West Indies team battled England on the cricket field.

### Chapter 3: Fields of Change: West Indies Cricket: 1928-1950.

The entry of West Indies cricket into the test arena in 1928 marked a critical stage in the development of cricket in the region.<sup>10</sup> It provided West Indians with an international stage on which they laid claim to their development as cricketers and as people after emancipation in 1838. Though test cricket represented significant progress, the captaincy and leadership of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control were still firmly in the control of the colonial white elite. Chapter 3 examines the gains of West Indian cricketers between 1928 and 1950 that resulted in the team on the verge of beating England on British soil for the first time in 1950. During this time, the arrival of a new black cricketing class challenged the legitimacy of white rule on and off the cricket field. Learie Constantine and George Headley were the first West Indian cricket stars; they demonstrated to the region and the world that West Indians were capable of achieving greatness. Frank Worrell, Clyde Walcott and Everton Weekes (known as the Three W's), emerged in 1948 as irrefutable evidence of the arrival of the potential for West Indian achievement outside the purview of white, colonial leadership. Against the backdrop of a combustible political climate in the West Indies that agitated for a political break from England, the development of West Indies cricket by 1950 firmly entrenched the game as a rallying point for West Indians.

#### Chapter 4: 'Massa Day Done': The Role of Cricket In Achieving West Indian Independence.

Two specific moments in the history of West Indies cricket, spanning 10 years, were of particular importance to this study. The first occurred in 1950, when the West Indian team defeated England on English soil for the first time. This historic series victory marked the first time in the then 30-year history of playing Test cricket that West Indies beat their colonizers at their own game. The importance of the event was magnified as it occurred at a time when the British colonies in the Caribbean had set in motion various movements toward achieving independence from the crown. The West Indies' win represented, and was made to represent, a strong political statement for the development of the Caribbean to its people and the world. The victory was symbolic in exacting revenge for centuries of colonial domination. Additionally, by 1950, many West Indians had already migrated to England and so the triumph was a resounding rallying point for persons in the West Indies, as well as those who were struggling to adjust to new lives in England. A critical discourse analysis (CDA) applied to a collection of newspaper articles, calypsos and political speeches identified the success of the West Indies cricket team as a galvanizing force toward independence from Britain.

The second noteworthy occurrence was the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the West Indies team in 1960. C.L.R. James used his position as editor of a political paper, *The Nation*, to expose the injustice of the continued appointment of lesser white captains to lead the cricket team. The campaign for the captaincy of Frank Worrell gave voice to West Indians around the Caribbean and, the world, who felt Frank Worrell was the man most deserving and qualified to lead the team. The significance of this moment cannot be overstated, as it proved to be highly symbolic evidence that the people of the West Indies were ready to govern themselves both within and beyond the boundary. Worrell's captaincy removed a long standing remnant of colonial rule and transferred autonomy of West Indies cricket to West Indians from the grasp of the colonial elite.

The politics of decolonization in the Caribbean provided context for the integral role that West Indies cricket played in the realization of independence from England. Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago became independent in 1962, while Barbados and Guyana achieved similar

status in 1966 and 1968, respectively. The actual realization of independence was of lesser concern to this study than the political narratives that emanated from it. Independence politicians engaged in a race politics in their political manoeuvrings and promises to West Indians. They distanced themselves from the white colonial elite and challenged the traditional idea that white was unquestionably superior to black. This represented a significant break from the existing psychological inferiority that permeated the region after emancipation. Previously, most blacks accepted their 'inferiority', a festering condition of years of colonial rule. The symbolic victories in 1950 and 1960 provided added fuel to politicians' efforts toward political independence for their respective colonies. They made claims of racial unity that implored West Indians to unite against continued colonial oppression. The narratives of "the time is now" and the "massa day done" reflected and charged a sense of urgency toward independence that capitalized on the template provided by the success of the West Indies cricket team a decade earlier.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

## **Literature Review**

*What Do They Know of Cricket Who Only Cricket Know?*<sup>11</sup>

*Beyond A Boundary*, the seminal work of C.L.R. James, was the starting point for this study, as is any investigation into the socio-political history of West Indies cricket. The question highlighted above, "what do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" spoke to the vast potential for cricket to transcend the mere occurrences on the field of play, and seep into the everyday lives of those who play and consume the game. One cannot begin to know anything about cricket, and indeed cricket in the West Indies, without a full and critical consideration of the context and circumstances surrounding the game "beyond the boundary." As far as James was concerned, to understand cricket was to familiarize oneself with the tentacles of the game that extended beyond the field of play and into the very fabric of the culture and West Indian

society. Kevin Yelvington argued that “the study of West Indian cricket begins - indeed must begin – with the cultural studies of Trinidadian writer and Marxist theorist C.L.R. James.”<sup>12</sup> *Beyond A Boundary* was James’ most pertinent work for this study; throughout his work, James situated cricket within the larger postcolonial society of the West Indies and explored issues of class, race and politics.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Development of West Indies Cricket*

The formative years of West Indies cricket, starting with the game during slavery and leading to the acquisition of Test status in 1928, was a path well travelled by writers in the field. Michael Manley, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, penned *A History of West Indies Cricket*, a book often referenced in scholarly writings on cricket in the Caribbean. Cricket made its institutional debut in the colonies through the education system and British soldiers stationed in garrisons strewn across the islands.<sup>14</sup> Exposure to cricket through education was one of the key ways the game and its code of conduct were first disseminated to freed slaves and indentured workers in the Caribbean. It is from this beginning that the ties between cricket and the formation of a post-emancipation West Indian identity were established. This was further illustrated by James when he wrote of his childhood and socialization in cricket. One of the recurring themes throughout these early accounts of West Indies cricket was the lack of access that the colonized had to cricket outside of school. The best club teams were run by the elite planter class, which denied access to players on the basis of skin colour.<sup>15</sup> The development of West Indies cricket was stunted by an ever resistant upper class that refused to cede any of its power on or off the cricket pitch. Clem Seecharan’s *Muscular Learning* supplemented James’ writings on the subject and expanded on the role of education in the diffusion of cricket, and English culture, in the colonies.<sup>16</sup> J.A. Mangan, leading scholar on British sport and its role in its empire, located the development of team sport in the British school.<sup>17</sup> Team sports were used to promote obedience to authority, and instill loyalty and respect for rules. The rise of sport in the British school coincided with the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, and thus served a similar character development function when implemented in the West Indian schools, albeit



with an oppressive taint of Englishness. The privileging of Englishness served the colonial goal of instilling British culture as the dominant way of life in the colonies, one which positioned West Indian inferiority as unquestioned.

### *The Social and Political Importance of Cricket*

The series victory of the West Indies over England (1950) and Frank Worrell's captaincy (1960) are understood to be two seminal moments in the development of West Indies cricket. However, fairly little has been studied about the relationship between these two events and the political movement toward independence. These historic moments were catalysts for a "coming of age" period in West Indies cricket that subsequently led to a period of domination in world cricket starting in the mid 1970s. However, Brian Stoddart, noted Australian sport historian, stated that "there was another dimension, too....the rich political vein within Caribbean cricket which was both an inheritance of empire and a prophecy for independence."<sup>18</sup> Stoddart acknowledged the colonial baggage that accompanied West Indies cricket and clearly identified this moment (the triumph at Lord's) as a foreshadowing of independence. However, his chapter offered only a snapshot of the political nature of West Indies cricket and does not make any definitive claims about the role that cricket played in achieving independence. Nonetheless, his point remained salient to the aims of this thesis; the fallout from the endeavours on the cricket pitch spilled across land and sea, and contributed to the brewing anti-colonial movement in the West Indies. This thesis adds to the literature which has argued for the socio-political importance of West Indies cricket toward independence through the analyses carried out by this study. The identification of themes that emanated from the discourse surrounding the success of the West Indies cricket team, allowed this study to make connections between cricket and the political narratives surrounding independence and Frank Worrell's captaincy which cemented the role of the game in the realization of autonomy from England.

Black cricketers forged their way onto the West Indies cricket team in greater numbers after its inaugural test match in 1928. The likes of George Headley, Everton Weekes, Clyde

Walcott, and Frank Worrell achieved international recognition for their achievements on the cricket field as members of a class of pioneering black cricketers. Yet, from 1928 to 1960, “white men of dubious cricketing ability had been appointed by the West Indies cricketing hierarchy as captains”.<sup>19</sup> The “hierarchy,” of which Chris Searle spoke, had a political agenda in its reflection of choices for the captaincy during this period. In repeatedly choosing a white man as captain, the WICBC made clear that it did not think black West Indians were capable of holding a leadership position. Furthermore, it was a political statement that served the purpose of maintaining the colonial relationship of master teaching the pupil. James returned to Trinidad after a sojourn of 26 years and immersed himself in the politics of the region.<sup>20</sup> Of his time as editor of *The Guardian*, the platform from which he launched his campaign for Worrell’s captaincy, he said, “Once upon a blue moon, i.e. once in a lifetime, a writer is handed on a plate a gift from heaven.”<sup>21</sup> This gift resulted in the final chapter of *Beyond A Boundary*, “Proof in the Pudding,” where James documented the pervading mistrust of the British by the Caribbean people. For James, “the nearer the people get to independence, the greater is the suspicion that the enemies of independence and nationalism are scheming against them.”<sup>22</sup> James’ role as agitator in this cause made his work an additionally indispensable source for this study, and cemented further the primacy of West Indies cricket in achieving independence from Britain.

### *Calypso*

Calypso is a musical form indigenous to Trinidad but very popular in all parts of the West Indies. It “has long been a medium for the expression of popular commentary on all manner of public events and figures.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, it was no surprise that many calypsos were written about political events in the Caribbean as well as watershed moments on the cricket pitch. In 1950, Lord Beginner, a famous Calypsonian who was part of the initial wave of immigrants to England in 1948, penned “Victory Test Match Calypso” which exalted the historic defeat of the colonial master on his home turf. Immediately after West Indies won the match, Lord Beginner and Lord Kitchener<sup>24</sup> led a group of expatriate West Indians in song and dance on the hallowed grounds of Lord’s.<sup>25</sup> Hilary Beckles, pre-eminent West Indian scholar, explained that “the Lord’s test was

the scene of the first ‘cricket carnival’ in England. The ground exploded in dance, song, and bacchanal, West Indian style.”<sup>26</sup> The response to the victory in England, by the expatriate West Indians, underscored the socio-political and symbolic significance of cricket to the Caribbean people at home and overseas. In this instance, the calypso illustrated its importance as a medium through which West Indians could express themselves fully. After arriving in England in 1948, Lord Kitchener composed a series of calypsos which depicted life in England for West Indian immigrants. “London is the Place for Me” and “Sweet Jamaica” weaved opposing tales of the wonders and sorrows respectively that British life presented.<sup>27</sup> These calypsos heightened the importance of the test series in 1950 and situated the play inside the boundary as a means of lifting the spirits of struggling West Indians, in both the Caribbean and London.

### *Race and Nationalism*

The problematization of the treatment of race, nation, and nationalism was a key component to the construction of this thesis. It was imperative to acknowledge that these problems existed within the literature and that they were understood in the contexts in which they were written. Most of the literature pertaining to West Indies cricket and independence failed to engage critically with issues of race, nation, and nationalism. Terms such as “white”, “black”, and “West Indies” were used recurrently without critical interrogation. In a Caribbean society that was and still is highly differentiated along ethnic lines, what does black or white mean? The non-biological conception of race that “stresses the idea of social construction, and argues that although the term has no biological utility, it continues to serve political and economic interests because most people believe it to be real”, was needed to add nuance to the analyses utilized within this thesis.<sup>28</sup> Maurice St. Pierre, cricket scholar, underscored this important distinction when he wrote that the selection process of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) changed when “a Black Barbadian took over the captaincy from the light-skinned Jamaican, Gerry Alexander”.<sup>29</sup> One of the dangers in referring to Frank Worrell as the first “black” captain was that it created a dichotomy of black versus white that failed to account for myriad skin colours and ethnicities in the Caribbean. Furthermore, it stifled the ascendancy of

cricketers of East Indian descent, who traditionally suffered from a lack of visibility in West Indies cricket. Whereas blacks were concerned with the captaincy of the team, East Indians were struggling even to be selected.<sup>30</sup>

The inherent problem with a “West Indian” identity - representative of all different peoples of the Caribbean - was that it failed to account for the heterogeneous nature of the populations. This was doubly difficult because all peoples of the Caribbean (black, Indian, Chinese, etc.) lacked representation on the cricket field and political agency in their own countries. Though a collective political West Indian identity through Federation failed, the Caribbean people assumed a united West Indian identity without pause when it came to supporting their cricketers. Douglas Midgett pointed out that “the assembling of the team to compete internationally...predates, by nearly two decades, the founding of the University of the West Indies and serious discussion of a federated nation-state.”<sup>31</sup> The West Indies cricket team was one of, if not the first, ways in which West Indians collectively thought of themselves as an allied group of people with common interests. Thus, one can discern how the fortunes of the team were tied so closely to its followers and how a victory for the team became a victory for the masses.

Nationalism can be “conveyed as a sentiment of oneness....the uniting of people, almost with the tightness or primordial, family bonds, and assumes an ineffable or unquestioned unity.”<sup>32</sup> Nationalism is often predicated on a myth of origin whereby people from the same geographical region share “common birthplace, common soil, and common blood.”<sup>33</sup> The problem with West Indian nationalism, as demonstrated in the independence movement, was that these supposed commonalities, appealed to by politicians, were founded upon a fabricated, convenient (for the English) myth. Colonialism brought varied peoples to the Caribbean from all parts of the world (blacks from Africa through the slave trade, and Indians and Chinese as indentured labourers after emancipation). Therefore, the idea of a common birthplace was a falsehood, used by the English to appeal to a sense of togetherness. There was also no singular West Indian identity or West Indian soil. The colonies of the West Indies Federation were distinctly unique from each other. And, with heterogeneous populations due to slavery and indentureship, claims of a common West Indian blood were just as untenable. However, the

West Indies cricket team was symbolic of what a West Indian identity could be. The team appeared to be a united front, particularly after defeating the English, a feat that West Indians craved in the political arena. Additionally, the selection and success of Sonny Ramadhin, the first West Indies cricketer of East Indian descent, gave the illusion of a more integrated and unified region. In fact, the reality was that the West Indies cricket team represented and perpetuated many myths. Nonetheless, the myths of race and nationalism functioned as being real in the tangible effects they had in the everyday lives of West Indians, especially as politicians (on the back of the cricket triumph) were able to make successful appeals to racial and regional unity toward political independence from Britain.

## **Methodology**

### *The Idealization of Englishness/Whiteness*

The writings of Frantz Fanon helped to provide context for the psychological aftermath of colonialism in the West Indies. An understanding of the damaged colonial psyche of West Indians was critical to an understanding of the circumstances from which political actors took the stage in the lead-up to independence. It also made for a more complete contextualization of the victory at Lords in 1950 and the campaign for Frank Worrell's captaincy. Fanon's interrogation of the idealization of whiteness in *Black Skin, White Masks*, showed the total success of the colonial enterprise in stifling the acculturation of a West Indian identity and installing the "mother culture" as the dominant way of life. He began with an examination of the role that language played in this process (in Fanon's case, French was the language brought to Martinique). He argued extensively for the acquisition of this new language as a form of capital that allowed the "black man" access to new avenues in life. Fanon critiqued the inferior status attributed to Creole in favour of French as the language of "civilization" in the Antilles, and showed that the dismissal of the local language as unbecoming was key to understanding the dehumanization of colonization. He argued that, "the more the black Antillean assimilates the

French language, the whiter he gets – i.e., the closer he comes to being a true human being.”<sup>34</sup> Stated differently, to be black and speak Creole meant he was worthless, and the only means of bettering himself was to appropriate French culture. The fact remained that no matter how much the black man modeled himself after the white colonial culture, he would only be an imitation and never authentic.

Fanon referred to the idealization of whiteness as the process of lactification, whereby the acquisition of anything associated with the Empire or being white was desirable.<sup>35</sup> The ideal of whiteness was so deeply embedded in the psyches of the colonized that anything associated with this whiteness was glorified, be it language, pigmentation, education, or culture. Trevor Rhone’s *Old Story Time* served as a literary accompaniment to Fanon, and aided in depicting a similar phenomenon in Jamaica, emblematic of the uniformity of the colonial enterprise regardless of its origin. The idealization of whiteness (Englishness in the case of this study) privileged all facets of the mother culture over the dirty blackness of the colonized where the subjects participated in their own oppression. An interrogation of this damaged psyche was critical to the success of this thesis. It is against this backdrop of self-loathing that independence emerged as a means of creating a new identity and destroying the mental shackles that remained long after emancipation.<sup>36</sup> Politicians, riding on the coattails of West Indies cricket, were able to position independence as an affirmation of the worth of black people in the Caribbean and across the globe. In appealing to racial unity and West Indians’ self-worth, politicians attempted to upend the racial legacy of colonialism that idealized whiteness, and re-position themselves as capable, authentic human beings ready to govern themselves.

### *Discourse Analysis*

I performed a critical discourse analysis (CDA) on a series of political speeches, newspaper articles, and calypso lyrics between 1950 and 1962. The 12-year period bookended the first West Indies defeat of England (1950) and Jamaica and Trinidad’s independence (1962). Admittedly, there was no smoking gun piece of evidence in this thesis that made a direct cause and effect link between the 1950 Test series win and Frank Worrell’s captaincy with the

realization of independence in the West Indies. Rather, the use of CDA allowed me to make inferential judgments based on the narratives surrounding these events and establish correlations between the factors connected to cricket which were at play in forging independence. It was not enough to state that successes on the cricket pitch facilitated independence around the Caribbean; an inquiry into the conditions that precipitated independence revealed common narratives that established a relationship between the successes of the West Indies' team and the political rhetoric deployed to galvanize support for a political break from Britain.

Discourse analysis is a highly contested method of research, particularly because there are so many varied ways in which it can be performed.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, when engaging with discourse analysis, it is imperative to establish a definition of "discourse" that best fits the study at hand. Some approaches focus solely on a structuralist definition;<sup>38</sup> this was deemed a bad fit for this thesis because it fails to account for the social context in which language is used. Discourse, in connecting West Indies cricket to independence in the Caribbean, has to move beyond linking sentences. A second, functionalist approach seemed to be more appropriate because it accounts for the role that language plays in society. Still, in order for an analysis to move beyond a discourse and become critical discourse, it has to link linguistic analysis to social analysis.<sup>39</sup> John E. Richardson, a pre-eminent scholar who applies CDA to newspaper research, argues that it is at this stage that discourse becomes CDA, that is, when analysis considers power relations and inequities in society. For Richardson, CDA "investigates, and aims at illustrating, 'a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations.'"<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, he states that, "it is at this stage that analysis becomes *discourse* analysis rather than *textual* analysis. Discourse analysis involves an analysis of texts as they are embedded within, and relate to, social conditions of production and consumption."<sup>41</sup> This is why Richardson's approach to CDA is the most relevant mode of analysis for this research, as I used a combination of primary sources to make a correlation between the socio-political conditions of the Caribbean and the West Indies cricket team that led to political independence from Britain. The chosen texts had to be studied in a manner that accounted for how words functioned in creating a discourse against the socio-political backdrop in which they were written. Accordingly, this analysis drew on Norman Fairclough and operationalized his three dimensions of CDA which, in turn, called for a multi-faceted approach to research.<sup>42</sup>

### *Fairclough's Three Dimensions of CDA*<sup>43</sup>

#### *Textual Analysis*

Fairclough argues that within the framework of CDA, words or text must be analyzed as being more than elements of language. In order for textual analysis to be a component of CDA,<sup>44</sup> it must examine the text in terms of what is being said by the author, what is not said and what could have been said.<sup>45</sup> Requiring a broader approach, CDA holds that “we shouldn't consider elements of vocabulary, grammar, semantics (and so on) to be of profound and direct significance in themselves; rather it is the function that such elements serve in the moment of their use that is of interest.”<sup>46</sup> This builds on a functionalist approach to discourse analysis, one that argues that texts should be studied as “language in use,” and is “used to mean something and to do something and that this ‘meaning’ and ‘doing’ are linked to the context of its usage.”<sup>47</sup> Within this framework, this study was able to glean the “connoted” and “denoted” meanings within the newspapers. By considering the texts in the context in which they were written, the language used took on greater meaning. In the case of the 1950 test series, the texts in the *Jamaica Gleaner* revealed a discourse that posited the master's (England) reign had ended. Given that the series occurred during a time when decolonization was the dominant political issue, it was a logical conclusion that there was a relationship between the end of British reign on the cricket field and its political reign over the Caribbean.

#### *Discursive Practices*

In this second dimension of Fairclough's CDA, he argues that the producers *and* consumers of texts bring their individual biases to discourse. Here, Fairclough describes a reflexive relationship between the producers and consumers of texts, where both make use of their prior experiences with society to ascribe meaning to the texts.<sup>48</sup> Specifically when



analyzing newspapers, this dimension allowed for an inquisition into the choices of words used in headlines and articles pertaining to the test series in 1950. For example, it helped explain how the *London Times* and *London Daily Express* undermined the performances of the West Indies cricket team in attributing the English losses as having more to do with the home team's poor play than the excellence of the West Indians. The *Jamaica Gleaner*, however, had no problem framing the wins as a West Indian demolition of their colonial master. The difference in reporting between the British and West Indian papers revealed a desire to create and maintain certain narratives that appealed to their respective audiences. Fairclough's tools of "objectivity" and the audience as "consumer" and "commodity" helped this study move beyond the pretence of objectivity in newspaper reporting toward an understanding of what was being said and why.

### *Social Practices*

This third and final component is arguably the most critical dimension of Fairclough's CDA for this thesis. Employing "social practices" allowed for an exploration of the transformative power of the chosen texts. Given that texts are shown to be "language in use" and have a reflexive relationship with society and institutions, one can begin to see how the primary sources can effect social change. Indeed, Richardson notes, "language ought to be analysed in relation to the social context in which it is being used and the social consequences of its use; and, more specifically, the relationship(s) between discourse and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations needs to be examined."<sup>49</sup> Consequently, I was able to delve into what the texts said about the society in which they were produced. Additionally, this allowed me to consider the effect texts had on social relations, and decipher if they contributed to unequal power relations, or aided in its destruction?<sup>50</sup> For Fairclough, it is at this point that discourse analysis becomes *critical* discourse analysis: when the analyst is able to consider how texts are influenced by, and in turn, influence society. Under these parameters, this thesis was able to link the effects of political speeches, newspapers, and calypsos with the successes of the West Indies cricket team in ensuring a readiness for political independence in the West Indies.

## Method

In order to provide sufficient context for the pre-independence period in the West Indies, this study focused its attention on three main political figures: Norman Manley, Eric Williams, and C.L.R. James. Norman Manley was one of the leading political figures in Jamaica during decolonization and served as leader of the People's National Party (PNP). Meanwhile, Eric Williams led the People's National Movement (PNM) in Trinidad. Williams and Manley were heads of two leading political parties of the West Indies Federation when independence from Great Britain was conceptualized as a collective movement involving ten colonies. These two were particularly significant to this study, as it was the political manoeuvring between Jamaica and Trinidad, involving these two politicians, that precipitated the disintegration of the West Indies Federation.<sup>51</sup> As the two largest colonies with the two largest populations and economies, Jamaica and Trinidad had the most influence within the Federation. Thus, the political speeches of these two men were the most salient of the elected officials in the region.

Unlike Williams and Manley, C.L.R. James was not an elected politician. However, he wielded significant influence in the political sphere as an intellectual and political agitator. Furthermore, James is widely considered to be the foremost thinker of the time with regard to cricket and colonialism.<sup>52</sup> As writer for *The Nation*, James waged a public campaign to have Frank Worrell instated as the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team. He was also an advisor to Williams during the late 1950s and early 1960s as Trinidad charted its course toward independence.<sup>53</sup> It is from these pulpits that C.L.R. James' voice resonated for use within this thesis. James' writings on Worrell and a collection of political speeches by Manley and Williams were used to provide context for the socio-political climates in Jamaica and Trinidad during the period in question. As the main political voices during the independence movement, these three men were a vital component of this study. They made appeals to racial unity and claimed that the time had arrived for West Indians to make a political break from Britain because the "massa day done".

With respect to newspaper sources, *The Jamaica Gleaner*, *London Times*, and *London Daily Express* were the periodicals used. The *Jamaica Gleaner* was chosen to represent the

reporting in the West Indies as it is its oldest newspaper and the only periodical in the region that had online archives dating back to the 1940s. The *London Times* and *London Daily Express* served as counterpoints to the *Jamaica Gleaner* and, taken together, all three allowed for a comparative analysis of the reporting on the cricket series in England and the West Indies. The test series comprised four matches, each lasting five days. The newspaper research focused on the reports from the five days of play as well as the days immediately before and after each match. All three periodicals were analysed in their entirety for what each had to report and opine about the matches.<sup>54</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Francis Welch, *Empire of Cricket – West Indies*, Documentary Film, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMwEYeh4oMU>. This documentary is exemplary in that it features leading academics in the study of West Indies cricket and colonialism. Hilary Beckles and Clem Seecharan, two scholars whose work I will engage with, give extensive commentary throughout the documentary.

<sup>2</sup> The West Indies cricket team is selected from players from: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Anguilla, Montserrat, British Virgin Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands and Saint Martin.

<sup>3</sup> This thesis argues for West Indies cricket as one of many catalysts for independence in the West Indies and does not claim that the success of the cricket team was the sole factor in the realization of independence. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the templates of other decolonization movements around the world were additional contributing factors.

<sup>4</sup> Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 23-28. Audre Lorde argued that oppressed peoples could not achieve liberation (dismantling the master’s house) by using his own tools against him. Lorde applied this argument to feminist theory and claimed that within the white dominated feminist superstructure, black feminists had to carve out their own path separate from white feminists in order to gain agency. This thesis, in part, argues that West Indians used cricket (one of the master’s tools) to dismantle his house (colonial rule in the West Indies) and thus rejects Lorde’s ideology. Her ideology can be understood best in a situation wherein cracks have already formed in the foundation of the master’s house. In the case of feminism, the movement had already taken hold and Lorde was concerned with its tendency to exclude black women and their concerns from the movement. A parallel can also be drawn with the plight of blacks within the so-called gay movement. Much like the feminist struggle, the gay movement’s immediate successes tended to privilege the concerns of white gays and created a social hierarchy within a supposedly liberating movement. In the case of West Indies cricket and the anti-colonial movement, cricket was one of the only ways in which the oppressed could loosen the colonial shackles and make inroads into the foundation of the master’s house. Lorde’s theory could then be applied once West Indians gained some agency after independence, as they struggled to survive economically as newly minted political nations within the overall structure of a capitalist dominated world.

<sup>5</sup> Unlike other sports, the captain plays a pivotal role in cricket. While a team is on the field, for multiple days during the course of a test match, the captain is responsible for deploying strategies to dismiss opposition batsmen, setting field positions, managing who bowls and when, and is

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responsible for maintaining a high morale within the team. As captaincy demands so much of a player, the role can be pivotal in deciding the outcomes of matches. It is from this understanding that the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain became a powerful symbol of the abilities of black West Indians in 1960.

<sup>6</sup> “West Indies” does not always refer to islands that were subject to British colonial rule, but also French, Spanish, Dutch, etc. But, for the purpose of this thesis, West Indies will be considered to be the British West Indies.

<sup>7</sup> A boundary is used to demarcate the edge of the playing field. A rope or fence is often used to signify the boundary of the cricket field.

<sup>8</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008).  
Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> This did not mean that all blacks and colonized people in the West Indies shared the same views or even felt the same way about each other. There were divisions between blacks and Indians who were mistrustful of each other. Some blacks who possessed cultural capital felt superior to other blacks who were less privileged. While class was a factor in the everyday lives of West Indians, this thesis privileges race as a means of analyzing the relationship between the colonial master and pupil.

<sup>10</sup> A test match is played between representative teams of two nations. The duration of the match is five days and it is the highest level at which the game is played.

<sup>11</sup> C. L. R. James, *Beyond A Boundary* (London: Yellow Jersey Press, 2005), preface. James was one of the foremost intellectuals on decolonization in the West Indies during the first half of the twentieth century. His study on the Haitian Revolution, *Black Jacobins*, positioned him as leading scholar in the field of African Studies. His affiliation with Trinidadian politics, friendship with Learie Constantine, and his campaign for the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team, make him an integral point of reference for this thesis. *Beyond A Boundary* is the work from which most scholarship on the history of West Indies cricket builds.

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Yelvington, "Cricket, Colonialism, and the Culture of Caribbean Politics," in *Social Roles of Sport in Caribbean Societies*, ed. Michael Malec (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1995), 14.

<sup>13</sup> Also pertinent to this study was a collection of James' writings in *A Majestic Innings*. It featured letters and writings throughout the course of James' life. Of particular note were the writings in *The Nation* where he lobbied for Frank Worrell to be instated as the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team.

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*. (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1988), 20.

<sup>15</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 66.

<sup>16</sup> Clem Seecharan, *Muscular Learning: Cricket and Education in the Making of the British West Indies at the End of the 19th Century* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> J.A. Mangan and Allen Guttman are two of the leading scholars in the field of sport and empire. For additional reading, see J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking, 1986)

<sup>18</sup> Brian Stoddart, "Caribbean Cricket: the Role of Sport in Emerging Small-Nation Politics," in *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture*, ed. Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 239.

<sup>19</sup> Chris Searle, "Race before Wicket: Cricket and the White Rose: For C.L.R. James (1901-1989)," *Race and Class* 31, no. 3 (1990), 34.

<sup>20</sup> James left Trinidad in 1932 to pursue interests in England and later in the United States. He returned in 1958 to assume a post with the People's National Movement and clamour for a change in leadership of the West Indies cricket team.

<sup>21</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 297.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

<sup>23</sup> Douglas Midgett, "Cricket and Calypso: Cultural Representation and Social History in the West Indies," *Sport in Society* 6, no. 2-3 (2003), 241.

<sup>24</sup> Lord Kitchener was one of the first famous Calypsonians, not the prominent British military leader. Lord Kitchener moved to London as part of the first wave of West Indians immigrants in 1948. While in Britain, he wrote and performed calypsos which detailed the conditions of West Indians in England at the time. He featured in the victory celebrations at Lord's in 1950 and his calypsos are analyzed in Chapter 4.

<sup>25</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 93.

<sup>26</sup> Hilary Beckles, "Redemption Sounds: Music, Literature and the Popular Ideology of West Indian Cricket Crowds," in *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture*, ed. Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 376.

<sup>27</sup> Lord Kitchener, *London is The Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956*. © 2003 by Honest Jon's Records. HJRLP2. Compact disc.

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<sup>28</sup> Anton Allaha, "Black Power and Black Nationalism," in *Ethnicity, Class, and Nationalism*, ed. Anton Allaha (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2005), 128.

<sup>29</sup> Maurice St. Pierre, "West Indian Cricket as Cultural Resistance," in *Social Roles of Sport in Caribbean Societies*, ed. Michael Malec (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1995), 63.

<sup>30</sup> Yelvington, 18.

<sup>31</sup> Midgett, 241.

<sup>32</sup> Allaha, "Black Power and Black Nationalism," 131.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>36</sup> Bob Marley, Jamaican reggae artist and one of the island's greatest cultural exports, wrote "Redemption Song" which called for colonized people to "emancipate yourself from mental slavery" as "none but ourselves can free our minds."

<sup>37</sup> John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21.

<sup>38</sup> The structuralist approach focuses on the form of the language where language is a "system of systems", with each system having its own characteristic forms of structure or organisation. In this approach, analysts look for features of language that link sentences together. It does not take into consideration contextual backdrops that can explain the meaning of the text (Richardson, 22).

<sup>39</sup> Linda Woods and Rolf Kroger, *Doing Discourse Analysis: Methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 206.

<sup>40</sup> Richardson, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>44</sup> Content analysis is one form of textual analysis. According to Richardson, when content analysis is deployed as the sole research method, it is insufficient to be applied to an analysis of newspapers. Rather, a more total approach has to be used; one that accounts for the function of

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the text and presumes that each word was chosen by the author and requires a more total or interpretive analysis.

<sup>45</sup> Richardson, 38.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>51</sup> George Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica* (Kingston: Kingston Publishers, 1975), 160-195.

<sup>52</sup> Without fail, every author consulted for this study who wrote about the history of West Indies cricket (Beckles, Stoddart, St. Pierre, Manley, Seecharan), borrowed from James' writings in *Beyond A Boundary*.

<sup>53</sup> In *Beyond A Boundary's* "Proof of the Pudding," James stated that part of the reason he returned to Trinidad after so many years overseas, was to assume a post in the People's National Movement.

<sup>54</sup> The dates of the test matches in 1950 were: June 7-13, June 23-30, July 19-26, August 12-18.



## Chapter Two

### **Cultural Imbroglia: Englishness and the Development of West Indies Cricket from Settlement to Test Status**

*For West Indians cricket has been part of a struggle to escape a history disfigured by racial conflict and legacy of empire.<sup>1</sup>*

This chapter uncovers the conditions which gave rise to the development of cricket as a means of overcoming centuries of colonial domination in the West Indies. From the game's elite beginnings, when cricket was inaccessible to the colonized, to the turn of the twentieth century and the formation of the first West Indies teams, this chapter analyzes the socio-cultural considerations which molded cricket as an agent of change. In order to position West Indies cricket fully as a means of overcoming the mental entanglement enacted by colonialism, an understanding of the idealization of Englishness [see definition and discussion of Englishness in Part 2 below] is necessary to grasp the totality of the inequality meted out by the colonial mission. A study of Englishness leads to a better understanding of why cricket was brought to the Caribbean, how it was introduced, and the points of conflict throughout its development. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and Trevor Rhone's *Old Story Time* assist in situating the psychological scarring caused by Englishness in the formative years of West Indies cricket and West Indian society. Both works expose the success of colonialists in exporting their culture and embedding it in the colonies. The result was centuries of attempting to replicate all aspects of English culture, with a reifying belief that all things English and/or white were better. Cricket emerged as a means of overcoming this damaged psyche and self-loathing through West Indians outperforming their colonial masters on the cricket field. In refashioning the master's game in their own image, West Indians were able to move beyond their accustomed position as colonial subjects and create something of their own. The West Indian cultural imbroglia addressed in this

chapter is shown in two main sections: the first part navigates the formative years of West Indies cricket, while the second deals with West Indians' idealization of Englishness.

## **Part One – The First Years of Cricket in the West Indies**

### *Cricket during Slavery*<sup>2</sup>

This study needs to be established on an understanding of the conditions under which cricket took root in the West Indies. Hilary Beckles, preeminent scholar of West Indies cricket, posited that “there was nothing surprising or spectacular about the journey of English cricket culture to the ‘sugar colonies’ of the West Indies at the end of the eighteenth century.”<sup>3</sup> He further explained that for British garrison soldiers deployed to the West Indies, cricket was the primary pastime or respite from “hurling cannon balls at the French.”<sup>4</sup> While the game originated in the colonies as a mere form of recreation for the crown’s subjects, it quickly took on greater significance in the day-to-day lives of all involved in the colonial enterprise. From this seemingly benign beginning, the seeds of West Indies cricket were planted. In short order, the game was played by “the planters, the mercantile group, colonial administrators, Anglican clergymen, and visiting military personnel.”<sup>5</sup> Initially, cricket was reserved mostly for the white elite and came to embody Englishness, “encapsulating all the virtues of that perceived high civilization.”<sup>6</sup> During colonial rule, blacks had very little access to organized cricket:

Organized cricket culture, as a social practice, was defined in colonial society as an institution of high culture. It excluded blacks and mixed race people from the 1790s, when the game was introduced by garrisoned imperial soldiers and domesticated by the planter-merchant elite. On racial grounds blacks were denied by whites the opportunity to participate in colonial leagues and competitions in which they played.<sup>7</sup>

Clem Seecharan, Caribbean historian, argued that because cricket was initially an elite enterprise, enslaved West Indians were only allowed to participate through manual labour.<sup>8</sup> While white men played the game, the slaves retrieved balls that had crossed the boundary ropes into the cane fields, prepared the pitches, weeded the fields, and were responsible for the overall entertainment of guests.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, the early days of cricket in the colonies reflected the overall power structure of the time, whereby the enslaved Africans were subservient to the colonial white master.

### *Emancipation Leads to Better Accessibility to Cricket*

Emancipation, granted in 1838, was a landmark event in providing wider access to cricket. Previously, slaves were restricted to the plantations and had no autonomy over their lives. When they were freed, they were able to seek out cricket and organize matches for themselves, a game that previously they were privy to only from a distance. Michael Manley, former Jamaican prime minister (1972-80, 1989-92) and life-long cricket lover, stated that “particularly after the emancipation of the slaves in 1838, the rest of the population began to emulate the habits and practices of the elite and even to create parallel, though less well endowed, institutions of their own”.<sup>10</sup> Once the British settled in the West Indies, they quickly built the social institutions that would serve them and their families as they forged new lives in their proclaimed ‘new world.’<sup>11</sup> Chief among these, for the development of West Indies cricket, was the implementation of the British school.<sup>12</sup> Initially these schools were to serve only the children of the colonial officers. However, with emancipation and the formation of a new society after slavery, education became available to some children of former slaves.

The British school was the primary location, post-emancipation, where English culture was institutionalized and was readily disseminated to freed slaves and indentured workers in the Caribbean. At school, children learned the code of conduct that was properly suited to the perfect English gentleman.<sup>13</sup> Cricket played a vital role in supplementing the implementation of English culture. Michael Manley noted that,

As the great sugar plantations began to form the basis for a plantocracy, schools began to be built for the children of the planters. Teachers were imported from England to ensure that British values, no less than the more fundamental academic disciplines would be absorbed by the young. It was these teachers who initiated young West Indian schoolboys in that altogether idiosyncratic and arbitrary collection of objectives and rules which make up any game and, in this case, cricket.<sup>14</sup>

Education was the primary way in which cricket and its code of conduct were first diffused to freed slaves and indentured workers in the Caribbean.<sup>15</sup> C.L.R. James shared his experiences in school and club cricket around the turn of the twentieth century in *Beyond a Boundary*. Of his childhood and socialization in cricket in Trinidad, he wrote,

Before very long I acquired a discipline for which the only name is Puritan. I never cheated, I never appealed for a decision unless I thought the batsman was out, I never argued with the umpire, I never jeered at a defeated opponent, I never gave to a friend a vote or a place which by any stretch of imagination could be seen as belonging to an enemy or to a stranger. My defeats I took as stoically as I could. If I caught myself complaining or making excuses I pulled up. From the eight years of school life this code became the moral framework of my existence.<sup>16</sup>

James' account of his acquisition of the code illustrated the success of education and cricket in creating a West Indian who grew to adhere to the cultural code of Englishness. Despite the many injustices and inequalities surrounding him, cricket taught James to stay in line and not challenge authority. The notions of the "stiff upper lip" and maintaining appropriate decorum were two key tenets of cricket and Englishness that served to maintain a social stratification that elevated whites while oppressing all others. This process, in part, spoke to the prominent role that cricket played in the colonizing mission, particularly after emancipation; it helped the British ensure law and order in society as a means of social control.

One of the recurring themes throughout these early accounts of West Indies cricket was the lack of access that the colonized had to cricket outside of school. The best club teams were run by the elite planter class,<sup>17</sup> who denied access to players on the basis of skin colour.<sup>18</sup> The development of West Indies cricket was stunted by an ever resistant upper class that refused to

cede any of its power on or off the cricket pitch. Although the game was more accessible, the development of a West Indian cricket culture was stymied due to the severe lack of access to the resources necessary to play regularly. Equipment and playing spaces were not readily accessible as most cricket clubs enforced exclusionary racial policies. It took decades for West Indians to build the infrastructure to support a steady development of cricket in the region. The discriminatory racial policies of cricket clubs proved to be the most significant obstacle for West Indian access to cricket in the decades immediately following emancipation. However, by the turn of the twentieth century, West Indians fashioned their own clubs and were able to practice and play organized games against each other.

The development of West Indian cricket faced many obstacles in the years after emancipation; the problems were greater than the aforementioned lack of access to playing facilities. Hilary Beckles explained the conundrum of batsmanship being considered the art of the white player while fast bowling and fielding were seen as the role of labourers.<sup>19</sup> Michael Manley clarified further, “In the tropics where the temperature in the shade will not often fall below 90°F in the course of the average day, batting is a less arduous pursuit than bowling.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, as West Indies cricket progressed, most of the batsmen were white while the young black men would be limited to the more grueling tasks of bowling and fielding. These roles were first designated during slavery when blacks were only allowed to retrieve balls from the outfield as the colonials played. It continued in the British school when the sons of the colonized were made to bowl to the sons of the planters and elites.<sup>21</sup> This positional mentality laid the foundation for decades of struggles for the West Indian batsman. The formative years of the West Indies cricket team saw many talented and qualified black batsmen overlooked in favour of less accomplished white players.<sup>22</sup> Batting was seen as an element of the game that required thinking, strategy, style and temperament. The colonial roots of cricket in the West Indies dictated that these were qualities that the colonial subjects did not possess. Consequently, it took years of black batsmen outperforming their white counterparts for any headway to be made. Another by-product of this stratified mentality resonated with this study; the captains of cricket teams were batsmen, West Indians of colour struggled for decades to hold this highest post at the international level. This was yet another way for the colonial master, albeit decades after emancipation, to maintain authority and control over his subjects. The appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black

captain of the West Indies cricket team in 1960 is a major point of analysis in the ensuing chapters. Worrell's captaincy proved to be a watershed moment as it was a concrete realization of progress after centuries of struggling to gain and improve access to the game in the West Indies.

### *Cricket as resistance*

Owing to the fact that cricket was a uniquely British endeavour replete with vast numbers of rules and codes, the game was used as a means of containing rebellions in and around plantations.<sup>23</sup> Through socialization in cricket, the British hoped that the game's adherence to civility would be transferred from slaves to their descendants, thus ensuring a smooth transition from plantation to emancipated society. Hilary Beckles captured the essence of power relations within colonial rule when he wrote:

Contests of cultural legitimacy within contexts of racial domination are located at the centre of all readings of colonialism. The colonizer recognizes the importance of cultural actions and identity in the making and unmaking of colonial authority, and seeks to maintain delicate balances over time despite resistance and general turbulence in social relations.<sup>24</sup>

The foregoing characterized both the suppressive and subversive elements of cricket within the colonial context. While cricket was used by the British as a means of instilling discipline and adherence to rules, it also provided the colonized with an opportunity to lash out against their colonial masters on the field of play. The cricket field became a site of conflict that, even if no significant gain resulted off the field, symbolic victories could be won on it. The importance of this dichotomous aspect of cricket cannot be overlooked, as the number of colonized in the West Indies far outnumbered the number of British.<sup>25</sup> During the 1920s, the English-speaking Caribbean islands and territories had a population of about 2 ¼ million with whites comprising only three percent.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, rebellions or uprisings were always a clear and present danger for the imperial masters, who understood that unless they were able to control the masses,

they easily could be physically overrun. The cricket code that taught strict obedience became a vital element in maintaining order and instilling civility within the population. This was primarily implemented through the British school, where children were taught at a very young age about the British ideals of strict adherence to rules and decorum.<sup>27</sup>

However, even through mere peripheral participation, slaves were able to use cricket as a means of resistance. Clem Seecharan argues that

By propelling a cricket ball at his owner or his owner's son, he was symbolically contesting their unbridled power over his person: *their property*....In this context, therefore, cricket could not be just a game: it was definitely an instrument of mobility, if not liberation.....Cricket was a potent symbol, the site of African imaginings of liberty and the recovery of self. The fact that it was at the core of the imperial mission rendered the game an effective vehicle to carry African yearnings for freedom, and the undermining of imperial hegemony with its ordained hierarchies.<sup>28</sup>

Thus cricket, according to Seecharan, was almost immediately a vehicle for resistance whereby the enslaved could use the game to prove their worth. The slave was “certainly not centre stage, but he could, even from beyond the boundary, make a seminal claim on the game as an instrument for asserting his humanity.”<sup>29</sup> Seecharan further explained that “this activity [cricket], like other forms of play, was necessarily dichotomous, that is, infused with the potential for containment, as the plantocracy saw it, as well as subversion, from the standpoint of the enslaved.”<sup>30</sup>

Cricket remained both suppressive and subversive after emancipation. West Indies cricket developed as freed slaves engaged in and embraced the Englishness of cricket while simultaneously discovering ways to play the game in their own image. The simple act of adding a bit of flair to the muted game that was taught to them was a political statement that can be considered as a means of resistance. Thus, cricket was one way in which West Indians could forge a new identity for themselves outside of the shackles of colonial society. Cricket provided the means through which West Indians could conceptualize themselves as being something other than subservient to the crown.<sup>31</sup> The more West Indians played and adapted their own style to

cricket, the greater the distance they created between the English version of the game and culture imposed on them; they were able to envision more opportunities for themselves as a society moving forward out of slavery and into a “free” world. This was one of the ways in which cricket contributed to the formation of a post-emancipation West Indian identity. It was also a harbinger of the political potency of the game for West Indians, one which eventually afforded them the opportunity to lay claim to their political arrival on and off the cricket field between 1950 and 1962.

*The West Indies Cricket Team, 1865-1928*

The initial formation of the West Indies cricket team that exists today, representative of all the British territories, can be traced to 1865. The team’s development faced many fundamental challenges in its infancy. Hilary Beckles explained the major hindrances to its inauguration, stating,

Before a ‘West Indian team’ could be assembled, however, it was necessary to intensify and widen the base of cricket culture within individual territories. It was also essential that these territories play each other on a regular basis and in the process allow for the establishment of a regional knowledge base about particular players, and specific local conditions that would influence performances.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, integral to the incorporation of the West Indies cricket team was the development of the game within each individual territory. The first known game featuring two colonial territories was played between Demerara and Barbados in 1865.<sup>33</sup> Inter-colonial matches continued at an increasingly frequent rate after that first match and by 1886, the first West Indies cricket team toured North America, visiting the United States and Canada.<sup>34</sup> The tour consisted of matches against 13 club teams, played with moderate success, but the most important success was that international cricket for the West Indies became a reality. Michael Manley noted that “during these early beginnings there was a tendency for Jamaica to be less actively involved than the



‘Big Three’ of the Eastern Caribbean: Barbados, Trinidad and British Guiana.”<sup>35</sup> He elaborated that this was not due to a lack of interest in cricket in Jamaica, but more so to geographical location. Jamaica was relatively isolated compared to the other three colonies and thus transportation via steamship often proved prohibitive due to the cost and length of travel.

The period between 1926 and 1928 proved to be stimulus years for tremendous growth and achievement for West Indies cricket. It saw the founding of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) in 1926 and the granting of Test status to West Indies cricket in 1928.<sup>36</sup> The formation of the WICBC was an important development in the struggle for black improvement in cricket. Now there existed, within the region, an official governing body for cricket that oversaw the development of the game in respective colonies and was responsible for the selection of West Indian teams. This was significant because the disenfranchised cricketers and West Indian public had a specific target at which they could direct their grievances. Test status was doubly important as the team was deemed good enough to compete against England, Australia, and South Africa.

West Indies cricket forged ahead against the backdrop of the continued struggle of black players against racial prejudice. However, during the 1920s, Learie Constantine and George Headley emerged as the first great black West Indian players. They embodied an unequivocal challenge to the belief that batsmen had to be white, and displayed all the requisite characteristics of the great white batsmen of the time. They ushered in a new era of West Indies cricket when the top batsmen were no longer exclusively white. [See page 11 of chapter 3 for a more full discussion of these batsmen] Clyde Walcott, Everton Weekes, and Frank Worrell, known as the Three W’s, followed Headley as world-class batsmen atop the West Indies batting line-up.<sup>37</sup> Despite the progress made by the likes of Constantine and Headley, West Indies cricket and the WICBC were still in the control of the colonial elite. West Indians made progress in gaining more access to the game and, in Constantine and Headley, had a more visible presence in the team. By 1928, West Indies cricket achieved test status and realized some of the talent that, for decades, had been systemically suppressed. The global stage provided a platform on which the achievements of black cricketers could no longer be ignored. In the ensuing chapters, the continued excellence and proliferation of great West Indian cricketers will be positioned in their

roles as an inspiration for West Indians to move beyond the psychological entanglement of colonialism.

## **Part Two: The Ideal of Englishness – Anything Black Nuh Good<sup>38</sup>**

One of the enduring remnants of colonial rule on the Caribbean was an idealization of Englishness that privileged everything British and left West Indians without an identity of their own. The totality of Englishness can best be understood by how it infiltrated all aspects of West Indian life. Manthia Diawara, cultural theorist, writing on cricket as a discourse on colonialism, established this key concept when he posited Englishness as original, all aspects of which became a site of mimicry for its subjects:

Englishness is the privileging of a certain use of language, literature, ideology, and history of one group over populations that it subordinates to itself. As a colonial instrument its mode of existence depends on the construction and maintenance of dichotomies: England/the West Indies, Prospero/Caliban, religious/idolatrous, good English/Broken English, etc.<sup>39</sup>

Englishness privileged anything associated with the colonial master as being the ultimate standard of excellence. The ideal of Englishness was so deeply embedded in the psyches of the colonized that anything associated with it was glorified, be it language, pigmentation, education, and indeed cricket. British colonial rule tasked its subjects with emulating every aspect of its culture. Thus, the British gentleman became a measuring stick for young men's comportment. Diawara explained that "Englishness sets in motion absolute barriers between white and black, England and the West Indies, civilized and primitive, and, in the process, empowers the English subject as original and disempowers the colonized subject as the copy."<sup>40</sup> This is a vital concept for this study. One of the enduring and far reaching legacies of the British colonial enterprise in the West Indies was the never ending aspiration toward Englishness that permeated all facets of life for the colonized. It created a severe inferiority complex for West Indians. To be British was,

*ipso facto*, to be white. Thus, with Englishness elevated as the standard, then black, mixed, and all others were unmistakably lesser than. In trying to mimic Englishness, West Indians participated in reinforcing their own inferiority. The result was generations of West Indians beset by psychological scarring and a belief of cultural and personal worthlessness, the extent of which will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

The idealization of Englishness was rooted in a colonial culture that, from the very onset, built its foundation on a class hierarchy that explicitly privileged lighter over darker skin. During slavery, field labour and more arduous tasks were often reserved for slaves with darker skin while those with lighter complexions tended to be given tasks in and around the master's house atop the plantation. Thus, from the onset of colonial subjugation, slaves themselves were aware of the stigma connected with blackness. Anton Allahar, prominent sociologist, illustrated this privileging of whiteness when he wrote:

Certainly at the outset (and in many ways this is continued to the present), to be 'white,' i.e., having a light skin pigmentation, straight hair, slim bridged noses, other Caucasian-like phenotypical features, a certain non-creole, 'cultured' accent, even place of residence and other such overt markers, came to be synonymous with 'class': a certain measure of material comfort, privilege, power, and general social approval. As one descended the class ladder, one became darker and possessed less of these social amenities.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, 'race' and class were interdependent means of differentiation in the colonies. The colonial mission created a post-emancipation West Indian society where 'race' and class were muddled dynamics and one belonged to certain class groups because of the colour of one's skin. The power of colonialism and the implementation of British culture lay in the fact that West Indians accepted these power relations of 'race' and class, thereby allowing them to strengthen and reify over time. West Indians came to believe that their blackness was inferior to their master's whiteness, and thus deserving of their lower class status.

When engaging with issues of 'race', it is imperative that one "stresses the idea of social construction, and argues that although the term has no biological utility, it continues to serve political and economic interests because most people believe it to be real."<sup>42</sup> Racial issues were a

real, everyday consideration for West Indians, and a complexity due to the plurality of people in the region. Slavery and indentured labour brought to the West Indies people from varying parts of the world with different skin tones and heritages. Each colony featured its own distinct group of people. While Jamaica comprised a predominantly black populace of primarily African descent, Trinidad featured an almost equal mix of blacks and Indians. Thus, each colony dealt with its own unique relationship to issues of race. Accordingly, it is important to apply a nuanced understanding of the colonial experience as it pertained to the experiences of West Indians along racial lines. It is partly due to the heterogeneous nature of the West Indian population that the widespread adoption of Englishness as their ideal becomes all the more remarkable. West Indians, of all backgrounds, policed themselves in attempts to transform into the perfect English gentleman and lady. The following section examines the many ways in which the idealization of Englishness caused the mangling of West Indian psyches. The colonial subjects accepted themselves as inferior to their British masters, and believed that the only path toward an improved lot in life was to appropriate as much of English culture as they could, participating and colluding in their own mental subjugation in the process.

### *Fanon and Rhone – The Idealization of Englishness Explained Through Caribbean Literature*

This section of the chapter will use the literature of Frantz Fanon and Trevor Rhone to tease out the racial legacy of Englishness that festered for decades after the abolition of slavery. Colonialism left the people of the West Indies reeling from a belief of inferiority to their British masters. Through the literature of Fanon and Rhone, this feeling of inferiority can be better understood. When these pieces of literature are viewed as a mirror of society, one can discern a clearer picture of the machinations of colonial life. Fanon is useful for this project, as he was a preeminent scholar during the decolonization movements that metastasized around the globe starting in the late 1940s. His seminal book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, addressed the concept of “lactification,” which was a helpful accompaniment to Diawara’s discussion of Englishness earlier in this chapter. Fanon’s canvassing of his colonial experiences in Martinique mirror those of C.L.R. James’ in Trinidad and acts as a useful point of comparison between the British and

French colonial enterprises in the Caribbean. Fanon also situates the imposition of colonial culture as a key component of the colonial mission. While Fanon wrote of his experiences in Martinique, a French colony, his experiences with Frenchness mirrored that of the West Indians' with Englishness. A comparison between the two was instructive as it emphasized the primacy of the role that both played in the continued success of colonialism long after emancipation.

A key component of the idealization of Englishness or Frenchness was the privileging of whiteness over blackness. One of the ways in which Frantz Fanon interrogated this idealization of whiteness in *Black Skin, White Masks* was through his exploration of the relationship between the “woman of color and the white man.”<sup>43</sup> He used Mayotte Capecia's, *I Am a Martinican Woman*, to illustrate the desire of the black woman to be with a white man. Capecia endeavoured to whiten the world with her body and mind, through marrying a white man and having his children.<sup>44</sup> Fanon referred to this goal as a “striving for lactification,” where the black woman must save her race by producing children with increasingly lighter skin colours.<sup>45</sup> Reminiscing about her grandmother, a white woman, Capecia wondered “if she [grandmother] had married a white man, would I perhaps have been all white...and would life have been less difficult for me?”<sup>46</sup> This rueful question suggested that Capecia felt that her grandmother missed an opportunity to better herself and her family by not marrying a white man. This implied that Capecia felt her life would have been better had that been the case. Fanon's conception of lactification in Martinique is similar to Diawara's interrogation of the idealization of Englishness in the British territories.<sup>47</sup> Although both dealt with different colonial empires, the effect on the mostly black subjects of both regions were similar with regard to their racial legacies; the colonized believed they were inferior because they were not white.

Jamaican playwright Trevor Rhone depicted the idealization of Englishness in a similar fashion to Fanon, in *Old Story Time*.<sup>48</sup> The matriarch of the play, Miss Aggy, was mortified when she learned her son (Len) had been spending time with a very dark-skinned girl named Pearl.<sup>49</sup> This was particularly upsetting for Miss Aggy as she constantly encouraged Len to aspire toward Margaret, a girl who possessed the ‘right’ skin complexion. When Len confirmed that he had been spending time with Pearl, Miss Aggy proclaimed, “Miss Esmerelda frowsy-tail, jiggerfoot, jersey ears, board head gyal is your friend? Where is your ambition? You don't have

any ambition?”<sup>50</sup> Like Mayotte Capecia, Miss Aggy viewed a lightening of the skin as a means of betterment. Pearl represented a regression for Len, and Miss Aggy could not tolerate it. She lambasted Len in asking “How much time A must tell you, anything black nuh good? She is no advancement. It look like A will have to beat it into you.”<sup>51</sup> There was no confusion as to Miss Aggy’s belief that darker skinned persons were inferior to those with lighter complexions, and thus she forbade her son from being friends with a dark-skinned girl. She went on to make her position even clearer when she instructed Len that,

Them little dry-head gal will drag you down! [*As she pushes him to the ground again.*] You think I want to treat you like this? A only want what is best for you. Trust mama. Mama knows best. Leave out the dutty black gal them, concentrate on yuh books, for life is hard when you black, but with a little education you still have a chance. When time come for you to have a girlfriend, A have a nice girl pick out for you. Miss Margaret, Reverend Greaves daughter, a nice brown girl with tall hair down her back.<sup>52</sup> She is advancement, you hear me. [*She picks him up.*]<sup>53</sup>

Miss Aggy’s admonishment was noteworthy in two main ways. Her obsession with Miss Margaret as a suitable partner for Len demonstrated the primacy of Englishness in postcolonial culture. One of the ways in which Len could improve himself was by staying away from dark-skinned girls in favour of the likes of Miss Margaret, who had more “refined” or English features. Like Capecia, Len could save himself by aspiring toward a spouse with whom he could reproduce lighter skinned children. Not only did this illustrate Miss Aggy’s belief in the superiority of whiteness, but it also revealed a belief that blackness was ugly. This was a damning illustration of the deeply embedded racial legacy of colonial life. It left Caribbean people believing that they were mentally *and* physically inferior to whites. Fanon and Rhone, through their characters Capecia and Miss Aggy, depicted the extent of the psychological scarring of colonialism, which resulted in the socialization of its subjects into believing that anything white was good and anything black was bad.

The other noteworthy aspect of Miss Aggy’s warning was her encouragement of Len to concentrate on his books. This was in keeping with Fanon’s treatment of language in *Black Skin, White Masks*. He argued that, “the more the black Antillean assimilates the French language, the

whiter he gets – i.e., the closer he comes to being a true human being.”<sup>54</sup> Speaking the colonizer’s language became a measure of social standing, a means of differentiation amongst Caribbean peoples.<sup>55</sup> In this instance, the dialect spoken by West Indians was akin to or representative of blackness. For Len properly to appropriate Englishness, he had to abandon the local tongue and speak like a proper English gentleman. Similarly, a good education was a vital way in which Len could move away from his blackness and gain access to the white world. In speaking the Queen’s English and getting a good education, Len could elevate himself above the majority of West Indians and better his lot in life. The desire for a good education in itself is not noteworthy. However, when considered in this colonial context, it positions Englishness as superior to West Indian culture. Like language and education, cricket could be considered as a means for West Indians to elevate their status. In taking up the white man’s game, the colonized provided himself with the opportunity for betterment and access to avenues that would otherwise be closed to him. Adopting the proper decorum, abiding by the rules of the game, and exhibiting the proper stroke play, functioned in similar ways to speaking proper English. Cricket, like language and having lighter skin pigmentation, were vehicles to a better life provided the colonized mimicked them as closely to the original English culture as possible.

Fanon critiqued the inferior status attributed to Creole in favour of French as the language of “civilization” in the Antilles, and showed that the dismissal of the local language as unbecoming was a key to understanding the dehumanization of colonization. Len was a good example of one who veered away from patois in favour of the mother tongue. For Miss Aggy, mastering the English language was a critical part of Len’s education. His mother believed the more he educated himself, the better equipped he would be as a black man in Jamaica to improve his lot in life, to become a better man and a better human being. Fanon and Rhone both demonstrated just how crippling the colonial regime was to the ability of its subjects to conceptualize a personal or collective identity of their own. Their worth was tied to how well they could mimic Englishness. Overcoming Englishness is a key and parallel concern in this analysis. Cricket emerged as one of the key ways in which West Indians could begin to conceptualize a West Indian identity, one that moved beyond merely mimicking and performing the game as it was taught to them. The following section will address the role that cricket played

in overcoming the inferiority caused by West Indians' rigid idealization of all things British, through their development of their own brand of "calypso cricket".

### *Overcoming Englishness*

In order to develop an identity separate from Britain and its colonial beginnings, West Indians had to find a way to define themselves in distinct ways. The development of a West Indian identity through cricket, and later politics, could only occur when mimicry of Englishness was no longer the ultimate goal. Manthia Diawara argued for this transformative ability of cricket:

The appropriation of cricket at the margins of Englishness will liberate modernization in the West Indies, too, and do for Caribbeanness what it did for Englishness: i.e., it will create a collective West Indian will which transverse race and class belongings. It was a will that was made up of the desire to be different and equal to English people, at least on the cricket field.<sup>56</sup>

Calypso cricket<sup>57</sup> was the manifestation of this desire to be different and equal to the English on the field of play. West Indies cricket forged its own identity separate from its colonial master because West Indians adapted the game they had been taught, and reformed it with a distinct flair and panache that was distinctive in style compared to its original English beginnings. C.L.R. James, in *Beyond A Boundary*, described the Englishness of cricket when he said a good cricketer was one with "positive virtues – loyalty and self-sacrifice, unselfishness, co-operation and *esprit de corps*, a sense of honour, the capacity to be a 'good loser' or 'to take it.'"<sup>58</sup> Tied to this code of conduct was a strict adherence to a textbook prescription of how the inner machinations, or the actual playing of the game, should be conducted. Calypso cricket adapted the requisite code and added its own take on batting and bowling. The West Indian adaptation of play was a distinct visual style of cricket, wholly separate and easily distinguishable from that taught and played by the English. Thus, "the mastery of cricket, a game representing Englishness, is ironically, the West Indian's way of speaking for himself to the modern world."<sup>59</sup>



West Indians were able to take the game that was taught to them as a means of social control, and adapt and appropriate it into something that became easily identifiable as belonging to them. In this regard, calypso cricket was one of the first global signifiers of a West Indian culture.

Calypso cricket contributed to the creation of a Caribbeanness that helped establish a West Indian identity that moved beyond the field of play and galvanized political movements throughout the Caribbean. Cricket was a vehicle through which West Indians could repel Englishness and create something that was unique to their own sensibilities. They no longer played original, English cricket, but West Indian cricket. In 1950, when the West Indies played England on British soil and won convincingly, they did so while displaying a style of stroke play,<sup>60</sup> fielding, and bowling that veered away from what was taught to them.<sup>61</sup> West Indies cricket became a powerful symbol of the growing maturity of West Indian society. It was against the backdrop of self-loathing that the success of the West Indies cricket team sprang forth as a vehicle for transporting the hopes and dreams of West Indians for self determination on and off the field of play. The West Indies team's triumph on English soil was a concrete achievement to which the people of the Caribbean could point as evidence of their progress since emancipation. It concretized the dream of creating a new identity and loosened the mental shackles that remained long after colonialism officially ended. Understanding this scarred psyche helps to position the events on the cricket field as catalysts for independence movements across the Caribbean in the 1960s.

## **Summary**

British colonial rule left the West Indies riddled with psychological scarring due to the unattainable task of mimicking British culture. Mangled by the physical and mental anguish of slave and post-emancipation societies, West Indians learned to view themselves as inferior to their colonial masters. Frantz Fanon and Trevor Rhone exposed how the colonial enterprise was a psychologically damaging experience for its subjects, leaving them with a belief of inferiority. The literature of Fanon and Rhone exposed the insidiousness and totality of colonialism in

creating a spiritless West Indian society without aspirations outside of appropriating the culture of their masters. They reinforced my work in situating cricket as a means of overcoming the idealization of Englishness and forging a path toward creating a West Indian identity that was, at the very least, equal to but distinct from England. The task was far from easy and replete with obstacles. The ensuing chapters delve into some of these obstacles, particularly as West Indies cricket emerged as a site of conflict between West Indians and their colonial master. Progress was made as more and more West Indians gained access to organized cricket and were able to demonstrate to the region that they possessed the ability to be every bit as good as the British on the field. The likes of Learie Constantine, George Headley and Frank Worrell pioneered an era of West Indies cricket that saw the region granted Test status, a recognition of the team's ability to stand alongside the best in the world.<sup>62</sup> By 1928, West Indies cricket was at a crossroads with the legacy of colonial conquest in its rear view mirror and the promise of a brighter future on the horizon.

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<sup>1</sup> Welch, *Empire of Cricket*.

<sup>2</sup> The transatlantic slave trade operated from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until its abolition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Slavery, for the purposes of this thesis, begins with British settlement in the West Indies beginning in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century up to the abolition of slavery in the 1830s.

<sup>3</sup> Hilary Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket: The Age of Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Seecharan, 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Hilary Beckles, "Just Cricket: Black Struggles for Racial Justice and Equality." *African Studies* 58, no. 2 (1999): 171.

<sup>8</sup> I will return to this later on in this chapter. This practice aided in cultivating the belief that blacks were not suited to batting and were relegated to the more arduous roles of fielders and fast bowlers.

<sup>9</sup> Seecharan, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 20.

<sup>11</sup> The British first arrived in the West Indies in 1609. By 1655, the empire had acquired for itself: Bermuda, St. Kitts, Jamaica, Montserrat, Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas and Anguilla.

<sup>12</sup> The British school was first implemented during slavery. Initially, the schools were attended by the children of plantation owners, but more were built to accommodate the children of freed slaves after emancipation in 1838.

<sup>13</sup> J.A. Mangan is the pre-eminent historian on the infusion of the "games" ethic, muscular Christianity and the British school impact on British colonies. For further reading see, J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge, 1981).

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<sup>14</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Indentured workers were brought to the West Indies after emancipation to fill the labour void on plantations after slaves were freed. The main sources of indentured labourers were India and China.

<sup>16</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 34.

<sup>17</sup> The planter class refers to plantation owners, merchants, and members of the European upper class that lived in the colonies.

<sup>18</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 66.

<sup>19</sup> Welch, *Empire of Cricket*.

<sup>20</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 20.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 90-91. James recalls following various players in Trinidad and lamenting their lack of selection to the West Indies team, in spite of their obvious credentials. One such player was a wicketkeeper named Piggot who was overlooked for the 1923 tour to England because there were already too many black players on the team. This would become a contentious issue by 1950, as white players were repeatedly chosen to captain the team instead of more qualified black cricketers. The case of Frank Worrell will be a primary focus of chapter 4.

<sup>23</sup> Cricket is renowned for its perceived idiosyncratic rules and the premium placed on decorum and order. This can best be illustrated in the deference that is required to the decisions of the umpires. To show dissent, or even the slightest hint of questioning an umpire's decision, is one of cricket's greatest sins.

<sup>24</sup> Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, 69.

<sup>25</sup> Emancipation complicated this issue for the British, as they were no longer able to physically constrain their subjects. With the slaves freed, cricket and its code of conduct became a method by which the British could replace physical restraint with psychological control.

<sup>26</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 35.

<sup>27</sup> Seecharan, 264.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 3, brackets added.

<sup>31</sup> Organized cricket was played at cricket clubs across the West Indies. Some clubs had strict “whites only” policies that restricted blacks from playing. By the turn of the twentieth century, blacks created their own clubs that gave more access to the majority of the population. These clubs limited membership to men, and women had no access to organized cricket other than as spectators. While cricket clubs provided a designated space and proper equipment with which to play the game, informal or make-shift games were played in fields, streets, and yards throughout the colonies.

<sup>32</sup> Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 16. Demerara was one of the three colonies that comprised British Guiana.

<sup>34</sup> Hilary Beckles, *The First West Indies Cricket Tour: Canada and the United States in 1886* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 21.

<sup>36</sup> This meant that the West Indies cricket team was officially recognized by the governing Marlyebone Cricket Club in England as worthy of playing international cricket against the best teams. At the time, the West Indies was the fourth team granted test status alongside England, Australia and South Africa.

<sup>37</sup> Constantine and Headley had the misfortune of beginning their international careers shortly before the Second World War. The volume of matches that they played and overall statistics suffered due to the interruption in international play due to the war. The three W’s all made their first forays into test cricket in 1948.

<sup>38</sup> Trevor Rhone, *Old Story Time and Smile Orange* (Kingston: Longman, 1981), 14. It features prominently in the proceeding discussion of the implementation of Englishness during colonial society and will be explained in greater detail. Here, “black” is used to signify the antithesis of Englishness, which is as pure an aspiration as one can have in post-emancipation West Indian society. One of Rhone’s characters admonishes her grandson by instructing him that “anything that is black, isn’t good”.

<sup>39</sup> Manthia, Diawara, “Englishness and Blackness: Cricket as Discourse on Colonialism.” *Callaloo* 13, no. 4 (1990): 830.

<sup>40</sup> Diawara, 830.

<sup>41</sup> Anton Allahar, “Situating Ethnic Nationalism in the Caribbean,” in *Ethnicity, Class, and Nationalism*, ed. Anton Allahar (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2005), 5-6.

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<sup>42</sup> Allahar, “Black Power and Black Nationalism,” 128.

<sup>43</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 24.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>47</sup> The French and British colonial experiences were not exactly alike. They were enacted by two different colonial powers. However, a comparison between the two is still useful as irrespective of differing colonial masters, the enterprises functioned in much the same way in terms of how the colonial societies were taught to idealize the cultures of the mother countries.

<sup>48</sup> *Old Story Time* was first published in 1981, 19 years after Jamaica obtained independence from Great Britain. Although Rhone wrote the play more than a century after the immediate post emancipation period in Jamaica, the idealization of Englishness was still a relevant issue in Jamaican society. This illustrates how far-reaching the psychological damage of colonialism was on its subjects.

<sup>49</sup> Ironic in that the word ‘pearl’ means a white bead.

<sup>50</sup> Rhone, 14. Much of the dialogue in the play is written in Jamaican patois, a dialect of English. Jamaican patois is not a codified language. As such, there are many different definitions for various words/terms. It can best be explained through the general sentiment that it conveys.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Although Miss Margaret is not white, Miss Aggy has chosen her as a suitable girlfriend for Len because she has features similar to that of a white woman. She has long hair flowing down her back, presumably unlike many of the darker skinned girls whose hair is of a coarser texture. It is important to note too that Miss Margaret is brown and not a “dutty black gal” like Pearl. In this regard, we can see that Miss Margaret is more advanced in the process of physical lactification, and thus more suitable for Len.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>54</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 2. This is telling. Fanon’s implication is that unless the colonized assumes the culture of the colonizer, in this case language, he is subhuman. His personal worth is measured against the original or authentic culture.

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<sup>55</sup> The benefits were twofold: proving one's worth to the colonizer while also distinguishing oneself within the colony's racial, social and class constructs.

<sup>56</sup> Diawara, 840.

<sup>57</sup> Calypso cricket not only pertains to the style of cricket adapted by West Indians, but also references the role that calypso music played in the development of a West Indian cricket identity. As the reader will learn in the ensuing chapters, calypso music was an integral accompaniment to West Indies cricket, matching the flair on the cricket pitch with a rousing voice of celebration through song and dance off it.

<sup>58</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 215.

<sup>59</sup> Diawara, 835.

<sup>60</sup> Strokeplay is a synonym for batsmanship, or the style in which a cricketer bats.

<sup>61</sup> By 1950, West Indies cricket developed to the point where, after 22 years of playing Test cricket, the team defeated England for the first time. The series, played in England, was a symbolic spilling of British blood and served as a measure of revenge for years of colonial centuries of colonial servitude. The victory catalyzed the already vocal movement for the appointment of the first black captain of the team. Chapter 4 will frame this event within the context of West Indies gaining independence from Britain.

<sup>62</sup> Learie Constantine and George Headley will feature prominently in the next chapter. The rise to prominence of both men demonstrated that West Indies cricket was developing to a level that produced quality non-European players. This is a critical occurrence as West Indies cricket moved toward self-governance and away from the shadow of the colonial white master, as evidenced by the eventual push for Frank Worrell to become the first black captain of the team.

## Chapter 3

### Fields of Change: West Indies Cricket: 1928-1950

*The cricket field was a stage on which selected individuals played representative roles which were charged with social significance.<sup>1</sup>*

The centuries of British colonial rule in the West Indies ensured that West Indies cricket would always carry significant social and political weight outside of the field of play. In *Beyond A Boundary*, C.L.R. James explained that the class and racial rivalries were too intense for him to shed the “sordid compromises of everyday existence” when he took to the cricket field.<sup>2</sup> For James, the cricket field was a deeply political space on which he and other disenfranchised West Indians could fight. Although slavery had been abolished, West Indians had precious few avenues through which they could realize agency and self-determination. After centuries of being taught and reinforcing their own inferiority, West Indies cricket provided a unique, arguably singular opportunity to reshape their perception of themselves and showcase it to the world. The battles on the cricket field, whether at a local club in Trinidad or on the hallowed grounds of Lord’s, were never bloody but often rife with political symbolism and significance for those who had no other means of political agency. This chapter analyzes the first 22 years of West Indian Test cricket (1928-1950), a period which spans its debut as a Test team and culminates with the team on the cusp of winning a test series in England for the first time, in 1950.<sup>3</sup> Exploring this era is vital in establishing the social and political climate of the British West Indies leading up to independence in the 1960s, as this will provide context for the ways in which cricket catalyzed these movements.

The rise of a burgeoning, black, cricketing class changed the landscape of West Indies cricket during the period in question. The emergence of Learie Constantine, George Headley, Everton Weekes, Clyde Walcott, and Frank Worrell as talented black cricketers challenged the white autocracy that administered cricket in the region at a time when West Indian cricketers



made their initial forays onto the international scene.<sup>4</sup> Their successes brought better representation for black cricketers and the promise of finally breaking the shackles of white colonial rule on and off the cricket field.<sup>5</sup> Decolonization and the civil rights movement in the United States harmonized with the development of West Indies cricket to aid political movements toward independence in the region. This chapter is primarily concerned with the changes occurring between 1928 and 1950, against the backdrop of the political climate in the West Indies, which readied the team and its supporters for self-governance of their cricket and political lives.

### **West Indies Cricket Team: The Formative Years (1928-1950)**

The West Indies cricket team received a significant boost when, in 1928, it was awarded Test playing status.<sup>6</sup> This achievement marked the beginning of a period (1928-1950) that can best be described as an era of intense change for cricket in the region. West Indies was the fourth team to be granted Test status, an achievement of which Michael Manley writes,

At the turn of the century...only England and Australia were recognized as serious cricket powers. South Africa had been admitted to Test cricket in 1888, but was not their equal. They did not win their first Test match until 1905. After the turn of the century, the West Indies began knocking at the door and were finally accorded Test status in 1928. New Zealand was to follow one year later, and India in 1932.<sup>7</sup>

Although the West Indies cricket team achieved Test status, the game in the region was beset by a host of problems. The team lacked the quality of players and competition that the other test playing countries possessed. Thus, competing at a high level against these countries proved a difficult proposition. The ensuing sections of this chapter will explore further some of the major obstacles in the development of West Indies cricket and excavate the occurrences that brought about change. By 1950, West Indies arrived as a legitimate contender on the international stage and a region primed for political independence from Great Britain.

### *Transportation*

The geographical location of the colonies proved to be a severely limiting factor in the development of cricket in the region in the early twentieth century. In an age before commercial aviation revolutionized transportation, West Indians relied on ships and boats to travel across the Caribbean Sea to compete in inter-colonial matches. Given the lengthy travel times, teams were unable to play against each other as often as would be required for players to hone their skills as readily as the English, Australians or South Africans.<sup>8</sup> Thus, a lack of transportation was an undeniable hindrance to playing frequent matches between the colonies. Accordingly, matches tended to be contested between the larger colonies, such as Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, and Guyana, leaving the smaller colonies with even less match play. This resulted in fewer opportunities for players from the smaller colonies to draw attention to themselves for selection to the West Indies team.<sup>9</sup> Even within this reality of the larger colonies participating in the majority of inter-colonial matches, Jamaica suffered more than the other “big three” because it is situated hundreds of miles northwest of the other colonies. Hence, travel to and from Jamaica was prohibitive, as it took too long and cost too much.

This competitive disadvantage was compounded by the racial policies of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC)<sup>10</sup> with respect to the selection of the team, policies which called for the routine selection of lesser skilled white players to captain and play for the team, at the expense of more qualified black players. At the end of the 1920s, West Indies cricket was still in its infancy, and the team mirrored the racial struggles that plagued the region.<sup>11</sup> Just as West Indians struggled for political autonomy in their respective colonies, they faced a parallel fight to achieve fair representation from the WICBC in its selection of players to represent the region on the international stage.

### *Selection of the West Indies Cricket Team*

The formation of the WICBC in 1926 meant that cricket in the region benefited from a higher level of organization. The WICBC provided an infrastructure that was a crucial first step toward developing West Indian cricket. The launching and early workings of the WICBC is an

under researched topic with the details surrounding its formative stages cloudy. However, “it is known that a small group of wealthy individuals held a preliminary meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, in 1926 out of which an informal structure (the West Indies Cricket Conference) emerged”.<sup>12</sup> Foreshadowing the political problems faced by the West Indies Federation, the WICBC was met with the challenges of governing cricket in many different territories, each one presenting unique socio-cultural considerations.<sup>13</sup> Among its duties, the WICBC was responsible for the selection of the West Indies cricket team, the composition of which has been a point of contention throughout the history of competitive cricket in the region. Brian Stoddart, Australian scholar, comments:

From the beginning the very composition of representative teams was highly charged, with each colony claiming that its players were being discriminated against. For a long time the criteria for selection included not only ability but also colonial origin: there must never be too many Guyanese or Jamaicans or whomever else.<sup>14</sup>

The composition of the West Indies team continued to be a problem for the WICBC decades after its incorporation. With players from so many colonies to choose from, a truly fair selection of the team was arguably an impossible task. Setting aside geographical bias, there were many limiting factors that prohibited equal access to selection for all West Indians. At the onset of the WICBC, regional cricket was only played among the four major colonies: Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, and Guyana. Thus, players from the smaller colonies stood little to no chance of attracting attention for selection and the early years of West Indies cricket were dominated with players from these larger territories. Nonetheless, as Stoddart argues, even if the WICBC selected the best possible team, West Indians would still take issue with the geographical representation of the players.

Although more and more colonial subjects gained access to cricket at regional and international levels, the administration and leadership of West Indies cricket remained in the hands of the white colonial elite. Beginning with the first test team in 1928 and ending with Frank Worrell’s landmark appointment in 1960, the WICBC selected teams that were solely led by white men. Over time, this practice became problematic for most West Indians as these

captains were often less qualified and skilled than their counterparts.<sup>15</sup> Although white players constituted a decided minority of the West Indian population, the WICBC ensured that a white man was always present in the starting eleven to serve as captain.<sup>16</sup> The practice served the purpose of perpetuating a racial hierarchy in West Indies cricket. Furthermore, it sent a symbolic message to West Indians and onlookers overseas that in spite of successes on the field, the colonial subjects still needed the guidance of their white master.<sup>17</sup>

A third consideration of the selection of the West Indies team had to do with the racial compositions of the respective colonies. Slavery and indentured labour brought many different types of people to the West Indies in the centuries leading up to the period in question. Whereas the majority of the population in Jamaica came from Africa and were identified as black, the populations of other territories were less homogeneous. Trinidad is arguably the best example of this, a colony where the population was comprised of an almost even split of blacks and Indians. While Barbados had a primarily black underclass, Guyana featured a significant number of people brought to the country from India as indentured workers. This presented the WICBC with a further dimension of the selection process that complicated matters when naming a team to represent the region. In addition to a team selected on merit, some West Indians wanted to see better racial representation outside of black and white cricketers.<sup>18</sup> Due to the pluralistic composition of the Caribbean, the WICBC faced a difficult task in choosing a team that satisfied most West Indians. However, its racially biased policies only served to complicate matters. As Constantine, Headley and the Three W's (see below) achieved international success, the WICBC's selection practices (particularly those that favoured installing a white captain at all costs) would, in time, prove untenable.

### *First Test Tour to England*

Although England and West Indies had played against each other previously, the tour of 1928 represented the first time the teams played a test match.<sup>19</sup> England began the series as overwhelming favourites, so its comprehensive victory came as little surprise. Nonetheless, the result disappointed many in the West Indies.<sup>20</sup> While defeating England in the West Indies would

have been satisfying, doing so in their “own back yard” would have carried more political weight. The Test series of 1928 carried the promise of beating the colonial master at his own game and, in the process, making a proud statement for the maturity of West Indians and their cricketing skills. Though West Indies failed to do so, many positives were gleaned from the tour.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, much can be extracted from the manner in which the British reported on the matches. Recounting the first match of the series, the *London Times* noted:

In the first Test Match at Lord’s the West Indies gave the impression that their batting strength is not sufficient to give them any real chance of beating England under equal conditions. The deficit is of temperament rather than of technique, and will be less apparent as their experience grows. But at present their batsmen, with the exception of G. Challenor and R.K. Nunes, are easily lured on big occasions into adopting tactics which the bowlers, particularly the slow bowlers, desire to impose upon them, and their judgment is elementary.<sup>22</sup>

The article identifies West Indies’ batting as the main culprit contributing to the team’s demise. However, while seemingly straightforward in its analysis, closer scrutiny and contextualization reveal a great deal not readily apparent. The report can best be understood in the context of cricket’s colonial beginnings in the West Indies where batting was seen as artistry best suited to the white elite, and bowling viewed as agricultural labour reserved for blacks. The article distinguishes Challenor and Nunes (captain) as the only two West Indians who displayed the proper aptitude for batting, while the other players were deceived too easily by the English bowlers. Given that Challenor and Nunes were white, their praise can be decoded to reveal the implication that the black batsmen were not as up to the task of combating the English bowlers. Furthermore, describing the batsmen’s judgment as “elementary” is a particularly loaded choice of words by the author. It is possible other factors contributed to the uneven performance of the West Indian batsmen, but the author pointedly explains it away as an exploitation of their lack of intellect. Additionally, this was emblematic of how blacks were viewed at the time, all brawn and no intellect – not dissimilar to the plight of professional black athletes in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The negative perception of black cricketers at this time can also be understood within the framework of “race science.” David Wiggins explains that as black athletes achieved more and more success, beginning in the late nineteenth century, “people from all walks of life - coaches,

athletes, trainers, cultural anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, physical educators, biologists, medical doctors, and sportscasters - have put forth their own theories regarding racial differences and their possible effects on sport performance.”<sup>24</sup> The legacy of slavery demanded that blacks were inferior to whites, indeed one of the justifications for its implementation and survival during the previous centuries. However, the likes of Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, and Jesse Owens directly challenged this notion with each successive victory. Interested parties turned to science as a means of explaining the superior performances of these athletes. Expanding on this phenomenon, historian, Patrick Miller, explains:

By the 1930s generalizations from individual performances to group characteristics had come to dominate numerous renderings of the accomplishments of black prizefighters such as the heavyweight champion, Joe Louis. Likewise, to account for the medals won by the sprinters Eddie Tolan and Ralph Metcalfe during the 1932 Olympics and of Jesse Owens, Metcalfe again, and numerous other African American champions at the Berlin Games of 1936, white commentators sought explanations from the realm of biology, insisting that the sources of black success derived from innate advantages.<sup>25</sup>

By explaining the athletes’ successes as due to innate physiological differences, scientists ignored the sociological contributing factors. This practice served to negate the hard work and training required to produce these results as well as to perpetuate the idea that whites were still superior to blacks. In the context of cricket in the West Indies, it was more likely that white batsmen performed better due to the historical practice of relegating black cricketers to the more arduous roles of bowling and fielding. The notion that black batsmen could be “outfoxed” more easily than their white counterparts speaks more to a racist conception of blacks which fails to account for the sociological restrictions that limited their access to proper training in the preceding centuries. This would be the plight of the black athlete for much of the first half of the twentieth century; each time one racist ideology was disproven, another would be constructed to explain why the white athlete failed to defeat his black counterpart.

While the *London Times* was particularly critical of the West Indian batting, the paper heaped praise on the team’s bowlers. Marveling at the speed of the bowlers, the author posited, “Unless some new bowlers of pace have been discovered in Australia, it is highly improbable that our men during the upcoming winter will have to face an attack of such sustained ferocity as

that provided by Francis, Constantine, and Griffith.”<sup>26</sup> This was high praise given that, by 1928, Australia had already been playing Test cricket for decades. Still, the debutant West Indian fast bowlers were deemed to be more advanced.<sup>27</sup> Chief among these fast bowlers was Learie Constantine. On that initial Test tour to England, he emerged as the most noteworthy of the West Indian players. The press reports from the *London Times* during this period indicate that Learie Constantine awed many with captivating all-round performances via his bowling, batting and fielding. He was the first of a storied number of black West Indian cricketers that would continue to awe the cricketing world for the next 22 years.

### **Pioneers of West Indies Cricket<sup>28</sup>**

*The British tradition soaked deep into me was that when you entered the sporting arena you left behind you the sordid compromises of everyday existence. Yet for us to do that we would have had to divest ourselves of our skins.*<sup>29</sup>

The West Indies cricket team lost its first ever Test series against England on British soil in 1928. Of the historic first encounter, Michael Manley comments, “by 1928 many seeds long in the ground of social history were beginning to produce interesting new participants in the game of cricket. Although the West Indies were badly beaten, they were about to take their place in the future of cricket.”<sup>30</sup> Between 1928 and 1950, West Indies produced several world class cricketers. Learie Constantine, George Headley, Everton Weekes, Clyde Walcott, and Frank Worrell were all pioneering contributors to the establishment of West Indies cricket as an international force by 1950. The emergence and successes of these exceptional black cricketers helped to debunk the long institutionalized myth<sup>31</sup> that blacks in the West Indies were inferior to their white masters. They helped cultivate a self-belief and pride within the West Indies that nurtured a growing sentiment for self-determination. For West Indian cricketers of this era, cricket was a political enterprise. Each century and five-wicket haul was an act of resistance against the centuries of colonial domination meted out by the British.<sup>32</sup> The performances of these cricketers were crucial rungs in the ladder toward Worrell’s eventual captaincy and

political independence in the region. The following section introduces these men and examines their lasting contributions to the development of West Indies cricket and West Indian politics between 1928 and 1950.

*Learie Constantine (1928-1939)*<sup>33</sup>

Learie Constantine was one of the first West Indian cricketers to create an impact outside the Caribbean. His contributions to the early development of West Indies cricket constitute an integral part of this chapter. He was the cricketer most emblematic of change on and off the field between 1928 and 1950. Prior to the West Indies team achieving Test status in 1928, the team comprised a small group of black cricketers under the leadership of white players. Constantine was the first black cricketer who, through his skill and achievement on the cricket field, demonstrated that there were black cricketers in the West Indies who were capable of performing at an elite level. Previewing the series in 1928, the *London Times* identified Constantine as a major talent in the West Indies team.<sup>34</sup> According to the Times, the West Indies was “a particularly attractive team in that they can, if need be, call upon the services of three fast bowlers; they possess some remarkably active fieldsmen, and in Learie Constantine they have an all-round cricketer of exceptional merit”.<sup>35</sup> In Constantine, the West Indies had the rare cricketer who could bat, bowl, and field at very high levels.<sup>36</sup> This caused him to be the marvel of the English crowds wherever West Indies played on their tour in 1928. One report goes as far as saying his play “completely captured the imagination of the crowd.”<sup>37</sup> Indeed, English crowds had never before seen a cricketer like Constantine. The antithesis of the perfect English gentleman in his play, Constantine exhibited a flare and daring on the field that mesmerized the English crowds.

Constantine’s Test career spanned 11 years, and during that time he played in 18 Test matches.<sup>38</sup> He was arguably one of the first great all-rounders in the history of the game. Although his overall Test statistics do not put him in the same category as other great all-rounders who followed him, his contributions with both bat and ball are substantial when considered in the context of the era in which he played.<sup>39</sup> The true greatness of Constantine can



best be understood through his performances in the Lancashire Cricket League and the way in which writers described his talents. During the West Indies' tour to England in 1928, Constantine caught the eye of local reporters who marvelled at his abilities:

Everything else in the day's play was entirely put in the shade by Constantine's batting, and it is not flattery to remark that when once he was out cricket seemed to be a dreary game. Altogether, after his magnificent fielding on Saturday and the persistent threat of his fast bowling, Constantine established definite claims to be considered an ideal number 8 in a World team.<sup>40</sup>

Constantine was that rare cricketer who commanded the crowd's attention with everything he did on the field. Although this did not necessarily translate into statistical greatness in the Test arena, his ability was unquestionable. After a win by the West Indies, *The Times* noted that the "result was largely due to the fine all-round play of L.M. Constantine, who secured 13 wickets in the course of the match, performed the hat trick, and played a three-figure innings."<sup>41</sup> He all but won the match for the West Indies by himself. His dazzling performances on that initial test tour of England in 1928 caught the eye of the British public to the extent that he was able to secure a professional contract with the Nelson Cricket Club in the Lancashire Cricket League.<sup>42</sup>

Constantine's success at Nelson paved the way for other cricketers from the West Indies to play in the English leagues. This newfound access to cricket in England provided West Indian cricketers with the invaluable opportunity to hone their talents in ways that they could not while playing inter-colonial cricket in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the English leagues made cricket a viable career for West Indians.<sup>43</sup> Previously, many cricketers were forced to give up the game in order to make a living and provide for themselves and their families. For the first time, due in large part to Constantine's trailblazing efforts, cricket could be a career for aspiring players in the West Indies. This was a vital development in the maturation of cricket in the region. In order for cricket to veer from being dominated by the planter class, the game had to become more than a pastime for everyone else. Greater access to the English leagues also exposed more players to tougher competition and vastly different playing conditions - a key element to the team's eventual success in England in 1950.<sup>44</sup>

While Learie Constantine's achievements on the cricket field are exemplary, it is the influence that his career had off the field of play that make him a doubly relevant study for this analysis of the development of West Indies cricket.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, C.L.R. James writes, "he belongs to that distinguished company of men who, through cricket, influenced the history of their time."<sup>46</sup> He adds, "Even his countrymen know only the body and not the bones of his career. The rest of the world, England in particular, knows a great and original cricketer, a man of character, shrewd and genial."<sup>47</sup> After his playing days ended, Constantine assumed a role of political agitator.<sup>48</sup> Though he made considerable sums from playing cricket in England and was mostly a popular figure, Constantine was constantly navigating his way through the tenuous race relations of the time. In 1943, he and his wife were refused accommodation at a hotel, an event which prompted Constantine to sue the owners for discrimination. His subsequent victory was covered in *The Times*, receiving considerable attention.<sup>49</sup> He went on to serve in various governmental capacities for both his native Trinidad and England.

More than anything, Learie Constantine represented a change in the way black cricketers could see themselves within the overall construct of cricket in an ever-developing colonial region. He symbolized betterment, making progress as black West Indians endeavoured to climb the social, political, and economic ladders of cricket and Caribbean society. Young West Indians had Constantine to look to as an example of what was possible; not only could he excel at cricket, but also forge a successful and prominent political career for himself after retirement. His cricketering and political careers were transcendent in that the British were made to see him, and by extension West Indians at large, as human beings who could achieve great things. This was instrumental in planting the seeds of political self-determination on and off the field in the years to come.

### *George Headley (1930-1954)*

If Learie Constantine aroused the promise of change for black cricketers in the West Indies, George Headley was an even greater symbol of progress. Whereas Constantine's test

match statistics belied his talents, Headley's performances with the bat elevated him to the rarefied company of the all-time greats of the game. Like Constantine, Headley's career was interrupted by World War II, and consequently he only played in 22 Test matches. However, with a career batting average of 60.83<sup>50</sup>, Headley was an undeniable star. C.L.R. James encapsulated Headley's greatness when he wrote,

To think about Constantine between the wars is to conjure up the other West Indian master of the period, the one and only George Headley. I write of him purely as a cricketer. And I do so contrary to the pattern of this book, because, first, this West Indian narrowly escapes being the greatest batsman I have ever seen. Pride of place goes to Bradman, but George is not far behind. In fact, it is my belief that if he had lived his cricketing life in England or Australia he would not be behind anyone.<sup>51</sup>

James' comparison of Headley with Bradman is telling. Don Bradman is without statistical equal as far as Test match batting is concerned. He finished his career with a batting average of 99.94, with his nearest rival possessing an average of 60.97. James claims that had Headley spent his cricketing life in England or Australia, Headley's record would be unmatched, due to the superior facilities and greater opportunities for playing more local matches that Headley would have benefited from. Nonetheless, that Headley could be considered in the same breath as the greatest batsman of all time is no small matter. Previewing the West Indies team in 1933, *The Times* writes of the West Indies team that it featured "G. Headley, a batsman who has not irresponsibly been spoken of as being one of the best three batsmen in the world, and who, presumably on account of the scores he has made and not because of any similarity of method, has been ingenuously referred to as the 'black Bradman.'<sup>52</sup> In Headley, the West Indies possessed its first batsman who could dominate all bowling attacks and give further legitimacy to an ever developing cricketing region.

Though Headley had assumed the position as first great black batsman, building on the promise of Learie Constantine's visit to England in 1928, the *Times*' description of the team still reflected an unsettling racial undertone. Presumably offering praise for the West Indians, the author writes, "it is in the very nature of his (the captain) men to bang the ball down cheerfully, to chase it to the farthest end of the field, and whenever possible to hit it into the next county."<sup>53</sup>

The author does not use words that give the impression of a thinking cricketer, one who is deliberate in stroke play or cunning as a bowler. Instead, he chooses to focus on an exaggerated physicality of the West Indians, one that is in keeping with the narrative of the West Indians possessing great physical skill but lacking in mental ability. Although performances on the field rejected the trope of the mindless black West Indian, the English press insisted on characterizing the West Indian team as having an intrinsically carefree and jovial disposition that required them to play the game with a reckless abandon.

George Headley was the first black sporting star from the West Indies. He became a hero to the black masses in the West Indies. Michael Manley notes that Headley came to be known as “Atlas,” in reference to the ancient Greek god who carried the earth on his shoulders.<sup>54</sup> Headley earned the nickname because he was often the sole resistance to opposition bowling attacks for the better part of a decade. He carried the team on his back. Manley further comments that:

When he walked to the wicket, brisk, self-assured, and took guard in his quaintly old-fashioned, ‘two-eyed’ stance, he became the focus for the longing of an entire people for proof: proof of their own self-worth, their own capacity. Furthermore, they wanted this proof to be laid at the door of the white man who owned the world which in turn defined their circumstances.

George Headley’s bat was a weapon carrying a deeply political purpose. The West Indian people looked to him for political agency. Whereas they had very little influence over the everyday drudgery of their own lives, each at bat presented another opportunity to voice the cries of his people. This is the power that cricket wielded around the West Indies during the period in question, 1928-1950. Through the performances of an emerging black cricketing class, West Indians around the region fashioned similar aspirations of greatness for themselves, which increasingly became incongruent with adhering to British culture and political rule. The likes of Constantine and Headley offered an alternative script to colonial living after emancipation; one that extended the promise of beating back the colonial master and forging new, independent lives for themselves.

*The Three W's: Walcott (1948-1960), Weekes (1948-1958), and Worrell (1948-1963)*

The Three W's is a nickname given to Clyde Walcott, Everton Weekes, and Frank Worrell. The trio of West Indian batsmen were born within 16 months of each other in Barbados and all made their debuts for the West Indies in 1948. Never before had the West Indies cricket team featured such wealth of batting talent. Constantine planted the seed of black cricketing greatness, Headley fertilized and nurtured its infancy, and the Three W's oversaw its maturation. Prior to the Three W's, Constantine and Headley could be dismissed by the white elite as one-off aberrations or the exception to the rule. However, in Walcott, Weekes and Worrell, there was unequivocal proof that West Indian batsmen were every bit the equal to their white counterparts. Between 1928 and 1950, many underqualified and lesser skilled white batsmen were routinely selected to play for the West Indies at the expense of deserving black batsmen.<sup>55</sup> However, on the backs of Constantine and Headley, and with the emergence of the undeniable talents of the Three W's, this practice was no longer tenable.

The relationship between the development of West Indies cricket and the political development of the colonies is an integral component of this thesis. The performance of Constantine, Headley and the Three W's, in the immediate decades before mass independence in the Caribbean, propelled the people and politicians in the Caribbean toward the belief that they were ready for self-governance. Hilary Beckles concurs, arguing that "Great black players of the interwar period, such as Learie Constantine and George Headley, had ensured that the cricket culture would become a site for the discourse of decolonization and democratic freedom."<sup>56</sup> By the time the Three W's arrived on the cricketing scene in 1948, Learie Constantine and George Headley had already laid the foundation for change in West Indies cricket. However, the resounding success of Walcott, Weekes, and Worrell, ensured that black equality in cricket was no longer a question of *if*, but *when* it would be realized. The West Indies produced other outstanding athletes during this period, most notably in track and field. Jamaicans Arthur Wint and Herb McKenley won gold and silver medals respectively at the 1948 Olympic Games in London, England. However, those athletes represented their individual colonies, whereas the West Indies cricketers represented the entire region. With West Indian Federation looming as a

unifying political movement of all the colonies, the symbolism of cricketers from multiple colonies playing as one entity was a powerful harbinger for the potential of Caribbean political unity.

## **The Political Climate in the West Indies**

During the 22- year period in question, independence from Great Britain was the foremost political issue in the Caribbean. While the seeds of independence were planted before 1928 and the discourse surrounding its realization had long before taken flight, it was during this time that West Indians began to see a break from colonial rule as a realistic proposition. Political independence was conceived through two possible mediums. The first was an insular method whereby each colony plotted its own path towards independence from Britain. The second, more contentious method, prescribed the galvanizing of the colonies into one political unit known as the West Indian Federation. Regardless of how independence was achieved, the overriding sentiment during this time was one of readiness for a way of life different from the colonial master/subject dynamic that saddled the region with racial tensions and its people believing in their own worthlessness.

One of the most polarizing issues surrounding West Indian Federation was the distribution of economic resources. Much debate occurred pertaining to the belief in some colonies (typically the larger ones) that they had more economic resources to contribute to a federal government than other smaller territories, and so some would benefit more than others within the construct of a unified political Caribbean. In these scenarios, colonies such as Jamaica felt it had far more to gain by seeking its own independence from Great Britain than aligning itself with others in the region. In 1929, the *Jamaica Gleaner* ran an editorial discussing this dilemma as it pertained to gasoline.<sup>57</sup> The counterargument held that each colony had its own resources to contribute to the overall sustenance of the region, and where one was deficient it had other resources with which to complement the overall functioning of the Federation. Political representation within the Federation proved to be another divisive issue. Leaders of the movement had to decide the scope

of the proposed federal government, how much autonomy would remain within the individual countries, and how to elect its leaders.<sup>58</sup>

By 1947, Federation appeared to be gaining steam as delegates from each of the proposed member colonies met at a conference to flesh out the key considerations. One of the main catalysts for Federation was the blueprint which similar movements in Australia and Canada provided. The Barbadian delegate, Grantley Adams thusly said:

I wish to point out, Sir, that we, having due regard to the circumstances under which other existing federations began, are absolutely convinced that we are no less capable, no less ready and not in a worse position, even from an economic point of view than were the 13 colonies or the Australian colonies when they began. We of the West Indies want to be combined as a single unit.<sup>59</sup>

The pervading sentiment of Adams' declaration was that even though Federation faced many justifiable concerns, the West Indian people were ready to push forward. Inspired by the success of similar efforts in Australia, Adams was of the opinion that West Indians could hang their hat on their strong desire to make it work. Jamaican leader and prominent participant in the actualization of West Indian Federation, Norman Manley, argues that Federation would not be handed to the region by the British, and so they must be proactive to make it happen:

It is the natural tendency of colonial powers to doubt the ability of the governed to rule themselves. That must be so, otherwise they would not dare to continue to rule. If a man did not believe in his superiority to govern, he could not do so. Colonial powers must find reasons to justify slow progress. And they are not to be quarrelled with for that because it is based on the historical process.<sup>60</sup>

Manley's speech was a rallying of the masses to press forward with independence. If they wanted to be politically free from Britain, they would have to take it for themselves. Given that West Indians were long sufferers of the colonial enterprise, it is unsurprising that they would need inspiration to galvanize the requisite self-belief in order to make this happen. This is how the triumphs of the West Indies cricket team acted as a catalyst toward this end. For 22 years, the team showed quantifiable improvement to the point where, by 1950, the players were primed to

exact revenge on their tour to England. Chapter four will show how this decisive victory would be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

It was not until 1956 that political legislation brought about the founding of the West Indian Federation.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the enterprise would crumble shortly thereafter leaving the colonies with the task of arriving at political independence from Great Britain individually. This thesis is not concerned with how the West Indian colonies achieved independence but with the factors that aided in its fruition. The political frenzy and confusion surrounding political independence in the 1950s served to highlight the importance of the strident developments on the cricket field. With West Indian cricketers achieving considerable individual and collective success on the cricket field, they served as a potential blueprint for how Caribbean people could model themselves in a similar fashion with the ultimate goal of achieving political self-determination. West Indies cricket and the political movements in the Caribbean benefited from a symbiotic relationship as neither could be said to have a direct causal effect on the other but dovetailed to create a perfectly combustible region primed for the eventualities of autonomy on both the cricket field and political spheres.

## **Summary**

By 1950, momentum toward significant cricketing and political changes in the West Indies had gathered irreversible steam. Due to the successes of pioneering black cricketers like Learie Constantine, George Headley, and the Three W's, cricket was no longer the reserve of the colonial white elite in the West Indies. The extraordinary talents of these men ignited a desire in West Indians to move past colonial rule in the region and seek political autonomy from Great Britain.<sup>62</sup> The legacy of colonialism is one of West Indians having belonged to other peoples for hundreds of years. Most of the colonies belonged to multiple colonial masters over the course of the previous centuries. Jamaica first became a Spanish colony upon Columbus' "discovery" in 1492, only to be ceded to the British in 1655. By 1950, West Indians were ready to belong to themselves, no longer tethered to a mother country that controlled their destiny. Through cricket,



West Indians had a means through which they could proclaim their humanity, that they were civilized people. They were no longer the savages needing to be tamed, which was one of the initial justifications for colonialism. West Indians were not certain how they would proceed with independence, or if they would be able to survive and thrive. Yet, by 1950, most in the region were ready to forge ahead in that uncertainty, knowing only that the identities imposed upon them through slavery and colonialism were no longer tenable. The game that the British taught them as a means of social control had become the vehicle through which they could destroy the shackles of colonial subjugation. Constantine, Headley, and Worrell became their heroes, symbols of the success and liberation that awaited them. These cricketers showed their fellow West Indians that they too could rise up and take control of their political lives. Through the use of a Critical Discourse Analysis, Chapter 4 situates West Indies cricket as a catalyst for West Indians to achieve this political independence from Britain.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>3</sup> I have relied on the *London Times*, *London Daily Express* and *Jamaica Gleaner* as my two newspapers of choice for this thesis. As much of my thesis features events involving the West Indies and Britain, I am using one periodical from each region. I am limiting myself to two newspapers partly out of necessity as they are the ones at my disposal featuring extensive archives covering the time periods in question. For this chapter I turned to these sources when researching cricket matches and players within the declared 1928-1950 period. More specifically, the *London Times* was used to glean descriptions of West Indian players by the British so as to aid in analysis of the West Indian cricketer within the overall premise of the chapter – providing context for the conditions which gave rise to West Indian cricket becoming a catalyst for independence in the region. They are also used when discussing the political climate in the West Indies leading up to 1950, with specific reference to West Indian Federation. While these papers add heft to the content of this chapter, their main usage was in Chapter 4 as I relied on them as part of my Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

<sup>4</sup> Worrell, Weekes and Walcott were known as “The Three W’s.” This nickname, referencing the shared first letter of their last names, came about as they each cemented their spots as key cogs in the West Indies batting line-up during the 1940s and into the 1950s.

<sup>5</sup> As black West Indian cricketers gained more exposure to a higher quality of competition, they achieved more success. These trailblazing cricketers ensured that more black cricketers would infiltrate the West Indies team throughout the years in question, 1928-1950.

<sup>6</sup> See note 36 in Chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 24. As of 2010, ten teams have been granted Test playing status: England, Australia, South Africa, West Indies, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

<sup>8</sup> For example, English County and League cricketers could travel fairly easily from match to match via trains.

<sup>9</sup> It would be decades before a prominent player emerged from one of the smaller colonies to play on the West Indies cricket team.

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<sup>10</sup> The West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) was established in 1926. However, in 1996, the organization changed its name to the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), its current title.

<sup>11</sup> By the late 1920s, England and Australia had already been playing test cricket for over 20 years. “Infancy” is used to convey how underdeveloped West Indies cricket was at the time in relation to the other test playing countries.

<sup>12</sup> Ray Goble and Keith A.P. Sandiford, *75 Years of West Indies Cricket: 1928-2003* (London: Hansib Publishing Ltd., 2004), 16. The research conducted for this thesis did not reveal much regarding the founding of the WICBC and its members. This presents an opportunity for further research, particularly in identifying where these members came from and assessing how their backgrounds may have influenced the composition of the team.

<sup>13</sup> The West Indies Federation was a political movement in the mid-twentieth century whereby a plurality of West Indian colonies aimed to form one government presiding over all. This concept was similar to what was eventually realized with the European Union.

<sup>14</sup> Stoddart, “Caribbean Cricket,” 244.

<sup>15</sup> The push for Frank Worrell’s captaincy was catalyzed by West Indians rebelling against this method of selection. West Indians felt the time had come for self-governance on the cricket field (captaincy) as well as in political spheres (independence from Britain).

<sup>16</sup> Stoddart, “Caribbean Cricket,” 246. Brian Stoddart gives a complete account of the succession of white captains that led the West Indies cricket team between 1928 (Sir Harold Austin) and 1960 (John Goddard).

<sup>17</sup> This is not to say that most of these white captains could not make the team on merit alone. However, their repeated selection as *captain* for 30 years, over more talented players fit for the job, is a crucial component of the contextual lead up to the following chapter and the crux of this thesis.

<sup>18</sup> It was not until 1950 that Sonny Ramadhin (Trinidad) became the first player of Indian descent to play for West Indies. This could have been due to prejudiced practices by the WICBC or that there were few qualified Indian players during this time. Regardless, the absence of an Indian player was a reminder of the constant struggle in the region pertaining to issues of race.

<sup>19</sup> West Indies played test cricket for the first time in 1928. However, English and West Indian teams had been competing for over 30 years in non-test match capacities. Each team took turns sending representative sides overseas to contest matches during this time.

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<sup>20</sup> “West Indies Cricket Team,” *London Times*, September 27, 1928, Infotrac. At a luncheon for the West Indies team hosted by the West Indian Club, its chairman expressed dismay at reports of disappointment in the team’s performance emanating from the Caribbean press. While the team failed to win the series, he felt there were many positives to be derived from the proceedings.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> “Cricket, The Second Test Match, The West Indies’ Weakness,” *London Times*, July 23, 1928, Infotrac.

<sup>23</sup> Refer to page 27 in Chapter 2 for a more detailed account of how this perception of black cricketers came to be.

<sup>24</sup> David Wiggins, “Great Speed But Little Stamina: The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority,” *Journal of Sport History* 16 (1989): 158.

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Miller, “The Anatomy of Scientific Racism: Racialist Responses to Black Athletic Achievement,” *Journal of Sport History* 25 (1998): 129.

<sup>26</sup> “Cricket. The Second Test Match, The West Indies’ Big Task,” *London Times*, July 24, 1928, Infotrac. Here, “speed” and “pace” refer to the actual velocity of the ball delivered by the bowlers to the batsmen, akin to a pitcher’s fastball in baseball.

<sup>27</sup> While the author does not attempt to explain the success of the West Indian fast bowlers as having to do with intrinsic biological advantages, the awe expressed in the descriptions of their physical abilities speaks to a level of athleticism that appears to have been foreign to the British public to this point. It was this awe that led scientists during this period to search for a biological explanation as to why these black athletes were outperforming their white counterparts.

<sup>28</sup> The first great West Indian cricketers are a critical component of this chapter. The exposition of their exploits on the cricket field should be viewed as more than biographical depictions. Up to this time, West Indians had precious few successes in whom they could feel great pride. Beyond this, these cricketers possessed the unique ability to lash out against the British on the cricket field, making them an appropriate study for how their performances spilled over onto West Indian society at large.

<sup>29</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 88.

<sup>30</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 28.

<sup>31</sup> For more background regarding this myth, see endnote 25 in chapter 2. Here I’m more interested in the use of “institutionalized” as a means of conveying how insidiously ubiquitous

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this was – in keeping with Chapter 2’s exposition of the damaged colonial psyche of West Indians.

<sup>32</sup> These terms refer to outstanding performances that can be achieved by a batsman and a bowler, respectively. A “century” occurs when a batsman scores 100 runs in a single innings, while a “five wicket haul” is when one bowler dismisses five of a possible ten opposing batsmen in one innings.

<sup>33</sup> The time span in parentheses represents the length of Constantine’s test career. Similar parentheses will be used later on for Headley, Worrell, Walcott, and Weekes. Although these players retired from test cricket, they continued their professional careers at lower levels of cricket, be it regional (in the West Indies) or county (in England).

<sup>34</sup> The *London Times* is used as a primary source for three main reasons: for its ease of access through the Western Library, reputation, and breadth of its archives.

<sup>35</sup> “Cricket. A Drawn Match at Hull, Robinson’s Hat-Trick,” *London Times*, June 23, 1928, Infotrac.

<sup>36</sup> An all-rounder is a cricketer who exhibits above average proficiency in more than one discipline of the game, typically in batting and bowling. Usually, players perform very specialized roles on cricket teams. The proliferation of the all-rounder is very much a modern development (post-1980). During Constantine’s time, batsmen were not expected to excel at other disciplines of the game and vice versa with bowlers. He absolutely stood out in this regard, in that he batted, bowled and fielded at elite levels.

<sup>37</sup> “Cricket. West Indies Do Well at Scarborough,” *London Times*, September 11, 1928, Infotrac.

<sup>38</sup> Cricketers who played Test cricket in the first half of the twentieth century played far fewer matches than those in the latter half. It is fairly common for the great cricketers of today to play in excess of 100 Test matches. The lack of quick transportation, immediate communication, and the two World Wars all hindered the potential for more Test series to be played during the playing days of Constantine.

<sup>39</sup> Constantine finished his Test career with a batting average of 19.24 and a bowling average of 30.10. Batting averages are calculated by dividing the total number of runs scored by the total number of times a batsman was dismissed or given out. Meanwhile, bowling averages are calculated by dividing the total number of runs conceded by the total number of wickets taken. While there is no definitive standard for what constitutes an elite batting or bowling average, the greats of the game tend to score runs at an average in excess of 50 and take wickets at an average below 30. For further clarification on runs, wickets and other terminology, please reference the glossary of terms.

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<sup>40</sup> “Cricket. The West Indies at Lord’s, L.N. Constantine’s Great Batting,” *London Times*, June 12, 1928, Infotrac. The description of Constantine as being an “ideal number 8” speaks to his all-round ability as batsman, bowler and fielder. Number 8 refers to the position in the batting order that the author thinks is best suited to Constantine. This position is usually the reserve of a player who shows significant aptitude as both a bowler and a batsman. The best batsmen occupy the numbers 1-7 positions in the batting lineup, while the bowlers reside in the 8-11 spots.

<sup>41</sup> “Great All-Round Play of L.M. Constantine,” *London Times*, June 29, 1928. Infotrac. A hat trick occurs when a bowler dismisses 3 batsmen or takes three wickets with successive deliveries.

<sup>42</sup> English county and league cricket are the domestic leagues in which English cricketers play. The English cricket team is then selected based on the performances of players in these leagues. The West Indian equivalent of this was inter-colonial cricket, when teams from the various colonies (Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados etc.) would play against each other.

<sup>43</sup> “Headley Signs 2-Year Contract With Haslingden,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, September 30, 1933, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com. By 1933, George Headley and Ellis Achong were both playing in the Lancashire League alongside Learie Constantine.

<sup>44</sup> Playing cricket in England proved challenging for West Indian cricketers throughout the years, as they encountered conditions unlike anything in the Caribbean. For starters, the English summer is often damp and cold. Players are often forced to wear sweaters while on the field, a far cry from the unrelenting sun faced in home conditions. Furthermore, overcast and damp conditions enable bowlers to effect dramatic movement of the cricket ball while bowling. This makes batting particularly difficult.

<sup>45</sup> Such was Constantine’s cricketing and political significance that he was knighted in 1962.

<sup>46</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 133.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>48</sup> Learie Constantine developed a friendship with C.L.R. James and the two became vocal advocates for the advancement of the interests of black cricketers between 1928 and 1950. In the 1950s, both men used their vast influence in the campaign for Frank Worrell’s captaincy. Constantine also enlisted James’ help in writing his first book in 1933, *Cricket and I*.

<sup>49</sup> “Law Report, June 28,” *London Times*, June 29, 1944, Infotrac.

<sup>50</sup> This means that, on average, Bradman scored 99.94 runs each time he batted. One of the premier markers of success as a batsman is the number of centuries (scores of 100 and above)

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achieved. A mean of 99.94 indicates that Bradman averaged nearly a century per innings (at bat). Not only is Don Bradman's batting average the highest in the history of the game, but no other batsman has averaged more than 60.97, a staggering difference. Thus, one can see that Don Bradman was the ultimate comparison for excellence.

<sup>51</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 181.

<sup>52</sup> "Cricket. A New Season, The West Indies Team," *London Times*, April 19, 1933, Infotrac.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 37.

<sup>55</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 90-91. James recalls the case of a wicketkeeper called Piggot. According to James, "He was without the slightest doubt the finest wicketkeeper we have ever seen, and to this day I have not seen or heard of any West Indian wicketkeeper who surpassed him". Yet, James recounts being flabbergasted when Piggot was overlooked for the 1923 West Indies team to tour England. He attributes the snub to there being too many black players on the team, with no room for Piggot.

<sup>56</sup> Hilary Beckles and Michael Malec, "Baseball, Cricket, and Social Change: Jackie Robinson and Frank Worrell," in *Anthropology, Sport, and Culture*, ed. Robert Sands (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1999), 139.

<sup>57</sup> "Question of West Indian Federation," *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 28, 1929, *Gleaner* archives, [jamaica-gleaner.com](http://jamaica-gleaner.com).

<sup>58</sup> "Strong Arguments For Immediate Or Early W.I. Federation," *Jamaica Gleaner*, September 13, 1947, *Gleaner* archives, [jamaica-gleaner.com](http://jamaica-gleaner.com).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Norman Manley, "Self-Government Now!," in *Norman Washington Manley and the New Jamaica: Selected Speeches and Writings: 1938-68*, ed. Rex Nettleford (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1971), 125.

<sup>61</sup> Established in 1958, the West Indies Federation comprised the ten territories of: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, the then St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago. The Federation was established by the British Caribbean Federation Act of 1956 with the aim of establishing a political union among its members.

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<sup>62</sup> There is no direct causal relationship between the successes of West Indian cricketers and the initiation of independence movements in the region. Rather, West Indies cricket gave inspiration to and catalyzed them. The symbolic victories on the cricket field gave a taste of what it would be like to shun the colonial master, and demonstrated to West Indians that they could be successful on their own.



## Chapter 4

### **‘Massa Day Done:’ The Role of Cricket in Achieving West Indian Independence<sup>1</sup>**

*The intimate connection between cricket and West Indian social and political life was established so that all except the wilfully perverse could see.<sup>2</sup>*

The previous two chapters have situated the historical and socio-political role of West Indies cricket in Caribbean society. Having taken root during the colonial mission, cricket grew from a form of recreation for British soldiers and instrument of social control, to a political weapon eagerly wielded by West Indian cricketers, laying claim to the maturation of their skills as world class sportsmen and a symbolic readiness for political independence from Britain. During the 1950s, Caribbean politicians embraced race politics in making their case for independence to their constituents. This chapter frames how the specifics of the preceding chapters left West Indians ripe for political manipulation as their leaders built their independence platforms. Furthermore, this chapter will reveal the various ways in which cricket functioned as a catalyst for independence in the Caribbean through the application of a critical discourse analysis (CDA). It is not enough to claim that successes on the cricket field aided in realizing independence around the Caribbean. More importantly, connections must be made between West Indies cricket and the socio-political conditions that allowed for this to be reality.

This CDA will navigate the incidents leading up to independence (1962),<sup>3</sup> including the successes of the West Indies cricket team, which implored an ever readying region that the time for a political break from England had arrived. The defeat of England in the 1950 test series, political manoeuvrings of West Indian politicians toward a West Indian Federation, and the fervor surrounding Frank Worrell’s ascension as the first black captain of the West Indies team dovetailed to create a Caribbean that was primed for change. It is against this backdrop that this chapter makes the case for West Indies cricket as an accelerator of political independence.

## Methodology

This chapter utilizes a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to make the case for West Indies cricket as a catalyst for independence in the West Indies. For this thesis, Norman Fairclough's work on CDA is the methodology used to operationalize the main tenet of this thesis: that West Indies cricket helped to galvanize political independence from England. Fairclough's three principles of CDA (textual analysis, discursive, and social practices) were utilized to analyse the data and discourse gleaned from a combination of newspaper articles, calypso songs, and political speeches. Each dimension of Fairclough's CDA forms its own section of analysis in this chapter. Within each section, the specific CDA dimension is applied to the relevant sources as a means of analyzing three specific events leading up to independence. These events are: the 1950 test series between West Indies and England; the political movement toward independence in the Caribbean (Federation); and the crusade to appoint Frank Worrell the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team (1960).

### *Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis*

Since this chapter will feature a critical discourse analysis, it is imperative that the term "discourse" be operationalized. "Discourse" is a highly debated term, with many schools of thought as to how it should be defined. The structuralist definition is one such approach, which focuses on language as a "system of systems," with each system having its own characteristic forms of structure and organization.<sup>4</sup> Theorists who abide by this definition "look at the features which link sentences together; the formal features which make two sentences 'a discourse' rather than just two unconnected phrases."<sup>5</sup> This is a fair starting point because making connections between texts is a basic component of what this thesis needs to achieve. However, this approach, by itself, is incomplete as it fails to account for the social context in which language is used. The aim of this thesis is to make the case for West Indies cricket as a catalyzing agent for independence in the West Indies. Accordingly, the applied discourse has to move beyond merely

connecting sentences, and instead link the texts that are used against the social conditions of the time in order to arrive at a more fully formed picture of the events of the day.

The functionalist approach to “discourse” is a second and broader perspective, primarily because it accounts for the role that language plays in society, or “language in use”.<sup>6</sup> At this level of analysis, theorists are interested in “what people *do* with language” and “*what* and *how* language communicates when it is used *purposefully* in particular instances and contexts.”<sup>7</sup> Stated differently, the functionalist approach to discourse assumes that texts are used to mean something and that texts must be viewed in terms of how they are designed to function in society. Richardson adds, “we need to work out what the speaker or writer is *doing* through discourse and how this ‘doing’ is linked to wider inter-personal, institutional, socio-cultural and material contexts.”<sup>8</sup> This version of discourse moves past linking sentences together and considers the text as active in its relationship with society. For the purposes of this thesis, “discourse” will be taken to mean “language in use” because this definition offers a fluid way of analyzing texts and it allows for interplay between the texts and the socio-cultural and political climates in which the texts were written.<sup>9</sup> This fits the overall aims of this chapter in casting West Indies cricket as a catalyzing force toward independence in the Caribbean.

Building on the functionalist definition of discourse as “language in use”, Richardson contends that in order for discourse to become critical discourse analysis, it needs to move beyond the prescription of “language in use” and link linguistic analysis with social analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) considers power relations and inequities in society. For Richardson, it also “investigates, and aims at illustrating, a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations”.<sup>10</sup> This is the essence of CDA that proved most useful to this thesis. The chosen primary sources were analyzed to make a correlation between the socio-political conditions of the Caribbean and the West Indies cricket team, one which led to the realization of independence from Britain in the region. CDA allows the reader to see how the socio-political climate in the West Indies influenced the texts and vice versa, in allowing for an intricate understanding of the ways in which West Indies cricket served as a major socio-political force in the region. A combination of newspaper articles, political speeches, and calypsos form the nucleus of the data analyzed in this chapter. These sources, when

considered for their relationship with the “social conditions, ideologies and power relations” of a pre-independent Caribbean, revealed West Indies cricket as a catalyst for self-government in the region.<sup>11</sup>

The CDA performed in this chapter, borrowed from John E. Richardson’s extrapolation of Norman Fairclough’s work, advocates for the application of three dimensions while doing discourse research. These three dimensions are delineated as: textual analysis, discursive practices, and social practices. The following section introduces each dimension and explains how each one is applied to the newspaper articles, political speeches, and calypso songs. In applying Fairclough’s three dimensions of CDA to newspaper research, John Richardson explains that there are a multitude of “tools” that can be used to satisfy each dimension, and that readers are “invited to seek out other texts to fill in these inevitable gaps”. Given that the “tools” provide an overall guideline as to how each dimension *can* be performed, this chapter selectively deploys the ones that are relevant to the material analyzed. Furthermore, the CDA reflects an elastic interpretation of Richardson’s newspaper discourse; one that more readily allows for the analysis of a broader range of sources, namely political speeches and calypsos.

### *Textual Analysis*

Within this dimension, Richardson describes a multitude of “tools” that can be used for analyzing newspapers. From his selection, this thesis utilizes “lexical analysis” and “modality” as the tools in carrying out this first step of CDA. Textual analysis holds that texts must be analyzed as being more than elements of language, and be considered in terms of what is being said by the author, what is not said as well as what could have been said.<sup>12</sup> The lexical analysis component allows an inquisition into how the use of certain words can “convey connoted and denoted meaning.”<sup>13</sup> This was particularly useful in exploring the newspaper reports of the 1950 Test series between England and West Indies. One of the findings of the research was a tendency by the British press to frame England’s losses as having more to do with England’s poor play than a triumph of West Indian cricketing skill. Having exposed this conveyed or denoted

meaning, one is able to analyze the findings against the overall socio-political climate of the period. The “modality” tool of textual analysis has to do with an analysis of sentence construction which looks for a “speaker’s attitude towards, or opinions about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence.”<sup>14</sup> Stated differently, this tool is concerned with value judgements texts make through the use of words such as: may, could, should, will, must, and their negations.<sup>15</sup> This tool can be applied to a controversy toward the end of the Test series when British press lamented the strategic tactics deployed by the West Indies in trying to secure the series win. The cries of how the West Indians should or shouldn’t have played transferred a negative judgment onto West Indies cricket, one which did not sit well with West Indians. This allows for further exploration of the master/subject dichotomy delineated in the findings of the research.

### *Discursive Practices*

This section of the CDA focuses on the use of “objectivity” and the audience as “consumer” and “commodity” as tools applied to the analysis of the selected newspapers. The “discursive practices” dimension of CDA features an interrogation of the production and consumption of texts.<sup>16</sup> At this stage, all parties involved with the production and consumption of texts bring their individual biases that are shaped by their interaction with society. This is where “objectivity” factors into the CDA. In being able to identify biases, one is able to understand more clearly all the factors that contribute to discourses taking hold at any given time. For example, the research found that the *London Times* and the *London Daily Express* reported on the Test series in ways that demeaned the good performance of the West Indies cricket team. Instead of giving full credit to the West Indians, the British press tended to show bias in presenting the narrative as the English squandering chances, while the *Jamaica Gleaner* did not hesitate to frame the wins as a complete demolition of their one-time cricketing masters. Interrogating the reasons why the papers might choose its respective narrative (due to bias) is instructive in situating the actual socio-political power of the West Indies cricket team.

A key to any analysis of newspapers is an understanding that they are made for profit and, as such, have a targeted audience. Two ways of understanding the audience in newspaper discourse are through the application of Richardson's audience as "consumer" and "commodity" tools. The bias shown by the English and Jamaican press can be explained by its awareness of its audience as its consumer. Given the obvious political weight of the cricket series, it was in the best interest of each paper to slant the reporting toward its respective readership. Using the consumer as a lens through which to understand the practices of newspapers, one can see beyond the pretence of objectivity and uncover biases. Immediately after the West Indian victory over England in the second Test match, the *Jamaica Gleaner* ran advertisements for "historic" photographs of the event that Jamaicans could purchase to commemorate the achievement. These advertisements became increasingly prominent as a West Indian series win appeared to be inevitable. Accordingly, Richardson notes that "the significant links between newspaper titles (and types), capital generated from advertising revenue and the audience cannot be overlooked."<sup>17</sup> In this regard, the audience is no longer just a consumer but becomes a commodity. The *Jamaica Gleaner* benefited financially from the success of the West Indies cricket team through the sale of advertising space. More importantly, this shows the material and inspirational power of beating back the perceived cricketing master, and positions West Indies cricket as a tool to be manipulated by political actors in aid of independence from Britain.

### *Social Practices*

This third and final component is arguably the most critical dimension of CDA for this chapter. Engaging with "social practices" through the use of Richardson's "campaigns" and "political rhetoric" tools, allows an exploration of the transformative power of the chosen texts. Richardson states that newspaper campaigns are "started explicitly in order to elicit a response from either the public or people in power; in other words, they are always aimed at *changing things* in one form or another."<sup>18</sup> This was precisely what occurred when C.L.R. James used his platform as editor of *The Nation* to rally for the appointment of Frank Worrell as first black captain of the West Indies cricket team. While not a campaign waged through newspapers, the

movement toward independence was treated much the same in this analysis. The political speeches by Norman Manley and Eric Williams functioned in the same way as James' newspaper campaign. The political rhetoric espoused by politicians at the time revealed a great deal about the strained relationship between Britain and the West Indies. Most notably, the research revealed a strong desire to break away from British colonial rule. Norman Manley and Eric Williams used numerous rhetorical strategies to make their cases for independence, many tinged with racial overtones that appealed to senses of racial unity in breaking away from the British master. Using Richardson's tools, this chapter was able to link the effects of political speeches, newspapers, and calypsos with the successes of the West Indies cricket team in ensuring a readiness for political independence in the West Indies.

## **Method**

The newspaper articles used in the critical discourse analysis (CDA) target the 1950 test series played between the West Indies and England in England. The four-match series saw the West Indies win its first ever match and series against England on British soil. Calypso songs also comprised an integral component of the analysis. Songs pertaining to the historic cricket series as well as the political climate in the West Indies during the 1950s and 1960s aided in situating West Indies cricket as a catalyst for the eventual realization of political independence in the region. Finally, a number of political speeches employed by independence politicians, Norman Manley (Jamaica) and Eric Williams (Trinidad and Tobago), highlighted the race politics employed at the time to drum up support among West Indians for independence. Taken together, these primary sources allowed for a rich study (through CDA) of how the cultural and political climate positioned the West Indies cricket team as a powerful symbol of regional unity and harbinger of independence from England. Furthermore, the sources were especially useful in that they often intersect, allowing for cross-referencing and strengthening the CDA deployed in this chapter.

## Newspapers

For the analysis of the 1950 test series in England, the *Jamaica Gleaner*, *London Times*, and *London Daily Express* were used to explore the events on the cricket field relevant to this chapter. The *Jamaica Gleaner* provided a window into how the cricket matches were reported in the West Indies while the *London Times* and *London Daily Express* contrasted how the narratives surrounding the same events were reported in England as opposed to the Caribbean. The test series comprised four matches, each lasting five days. Accordingly, this research targeted the newspaper reports of the five days of play as well as the days immediately before and after each match.<sup>19</sup> All three periodicals were analysed for what each had to say, in its entirety, about the matches.

Many of the newspapers that existed between 1950-1962 in the West Indies and England are either no longer in print or do not have archives. This was a major limiting factor in choosing which periodicals to use for this analysis. The *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *London Times* were most appropriate choices, as each is one of the oldest and most reputable newspapers in the Caribbean and England, respectively. The *London Daily Express* has progressively deteriorated into a tabloid paper in recent decades. However, it remains useful for this thesis for two main reasons. Firstly, in spite of its current lack of journalistic integrity, it adhered to more traditional standards during the 1950s. As such, it still allows for meaningful analysis. Secondly, by using more than one paper in England (alongside the *London Times*), the CDA is able to make stronger deductions regarding the overall tenor of the discourse surrounding West Indies cricket in 1950. Even though the *London Daily Express* was more inclined to present a perspective tinged with bias, it is still instructive and revealing in discerning the pervading sentiments.<sup>20</sup>

A newspaper analysis of the 1950 test series helps to make sense of an event that carried great socio-political significance. Mass immigration to England from the West Indies began in 1948. Thus, the spectators at these matches comprised both Englishmen and West Indians. Although many West Indians arrived in England with great optimism for a better life, the reality of adapting to harsher weather and an unwelcoming British public soon resulted in a more sullied outlook.<sup>21</sup> Thus, a successful series for the West Indies was not only the hope of people in the



Caribbean, but also the growing diaspora in England. When considered against this backdrop, one can see a clearer picture of the added significance of a good showing by the cricket team. Not only did the West Indies team bear the weight of expectations from its supporters in the Caribbean, but also the added desires of those who had arrived in England in search of a better life. The use of the *Jamaica Gleaner*, *London Time*, and *London Daily Express* aided in situating the discourse surrounding the play on the field as it related to West Indians both at home and overseas.

### *Calypsos*

The calypso was used to underscore the importance of the West Indian test tour to England in 1950 as well as to better gauge the political climate of London in the 1950s. Calypso is a Trinidadian musical style and the second type of primary source used as part of the CDA in this chapter. The 1968 calypso titled, “What is Calypso?” by Mighty Duke, offers a definition of calypso as an insight into the lives of Trinidadians:<sup>22</sup>

I am sure you don't know what calypso is  
 The words that we rhyme and sing  
 Is only half the thing  
 I could tell you that  
 Calypso is more than a work of art  
 It is a feeling which comes from deep within.  
 A tale of joy or one of suffering  
 An editorial of the life we living.<sup>23</sup>

While the melodies of calypsos gave the impression of light-hearted song, they were often conveyors of political messages, acting as a “newspaper for the poor.”<sup>24</sup> In pre-independent West Indies, the calypso was often used to voice the opinions of the people with respect to Federation, poverty, or any range of issues that were a source of malcontent. Due to its socio-cultural heft, the calypso was suited for use in this CDA as it offered an insight into minds of West Indians during this time of political upheaval.

Calypso music was also useful to this thesis as the genre has long been associated with cricket in the Caribbean. From the onset of West Indies cricket (1928), many in England and elsewhere have referred to Caribbean cricket as “calypso cricket.” The term refers to a “bright and breezy” approach to the game, relative to the “stiff upper-lipped” incarnation originated by the British.<sup>25</sup> While “calypso cricket” can be viewed positively, as an entertaining approach pleasing to spectators, it also carried a loaded, negative connotation. It “denoted an almost innate or congenital inability (on the parts of Blacks and Browns) to remain focused for very long.”<sup>26</sup> The calypso has also been associated with West Indian cricket through the many songs that were written about the team and its players throughout the twentieth century. When the team defeated England in the second test match at Lords in 1950, Lord Beginner led throngs of expatriate West Indians onto the field while singing a calypso that he penned for the occasion.<sup>27</sup> As the Caribbean forged ahead toward independence, the pairing of calypso and cricket at this momentous occasion spoke to the preeminent role that each played in the hearts and minds of West Indians.

The best way of conducting research with calypsos was centred in exploring the calypso itself as a primary source. However, accessing many of the calypsos proved difficult. For example, secondary sources such as Louis Regis’ *The Political Calypso* quoted from calypsos, but the full lyrics were sourced to physical archives in Trinidad. Given that travel to Trinidad was outside the practical scope of this study, YouTube and iTunes proved invaluable resources. Use of these two modern inventions provided access to scores of calypsos that were otherwise unavailable. The lyrics of the pertinent calypsos were then transcribed upon listening, with most of the excerpts used having gone through that process. Most helpful was the compilation CD, “London is the Place for me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956,” which featured a collection of songs recorded at time when many West Indians migrated to England. This provided an insight into the struggles of these West Indians who went overseas in search of a better life.

*Political speeches*

The rise of the black intellectual politician in the West Indies coincided with the rise of the black batsman on the cricket field. Both emerged in opposition to British colonial rule. Pre-independence political actors Eric Williams and Norman Manley (political independence) and C.L.R. James (the appointment of Frank Worrell as captain) pleaded their cases to the West Indian people for a break from white rule on and off the cricket field. Their speeches featured certain techniques that appealed to a sense of black unity or empowerment, which assured West Indians that the time had arrived for them to break free from British colonial rule. It is this “Massa Day Done” rhetoric which dovetails with the symbolic beating of the English master in the 1950 Test series and arrival of the Frank Worrell as the first black captain to form the overarching perspective of this thesis. The analysis of these selected political speeches frames the multiplicity of narratives to coalesce at the West Indies cricket team being a catalyst for independence in the region.

Two specific events in the pre-independent West Indies informed a portion of the discourse analysis performed in this chapter. The Federation movement and the campaign to install Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team were vital historical occurrences in the Caribbean during the 1950s that warranted careful consideration when carrying out the discourse analysis. They provided the context against which the primary sources were best navigated. The speeches from Norman Manley<sup>28</sup> were delivered in Jamaican parliament between 1952 and 1962. They were found in the book, *Norman Manley and the New Jamaica*.<sup>29</sup> The speeches of Eric Williams<sup>30</sup> were gleaned from *Eric E. Williams Speaks: Essays on Colonialism and Independence* and spanned from 1955 to 1962.<sup>31</sup> The consideration of C.L.R. James in this section came in the form of editorials he wrote for a Trinidadian newspaper, *The Guardian*, in which he fervently called for the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team. Written between 1959 and 1960, James used his pulpit as editor of the paper to appeal to the West Indies Cricket Board on behalf of West Indians, to right the injustice of Frank Worrell being continually overlooked for the position. Of the injustice, James declared:

Their whole point was to continue to send to populations of white people, black or brown men under a white captain. The more brilliantly the black men played, the more it would emphasize to millions of English people: ‘Yes, they are fine players, but, funny, isn’t it, they cannot be responsible for themselves – they must always have a white man to lead them.’<sup>32</sup>

This sentiment from James underscored the pervading socio-political current of the time. Through the speeches of Manley and Williams, and the writings of James, this discourse analysis exposed a rhetoric which prescribed beating back the colonial master on and off the cricket field. Furthermore, it was a sentiment manipulated by interested parties toward achieving political independence.

## **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

### *1950 West Indies Tour to England*

The research conducted through this CDA revealed commonalities across the newspaper articles, political speeches, and calypsos. The notions that “the time has arrived” and the “massa day done” recurred in all three types of sources. Both refer to a belief that West Indians were ready for self-government on and off the cricket field. This was first discovered in the analysis of the 1950 West Indies cricket tour to England. The tour held special significance due to the fact that West Indians began migrating to Britain only two years before, ushering in a new era of West Indians looking for a fresh life in the mother country.<sup>33</sup> Lord Kitchener, prominent Calypsonian, was part of that initial voyage of immigrants to England. Once he arrived in England, he penned a calypso entitled, “London is the Place for me.” In it, Kitchener sang:

I am glad to know my mother country<sup>34</sup>....  
 London is the place for me  
 To live in London you are very comfortable  
 Because the English people are very sociable  
 I cannot complain of the time I have spent  
 My life in London is really magnificent<sup>35</sup>

Lord Kitchener's outlook on his time spent in England was very bright, with nothing but good to say about his new environment. There were surely hardships encountered, having moved to a foreign country during the racially volatile 1950s. However, In "London is the Place for me", Kitchener does not mention anything about racial tensions or discrimination, giving the impression that he moved on to bigger and better things. However, this changed in his subsequent calypso, "Sweet Jamaica." While Kitchener, and many West Indians, may have left the Caribbean with hopes of starting a better life in England, they encountered conditions that left them regretting the move. Once more, Kitchener sang:

Thousands of people are asking me  
How I spend the time in London city  
Well that is a question I cannot answer  
I regret the day I left sweet Jamaica<sup>36</sup>

If Kitchener had "wings like an airplane" he would "fly to that blessed country (Jamaica) again." Of the many reasons for his change of heart, Kitchener listed the weather and a lack of job opportunities as the two primary concerns. He went on to say,

Many West Indians are sorry now  
They left their country and don't know how  
Some left their jobs and their family  
And determined to come to London city  
Well they are crying they now regret  
No kind of employment that they can get

It is against this backdrop of poverty and strife that the West Indian cricket tour to England in 1950 takes place. Having moved to a foreign, albeit mother country, many West Indians were homesick and struggling to make a living; rents were high and living conditions were less agreeable than they were accustomed to in the Caribbean.<sup>37</sup> Unlike "London is the Place for me," Kitchener had nothing good to say about his time in England as he described a life filled with misery. As shown later on in this chapter, a successful West Indian tour offered some reprieve from the drudgery of new immigrant living, and provided a significant morale boost.

Regrettably for West Indians at home and in England, the test series did not begin well. They were soundly beaten in the first test match. The newspaper reports regarding the suitability of the pitch provided some insight into the desperation of West Indians at the time. While the British press had little to say by way of complaints about the pitch, the *Jamaica Gleaner* took the opposite approach. The headline on the day after the conclusion of the match read, “Bradman Would Have Refused to Play.”<sup>38</sup> Don Bradman was, and still is, considered to be the greatest batsman to play the game. The overall tenor of the article was that the English would not have dared ask Bradman to play on such a poorly prepared pitch. Furthermore, the front page featured the following quote from the West Indies captain, John Goddard, in two separate articles: “It is not a wicket. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. I would like to see the Aussies being asked to play on it. It is not the worst wicket I have played on in this country – it is the worst I have ever seen in my life.”<sup>39</sup> The implication of Goddard’s statement was that the West Indians were treated unjustly and unequally. It is not a stretch to imagine the double placement of Goddard’s quote as a decided attempt by the *Gleaner* to convey this message of being treated unfairly, particularly when it previewed the series in this fashion:

The first Test match between England and the W.I. starts at Old Trafford tomorrow. As this will be the first of the four tests, the importance of the result cannot be over-estimated, for, it is this series that will decide in the eyes of the cricketing world whether or not the West Indies can lay justifiable claim to the fact that they can now walk shoulder to shoulder with the best cricketing countries in the world.<sup>40</sup>

For West Indian immigrants, faced with such hardship, the stakes were the same. They looked to the cricket as a means of justifying their place in England, validating within them, that they were every bit as good as their white, English neighbour. Thus, one begins to see how the massive defeat in the first Test match might have reflected desperation from West Indians.

Ahead of the second Test match, a sense of panic lingered in the discussions surrounding the prospects of the team. The *Jamaica Gleaner* called for a 41-year-old George Headley to come out of semi-retirement and play for the West Indies.<sup>41</sup> A second article declared that it was “incumbent on Worrell, Weekes, Rae, Stollmeyer and company to redeem themselves, not only

for the sake of West Indies' post war reputation (which is high) but also on account of their personal abilities."<sup>42</sup> This was a clear indication of the political heft of West Indies cricket carrying the weight of the reputation of its people to the world. If the first Test match left West Indians feeling uneasy, the remainder of the series brought nothing but unfettered joy. The second match saw the first time in the 22-year history of West Indies cricket that the team won a match on British soil. It was a landmark achievement that provides this study with a wealth of material to analyze.

The first point of analysis is the differing ways in which the British and Jamaican press reported the match. The strategy of the *London Times* was to attribute the English loss as mostly having to do with the poor play of the team, as opposed to the stronger performance of the West Indians. *The Times'* headline after day two of the match read "England Collapse, West Indies Strongly Placed."<sup>43</sup> Special attention must be paid to the way in which the headline was structured; it was worded in such a way as to convey the impression that the West Indies' good position was due to the collapse of the English team. The article went on to claim that the good position was due to the "preposterously bad batting," as the Englishmen allowed the West Indian bowlers to tie them down.<sup>44</sup> The report was relentless in its berating of the English batsmen, attacking their shot selection, stopping just shy of questioning their intelligence.<sup>45</sup> The *Jamaica Gleaner*, reporting on the same day's play, offered a completely different viewpoint, positing that the West Indies team had "no weak spots." The tactics by *The Times* denoted a feeling of superiority to the West Indians. If one were not to have seen the day's play and relied solely on the reporting of *The Times*, it would seem obvious that the West Indians benefited from a bout of unfathomable good fortune. Arguably, the reason for these tactics was to assuage the British public that they were still the masters of the neophytes and that a reversal of course in the coming matches would rectify things. The end result was that West Indians caught on to the false British narrative and reveled in their ensuing victories as the series went on.<sup>46</sup>

The response to the victory by the *Jamaica Gleaner* was every bit as instructive as that of the *London Times*. With two days remaining in the match, *The Gleaner* declared "West Indies Should Win Their First Test Match in England."<sup>47</sup> Richardson states that the use of modal verbs ("should" in this case) in newspaper reporting denotes a departure from objectivity and infuses

the author's judgment into the reporting.<sup>48</sup> This speaks to a heightened level of expectation surrounding the prospect of West Indies' first win in England. In the same vein, the following day's headline read, "Only a Miracle Can Stop W.I. now." Given what has been previously stated regarding the desperation in seeking this win, one can further glean the anticipation surrounding the event. Thus, when the West Indies completed the resounding victory, *The Gleaner's* response was equally expansive. News of the historic win graced the front page of the paper and the entire sports page was filled with numerous articles detailing the event. This was in stark contrast to the more muted coverage offered by the British press. The *London Times* featured two articles dedicated to the match, while the *London Daily Express* decided not to report on the match at all.<sup>49</sup> Instead, the latter paper ran an article soliciting opinions from readers as to the make-up of the English team for the third Test, asking "what are we going to do about it?"<sup>50</sup> The "it" was meant to represent "West Indians," positioning the English as having control over the outcome of the series, that "we" were still better than "them." The lack of any acknowledgement of the magnitude of what the visitors achieved in the second Test fit the narrative of a general disrespect toward the West Indians.<sup>51</sup> This was touched on in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, when after the victory, E.L. Cozier wrote,

Even more satisfying to those of us in England – and I think everyone of us must have been there this morning – is that we have won a decisive victory in the face of a most unsympathetic press. Never have I read stories day after day which see so little merit in the men who are actually winning a game.<sup>52</sup>

He went on to reference the fact that the English papers saw the poor showing with the bat as having more to do with the English batsmen than the skill of the West Indian bowlers. The disrespectful and biased practices of the English press became a major issue by the fourth Test match.

One of the major points of analysis stemming from the second Test match was the reaction of the West Indians in attendance to the victory. As mentioned previously, Calypsonians Lord Beginner and Lord Kitchener led a throng of West Indian supporters onto the field after the match. The description of this scene by the *Jamaica Gleaner* was particularly helpful; the front



page announced, “West Indians in Wild Scenes at Lord’s: Songs and Dances.”<sup>53</sup> Cricket in England is renowned for its air of gentility and strict adherence to decorum. While fans in the West Indies blow horns and party in the stands, the British stay seated and reward good play with a smattering of polite applause. Moreover, this match took place at Lord’s, the so-called “home of cricket.” That the West Indies beat England at Lord’s added to the significance of the achievement, as they did it on their most hallowed of cricket grounds. Furthermore, this situated the significance of *The Gleaner* headline, which could be taken to mean “West Indians Stomp all over the English in their Back Yard.” Lord’s was used in juxtaposition with “wild scenes” to subtly convey the pandemonium of the celebrations. The headlines could be easily decoded by West Indians while *The Gleaner* maintained some semblance of objectivity. Without anything being explicitly said, the reader could picture West Indians trampling on the sacred British turf. Coupled with the reports of the Calypsonians leading the expatriates in song and dance, one could begin to understand the magnitude of the event for West Indians.<sup>54</sup> It was not only a landmark achievement for the development of West Indies cricket, but also a symbolic thrashing of the colonial master.

The multitude of reports in the *Jamaica Gleaner* surrounding the Lord’s victory gave a broad depiction of the elation in the West Indies surrounding the event. Series reporter for *The Gleaner*, E.L. Cozier paraphrased Shakespeare in writing, “Lord’s is certainly ‘a stage for Princes to act and Monarchs to behold the swelling scene!’ and today saw the final curtain on the most swelling scene in which West Indian cricketers have ever starred.”<sup>55</sup> The positioning of West Indian cricketers as princes speaks to one of the overall themes of the news reporting of the series; that West Indians had arrived. Other headlines included: “England Outplayed in All Departments,” “Champaigne [*sic*] Flows in Barbados,” “We Have Done it,” “One of the Happiest Days of my Life.” The overall picture from the *Jamaica Gleaner* was one of unbridled joy, one which did not shy away from expressing the significance of the cricketing results beyond the field of play. Peter Ditton, English correspondent for *The Gleaner*, wrote, “The West Indies have arrived. Their grand victory over England at Lord’s by 326 runs has only served to strengthen my belief that this year the ‘pupils’ are going to be too good for the ‘masters.’”<sup>56</sup>

The narrative of the master and pupil was one which recurred throughout the discourse, across multiple arenas, from newspaper reports of the cricket matches to political speeches aimed at galvanizing support for independence. This is a key element in positioning West Indies cricket as a catalyst for Caribbean independence. Two additional features of *The Gleaner* reporting supported this claim. The first was a piece which argued that the “West Indies Win will Sweeten Sugar Talks,” and a cartoon depicting an English batsman having a nightmare about a West Indian bowler beating him repeatedly with a cricket ball.<sup>57</sup> Albert Gomes, prominent Trinidadian politician, declared that “this victory has done more for the morale of West Indians in the West Indies and for his prestige in Britain than all the speeches and achievements of politicians in the British West Indies and abroad. I sincerely hope it will sweeten the sugar talks.”<sup>58</sup> Here, Gomes explicitly situated West Indies cricket as a political tool that could be manipulated to increase sugar trade with Britain. In beating back its cricketing master, West Indies cricket represented a template that could be transferred to everyday political life. In one instance it could be used to convince West Indians that their time had arrived, and in the next it could be used to make that same case to the British for independence. Gomes’ comments confirmed what was previously said in the lead-up to the second Test, that a West Indian win was essential for the good of the region’s post-war reputation.

The other piece of evidence that positioned West Indies cricket as an impetus for political independence was the political cartoon featured in the *Gleaner* the day after the historic win.<sup>59</sup> The cartoon, entitled “Len Hutton’s Nightmare,” showed a sleeping Hutton with a bubble over his bed depicting the nightmare.<sup>60</sup> In it, Hutton begs for mercy as Alf Valentine stands over him holding an enlarged cricket ball in his exaggeratedly large left hand, giving the impression that Valentine was inflicting a beating on Hutton.<sup>61</sup> While the cartoon was intended to elicit laughter, this one was additionally relevant because it captured the feeling of West Indians in the region and in England. For many West Indians, inflicting pain on the British master may have been something they had dreamt of for centuries; now, their West Indies cricket team did it for them. The visual of a black West Indian (Valentine) bludgeoning a white Englishman (Hutton) with a cricket ball, as he begged for mercy, perfectly captured the socio-political power of West Indies cricket. The cartoon did not hold back in showing what this Test series was about: making the English symbolically pay for centuries of suffering inflicted upon the West Indies.

The third Test match saw the West Indies romp to victory over England. This meant that they held a 2-1 advantage going into the final match, with no possibility of losing the series. West Indian batsmen dominated the match and scored runs at will. One headline in the *Jamaica Gleaner* read, “Run-Getting Riot at Trent Bridge: Worrell-Weekes Partnership Pulverises England Attack.”<sup>62</sup> The article went on to claim that “England was made to suffer to the full for their sins yesterday.”<sup>63</sup> After the narrative emanating from the second Test match and the violent depiction of Alf Valentine beating Len Hutton in the cartoon, the Jamaican press was intent on maintaining the discourse of West Indies cricket serving as a tool of retribution for the “sins” of the English. It is important to note that the batsmen, Weekes and Worrell, were the ones who were inflicting the punishment. As mentioned in Chapter 3, these two batsmen were part of the new black class of West Indian cricketers who represented the maturation of the West Indian game. They were relentless in asserting themselves as being better than the English; proper batting was no longer the sole domain of the white man. This also positioned Worrell as the man best suited to become the first black captain of the West Indies team ten years later.

On the prospects of West Indies winning the series after the fourth Test, E.L. Cozier wrote, “this was a new West Indies: the slur of instability would be forever erased and the world would learn that determination, ruthlessness if you like, was not the exclusive prerogative of older nations.”<sup>64</sup> This was yet another correlation made between cricket and the West Indies’ place in the post-war world. This new West Indies would no longer be docile, and could stand on its own against more developed countries. The discourse here referred to cricket, but it fit the political discourse at the time as well, one that saw politicians plotting a path forward separate from the colonial master.<sup>65</sup> This discourse also fit with the aforementioned recurring narrative of “the time is now” and “we have arrived.” The main deduction was that West Indians were tired of waiting and they were ready to stand up for themselves. Through the “ruthlessness” of their cricket, they were ready to show that they had the fortitude to do whatever necessary to ensure success, especially if that meant throttling England in their own back yard.

The ruthlessness can also be explained as a reaction to the unjust treatment of the West Indies team by the British press. Entering the final match, West Indies needed only a draw to ensure a 2-1 margin.<sup>66</sup> Rather than focus on the inability of the English bowlers to dismiss the

West Indian batsmen, the English press accused the West Indians of batting too slowly in order to ensure the draw. The *London Daily Express* claimed that the Test was “turned into farce” and that the “West Indies prolonged the crawl beyond the bounds of logic to the regions of farce.”<sup>67</sup> This cast aspersions on the tactics of the W.I. team in their pursuit of a series victory. In implying that West Indies weren’t playing proper Test cricket, the British drew the ire of many West Indians who took exception to attempts to undermine the gravity of the achievement. One reader asked *The Gleaner’s* sports editor to “obtain from the English Press Correspondents an explanation of their adverse criticism of the ‘go slow tactics’ of the West Indian captain which tactics have resulted in a five-day match being completed in four days.”<sup>68</sup> The same day’s paper also featured reports of West Indians in England being “angry at certain press comments.”<sup>69</sup> The end result was that West Indians felt hard done by the biases of the *London Daily Express* and the *London Times*. From questioning the tactics of the West Indian captain to not giving enough praise when it was due, the actions of the British papers only served to fuel anti-colonial sentiment and strengthen West Indians’ self belief.<sup>70</sup>

“All West Indians will be Right Proud” and “West Indian Day Mooted” were two headlines emanating from the series win against England.<sup>71</sup> Taken together, they were indicative of what the cricketing triumph meant to the people of the West Indies. They witnessed their cricket team, as their representatives, defeat their colonial master in his own backyard. The West Indies cricket team took the game that was taught to them as a means of social control, and turned it into a weapon to exact revenge for the centuries of colonial oppression. For that, the West Indian people were very proud. Furthermore, the team showed the region that working together was possible, serving as an inspiration for political Federation in the region. Albert Gomes, recognizing the transformative effects of West Indies’ success, proposed that “all the other British West Indian Governments be sought in proclaiming a ‘West Indian Day’ holiday simultaneously throughout the West Indies.”<sup>72</sup> The socio-political power of the West Indies cricket team, in upending the master/pupil relationship between England and the West Indies, situated cricket as a catalyst for independence in the region in the years to come.

*West Indian Federation & the Campaign for Frank Worrell's Captaincy*

A critical discourse analysis of West Indian Federation and C.L.R. James' campaign serve to cement the position of West Indies cricket as a catalyst for independence. Politicians (Norman Manley and Eric Williams) deployed rhetorical strategies to aid them in their efforts toward independence. The discourse surrounding these strategies revealed commonalities with the discourse surrounding the West Indies defeat of England in 1950. The recurring use of the master/pupil dichotomy, often in describing the events of the cricket matches regarding the West Indies team, was one such commonality. It was often presented in terms of reversing the long existing roles of England as master and West Indies as pupil. This spilled over into the political discourse of the period, as politicians called for the same through anti-colonial rhetoric in their speeches to the West Indian populace. This master/pupil duality existed in conjunction with an overarching narrative that the "time is now" or that "we (West Indians) have arrived" and that the "Massa day done."<sup>73</sup> C.L.R. James echoed this sentiment in his campaign for Worrell's captaincy. These discourses were strengthened by politicians' use of certain targeted rhetorical strategies. They made appeals to racial unity and solidarity with other colonized peoples. Given that a national spirit had already taken hold, as witnessed through the coalescing of support for the West Indies cricket team, the Caribbean people were already primed to be targeted by these appeals. Using Richardson's tools of the "campaign" and "political rhetoric" as transformative elements of discourse analysis, these political speeches worked in conjunction with the success of the West Indies cricket team to realize independence from Britain.

*Federation*

In a speech delivered in 1952 entitled, "Self-Government Now!" Norman Manley argued that West Indians should not wait for independence to come to them. Rather, they must be proactive:

It is the natural tendency of colonial powers to doubt the ability of the governed to rule themselves. That must be so; otherwise they would not dare continue to rule. If a man did not believe in his superiority to govern, he could not do so. Colonial powers must find reasons to justify slow progress. And they are not to be quarrelled with for that because it is based on the historical process.<sup>74</sup>

In making his case for independence, Manley indulged in the “time is now” discourse as a means of galvanizing support. For Manley, there should have been no waiting around, as nobody who possessed power would want to relinquish it. He stopped just short of asking, “What are you waiting for?” Eric Williams, through the use of scare tactics, also implored Trinidadians to “act now.” He argued that “history is full of instances where slave owners restore or try to restore slavery. I know of no instance when the slaves themselves, once emancipated, return voluntarily to their former chains.”<sup>75</sup> The coded message that Williams conveyed was that if West Indians did not want to return to the days of slavery, then they had to act immediately. If there was no forward movement (independence), then they ran the risk of falling victim to Massa again. “The time is now” discourse in the political speeches gelled with the discourse surrounding the West Indies’ impending defeat of England in 1950. The importance of the cricketing successes in England cannot be overstated; the remnants of which infiltrated the political discourse surrounding independence in the West Indies.

Another tactic used by politicians in making the case for independence, was to appeal to a sense of racial unity; one that included all West Indians as well as the entire “coloured empire.” Norman Manley utilized this tactic when he stated:

I think that in Jamaica’s case we have a responsibility not only to Jamaica, but we have a responsibility to the whole Caribbean territory, and in a measure to the whole of the coloured empire, to press forward as fast as we can, because I am sure that we can show that we can successfully administer our own affairs, and I am certain and convinced that administration of that sort would redound to the advantage and gain of all colonial people the world over.<sup>76</sup>

The use of a race-based politics was crucial in making the case for West Indies cricket as a catalyst for independence in the region. The strategy encouraged West Indians to identify as black, different from their white masters, and to believe that they could create a nation based at

least in part on their common ancestry.<sup>77</sup> Manley deployed the tactic once more when he said, “I am convinced that... in the world which there are people like ourselves predominantly of African descent and of mixed blood...a move...for self-government would be welcomed and would afford them the greatest stimulus in their own efforts and in their own lives.”<sup>78</sup> The use of race as a unifying agent was problematic as the West Indies comprised a multiplicity of people from a wide spectrum of racial backgrounds. As explained in Chapter 2, the colonial experience differed from colony to colony, let alone the entire colonial empire. The pre-independent concerns of Trinidad, a colony that dealt with great racial tensions between its black and Indian populations were markedly different from Jamaica or Barbados, which featured a more homogenous society. Nonetheless, the appeals to a racial unity worked because of the success and template of their cricket team. At the time of independence, the West Indies cricket team was the only institution that united all of the British West Indies toward the same goal. Its success in working together as a heterogeneous group of West Indians, most notably in the 1950 tour to England, offered the hope that the same success could be achieved in political independence. Norman Manley spoke of a “national spirit” that had already taken hold; one that was essential to the political success of Jamaica.<sup>79</sup> This thesis argues that the discourse surrounding the West Indies cricket team in 1950, unified in its attempt to overthrow its cricketing master, planted the seeds of this spirit. It is because of this pre-existing national spirit that Manley and Williams were able to make their claims for political unity along racial lines.

A final rhetorical strategy, deployed primarily by Eric Williams, was a call to ensure that “Massa day done.” In one instance, during a campaign speech for re-election, he implored, “tonight of all nights I call on you to help us, for tonight of all nights Massa day done.”<sup>80</sup> Williams positioned himself as the opposite of the Massa. In doing so, he appealed to Trinidadians to support him in the upcoming local elections where he hoped to maintain his own political power. In this scenario, Williams painted the opposition Democratic Labour Party as “Massa” and argued that if Trinidadians wanted to continue on the path to independence and make a true break from their colonial past, then they would have to vote for him. This demonstrated that “Massa” had become a concept that could be applied as a negative connotation to anyone within the colonial realm, so long as it distanced the user from the British Empire and colonialism. Nonetheless, Williams’ use of “Massa” was instructive in that it brought to mind the

master/pupil relationship. A major concern of the pre-independence political discourse was its destruction. The West Indies cricket team demonstrated that it could be done and, here, Williams manipulated that truth in positioning himself as being on the side of Trinidadians and not the colonial master. Although Williams and Manley made repeated anti-colonial appeals in moving the region toward independence, each was also concerned with his own political survival. Their anti-colonial appeals were self-serving in this regard. Although they spoke of unity and togetherness, they were also concerned with acquiring and maintaining power. The success of the West Indies cricket team in beating Massa on the field, allowed them to make their cases for political independence, as well as to serve their own political interests.

### *Campaign for Frank Worrell*

Ten years after West Indies' historic defeat of England in 1950, the WICBC continued the practice of appointing white captains to lead the team.<sup>81</sup> After defeating the colonial master in 1950, black cricketers still faced institutional discrimination from the WICBC. From his post as editor of *The Nation*, C.L.R. James used his pulpit to decry the injustice and bring about the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team.<sup>82</sup> Early in his article, James demanded to know:

The question is: what right has Alexander to be captain of a side on which Frank Worrell is playing? What qualifications for captaincy has Alexander got which put him above Worrell for this all-important post? That is the question. The answer is on every tongue. Alexander has none."<sup>83</sup>

In claiming that Alexander was not as qualified as Worrell to lead the West Indies team, James called into question the motives of the WICBC. He also implied that this was a widely discussed topic around the region, with everybody in agreement with his position. James was careful in his choice of words so as not to categorize overtly the WICBC as being racist. However, due to the socio-political climate of the time, he did not need to as West Indians would have easily decoded his message. Considering the political appeals to racial unity and the need for West Indians to



envision themselves alongside the people of other “coloured empires,” it was not a leap to assume that they were well aware of the situation.<sup>84</sup>

The “Massa day done” discourse can be extrapolated to the case of Frank Worrell’s captaincy to provide added context to the campaign. Due mostly to the performances of its black and Indian players, the West Indies defeated England in emphatic fashion in 1950. Yet, 10 years on, these players could not govern themselves. How would it look to the world, if a region in the throes of political independence from Britain, were to send overseas a team led by an unqualified white captain? After having felt that they “had arrived” in beating England, and inspired a sense of self-belief around the region toward independence, how was it that their cricket was still in the hands of the white colonial elite? James used a rhetorical strategy in warning that:

The Board should know that the eyes of the world are upon them...Not to select Worrell, and to put Alexander in charge of the most difficult of all tours, with a team on which no single member except Ramadhin would have visited Australia before, that would be a declaration of war and a defiance of the opinions and attitudes and expectations of the cricketers and the cricketing public the world over.

James moved beyond the expectations of the West Indian people and argued that the entire world wished to see Frank Worrell appointed captain. This implication was that, even though the Board ignored the wishes of the (black) West Indians, they dared not ignore the wishes of the (white) world. While refusing to engage in any overt discussion of race in the exclusion of Worrell from the captaincy; James applied pressure on the Board through warning of the shame that awaited the Board if the situation were not rectified. Having given an expansive description of Worrell’s qualifications, from his superior aptitude to his beloved reputation the world over, James made one final plea when he noted:

It will be asked in cricketing circles the world over, and nowhere more than in Australia: what is it that in the face of all that I have written about Worrell, which is common property, what is it that made the Board reject Worrell and choose this novice? That is the international scandal which the Board can perpetuate or on the other hand win an international chorus of praise and approbation and congratulations from the whole cricketing world, not the least from their own people here and in Australia.

Without explicitly saying so, James told the Board that the only reason that could prevent its appointment of Worrell as captain, in the face of all the reasons for doing so, was racism. In the context of race relations in the mid twentieth century Caribbean, what, other than racism, could elicit scandal or praise?

James' campaign proved successful in effecting change when Frank Worrell was named captain of the team to tour Australia in 1960/61. Much like the success of the West Indies team to England in 1950 and the calls for independence in the region during the 1950s, the campaign revealed a discourse that the "time was now." For James, the time had long passed since it was acceptable that a West Indian cricket team be led by an unqualified white man, let alone a team that included Frank Worrell. This campaign was yet another instance where West Indies cricket achieved autonomy from the shackles of white rule, and served as a template for political autonomy from Britain within the region.

## **Summary**

Through the use of a Critical Discourse Analysis, this chapter has made the case for cricket as a catalyst for West Indian political independence from Britain. The preceding chapters provided context to the conditions which allowed West Indies cricket to serve this function. From the use of Franz Fanon to excavate the ways in which colonialism left West Indians with a mangled self-image, to the decades-long struggle of black cricketers on the West Indies cricket team, the chapters showed how the success of West Indies cricket could become a galvanizing force throughout the region. The resounding conquering of England on the cricket field in 1950 served as a template for how West Indians could unite toward a common goal. The CDA used to analyze this event revealed a feeling within the West Indies that their time had arrived; they had beaten their colonial masters on the cricket field and made great strides for their reputation in a post-war world. The CDA showed that politicians (Manley and Williams) capitalized on this feeling of accomplishment through their appeals to a sense of racial unity and that, much like their cricket team, the time had arrived for them to make a similar break from Britain politically. The 'massa day done' narrative linked the victory at Lord's in 1950 to the independence

movements throughout the course of the next decade. C.L.R.James' campaign for Frank Worrell to become the first black captain of the West Indies cricket team was the final point of analysis that indicated West Indians no longer found tenable the continued rule of 'massa' over their cricket and everyday lives. Through an analysis of newspapers, political speeches, and calypsos, the CDA used in this chapter identified the aforementioned narratives, linking West Indies cricket to the realization of political independence from Britain. West Indies cricket inflicted a symbolic beating on their cricketing masters, and declared that they were no longer inferior. Due to the influence of their cricket team West Indians sought and achieved a similar political role reversal, one which signified that their time had indeed arrived.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> “Massa” was used to mean “master” during colonial times and slaves would refer to the white master as such. “Massa Day Done” was the title of an independence speech by Trinidad’s Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams. The phrase was used to convey the pervading sentiment of the time that the master’s time had passed. This speech will be used as part of the discourse analysis of chapter 4.

<sup>2</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 297.

<sup>3</sup> Jamaica and Trinidad were the first two colonies to achieve independence from England, in 1962.

<sup>4</sup> Richardson, 22.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> While there are many definitions of discourse, this version was chosen due to its utility in analyzing newspapers. Given that newspapers comprise a significant portion of the data being analyzed, Richardson’s definition is a better fit for this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> Richardson, 27.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>15</sup> For example: may not, couldn’t, shouldn’t, will not, and must not.

<sup>16</sup> Richardson, 75.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson, 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

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<sup>19</sup> June 7-13, June 23-30, July 19-26, August 12-18.

<sup>20</sup> The *London Daily Express* was often referenced in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, mostly in editorials by West Indians who were displeased with a supposed bias against the West Indies team in the British press. This will provide for meaningful analysis later in the CDA when considering the powerful symbolism of the West Indies team's success as emblematic of the coming of age of West Indian people. The bias caused much consternation as many felt it was a calculated effort to undercut the significant strides made by West Indians. In particular, the *London Daily Express* argued, quite often, that the West Indian victories had more to do with poor performances by the English than the strength of the West Indian team. Thus, in spite of the partisanship of the *London Daily Express*, it remains a relevant source for this thesis as it adds to the overall discourse of the time.

<sup>21</sup> The reality of a disenchanting West Indian diaspora in England is explored further later on in the chapter through the calypsos of Lord Kitchener. Referred to as the "Grandmaster of Calypso", Lord Kitchener arrived in England with the first wave of West Indian immigrants. He recorded two calypsos that perfectly capture the transition from a hopeful to disconsolate expatriate. These calypsos will be fully analyzed later on in the critical discourse analysis.

<sup>22</sup> Part of being a Calypsonian was choosing a sobriquet. Mighty Duke's given name was Kelvin Pope, but hardly anyone knew him as such. Lord Kitchener and Mighty Sparrow are two great Calypsonians who will feature in this chapter.

<sup>23</sup> "Mighty Duke – What is Calypso?" [n.d.]. Video clip. Accessed May 21, 2013. YouTube. [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqThD0Urpz8>

<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Dunne and Michael Home, *Calypso Dreams*, Documentary Film, 90 minutes, 2003, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ufPaWQOYFE>. The documentary is the most complete source on the musical genre. It features interviews from major Calypsonians compiled from the 1970s to the 2000s. *Calypso Dreams* gives first-hand accounts of the significance of calypso as a political instrument in the pre and post-colonial West Indies. It explains the origin of the calypso and situates some of the most influential Calypsonians in the decades since it became a popular musical expression in the Caribbean in the early twentieth century.

<sup>25</sup> Goble and Sandiford, 12-13. West Indians achieved the sobriquet while playing club cricket, which called for the swift accumulation of runs. This was the complete opposite of what would be required while playing longer forms of the game like test cricket. Consequently, on their tours abroad, the West Indians became known for scoring runs very quickly in an attractive fashion before succumbing to the opposition's bowling attack. This was in direct contrast to the batting typically on display in test cricket, where batsmen had multiple days to accumulate their runs through a more measured approach.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 12-13. This is a concept that is addressed in chapters 2 and 3, having to do with the myth of West Indians being ill-suited to batting as they did not possess the necessary intellect to excel at the discipline. Nonetheless, it is a categorization that has stuck with the team for its entire existence; eventually becoming a source of pride as the team dominated world cricket from 1975-1995.

<sup>27</sup> “West Indians in Wild Scenes at Lord’s,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 30, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>28</sup> Norman Manley served as the Chief Minister of Jamaica from 1955-1962. Prior to Jamaica’s independence in 1962, this was the highest political position in the island. After independence, the position became Prime Minister, for which he was defeated in elections by Alexander Bustamante.

<sup>29</sup> Rex Nettleford, *Norman Washington Manley and the New Jamaica* (New York: Africana, 1971).

<sup>30</sup> Eric Williams was the leader of the People’s National Movement (PNM) and first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in 1962.

<sup>31</sup> Eric Williams, *Eric E. Williams Speaks: Essays on Colonialism and Independence*, ed. Selwyn Cudjoe (Wellesley, Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications), 1993.

<sup>32</sup> James, *Beyond A Boundary*, 308.

<sup>33</sup> “Empire of Cricket.” The first arrival of West Indians occurred in 1948.

<sup>34</sup> “Mother country” is a term referring to the relationship between colonizer and its colony. For Lord Kitchener, his mother country is England.

<sup>35</sup> Lord Kitchener, “London is The Place For Me” in *London is The Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956*. © 2003 by Honest Jon’s Records. HJRLP2. Compact disc.

<sup>36</sup> Lord Kitchener, “Sweet Jamaica” in *London is The Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956*. © 2003 by Honest Jon’s Records. HJRLP2. Compact disc.

<sup>37</sup> Lord Kitchener, “My Landlady” in *London is The Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956*. © 2003 by Honest Jon’s Records. HJRLP2. Compact disc.

<sup>38</sup> “Bradman Would Have Refused to Play,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 13, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> “First Test is Anybody’s Match,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 7, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>41</sup> “Headley Request Must Come From Abroad,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 14, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com. Headley had been playing county cricket in England at the time and displayed good batting form. While it could be argued that the calls for his return were not that far-fetched, they were still highly unconventional and spoke to an overall feeling that the batting lineup needed reinforcement.

<sup>42</sup> Longfield, “Second Test Preview,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 23, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>43</sup> “England Collapse, West Indies Strongly Placed,” *London Times*, June 27, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>44</sup> Rather than allow the bowlers to constrict the flow of runs, *The Times* argues that the batsmen should have taken proactive measures to hit out against the West Indian bowlers, so as to disrupt their rhythm.

<sup>45</sup> The *London Daily Express* reported in a similar vein, lamenting that the English batsmen “threw their wickets away”. This means that the batsmen were dismissed due to their own shortcomings rather than the skill of the bowlers, the same narrative presented by the *London Times*.

<sup>46</sup> This will be addressed in the ensuing pages.

<sup>47</sup> “West Indies Should Win Their First Test Match in England,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 28, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>48</sup> Richardson, 60.

<sup>49</sup> The *London Daily Express* is used mostly as a supplemental newspaper to the *London Times*. The major comparisons throughout this CDA are made between *The Gleaner* and the *London Times*. However, the *London Daily Express* is used as a point of comparison to acquire a more rounded understanding of the reporting of the “British press”.

<sup>50</sup> “Pick Your Team for the Next Test,” *London Daily Express*, June 30, 1950, *Express* archives, www.express.co.uk.

<sup>51</sup> *The London Times*’ headline after the win read simply, “Great Win for West Indies”.

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<sup>52</sup> E.L. Cozier, “W.I. Win First Test in England: Press Lament,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 30, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com. E.L. Cozier was the correspondent who wrote about the entire series for the *Gleaner*. His son, Tony, would become one of the longest serving West Indian cricket broadcasters and journalists.

<sup>53</sup> “West Indians in Wild Scenes.”

<sup>54</sup> Lord Beginner composed “Victory Cricket” to commemorate the occasion. It is also known as “Cricket Lovely Cricket” and “Those Little Pals of Mine.” This is the calypso that he sang on the field after the match.

<sup>55</sup> Cozier uses a reference to Shakespeare’s “Henry V” in describing the magnitude of the victory.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Ditton, “Second Test in Retrospect: Ramadhin, Valentine Paralysed England,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, July 5, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>57</sup> E.C. Lindo, “Len Hutton’s Nightmare,” Cartoon, *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 30, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>58</sup> “West Indies Win Will Sweeten Sugar Talks,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, July 1, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix II for the cartoon.

<sup>60</sup> Len Hutton was one of the greatest batsmen of all time and member of the 1950 English Test squad.

<sup>61</sup> Alf Valentine and Sonny Ramadhin were the two most successful West Indian bowlers on the 1950 tour. They were both very young and new to Test cricket. Lord Beginner’s calypso after the Test win made repeated reference to both of them as “those little pals of mine, Ramadhin and Valentine.” They represented a departure from the typical West Indian bowling attacks that featured mostly fast bowling. It was the first time in West Indies’ history that the team fielded a world-class spin bowler, and that team possessed two in Valentine and Ramadhin.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Ditton, “Run-Getting Riot at Trent Bridge: Worrell-Weekes Partnership Pulverises England Attack,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, July 22, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>63</sup> Indentureship, slavery and colonialism.

<sup>64</sup> E.L. Cozier, “W.I. in Strong Position in Fourth Test,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 15, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, jamaica-gleaner.com.

<sup>65</sup> This will be expanded on in the ensuing pages.



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<sup>66</sup> Test matches are played over 5 days. During the course of the match, a team must dismiss all 10 of the opposition batsmen twice in order to ensure victory. A draw occurs when all five days pass without this happening. Needing only a draw to ensure a series win, West Indies were in no hurry to score runs as the longer they batted, the less of a chance England had to win the match.

<sup>67</sup> Frank Rostron, “Test Is Turned Into Farce,” *London Daily Express*, August 15, 1950, *Express* archives, [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk).

<sup>68</sup> N.N. Nethersole, “How’s That?” *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 17, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, [jamaica-gleaner.com](http://jamaica-gleaner.com).

<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that the editors of the *Jamaica Gleaner* may have been inclined to “cry foul” about how the West Indies cricket team was represented in the British press, as it would appeal to the pervading anti-colonial malcontent in the region. By claiming victimization, they may be able to drum up support for their paper by exploiting the rancor of West Indians.

<sup>70</sup> West Indians were able to get an idea of what the English press were saying about the cricket matches because the *Jamaica Gleaner* featured a “London Correspondent” article each day. The article was written by a member of the *London Daily Express* and often summarized the general opinions of the English press and people.

<sup>71</sup> “All West Indians Will Be Right Proud,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 18, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, [jamaica-gleaner.com](http://jamaica-gleaner.com).

<sup>72</sup> “‘West Indian Day’ Mooted,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 18, 1950, *Gleaner* archives, [jamaica-gleaner.com](http://jamaica-gleaner.com).

<sup>73</sup> Eric Williams, in his speech “Massa Day Done,” described the Massa as “the owner of a West Indian sugar plantation, frequently an absentee, deliberately stunting all the economic potential of the society, dominating his defenceless workers by the threat of punishment or imprisonment, using his political power for the most selfish private ends, an uncultured man with an illiberal outlook.”

<sup>74</sup> Norman Manley, “Self-Government Now!” 124-125.

<sup>75</sup> Williams, 262.

<sup>76</sup> Norman Manley, “Self-Government Now!” 126.

<sup>77</sup> Anton Allahar refers to these politicians as “ethnic entrepreneurs” who “attempt to capitalize on the peoples’ general sense of cultural uprootedness and dislocation...the entrepreneurs in question are not averse to excavating (their invented version of) history with a view to mobilizing specific ethnic groups for political ends.” Anton Allahar, “Situating Ethnic

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Nationalism in the Caribbean,” in *Ethnicity, Class, and Nationalism*, ed. Anton Allahaar (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 11.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>80</sup> Williams Speaks, 264.

<sup>81</sup> George Headley filled in as captain for one match in 1948, but a black captain had never been selected to lead the team on a permanent basis.

<sup>82</sup> There is evidence that James wrote multiple articles in *The Nation* on the topic. However, I have found no trace of articles other than the one used in this analysis.

<sup>83</sup> C.L.R. James, “West Indies Cricket,” in *A Majestic Innings: Writings on Cricket*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (London: Aurum Press, 2006), 101.

<sup>84</sup> Newspaper reports from the *Jamaica Gleaner* did not reveal any consternation surrounding the topic. It appears as though this was an issue that generated most of its discussion outside of the press. James, in *Beyond A Boundary*, claims that many in the West Indies did not agree with the tone of his advocacy in taking on the WICBC.

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### *Summary*

The overriding purpose of this study was to determine the role that West Indies cricket played in the realization of West Indian political independence from Great Britain. Specifically, this study was tasked with discovering how the decisive victory at Lords over England in 1950 and the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain in 1960 factored into the already developing movement toward independence in the West Indies. Moreover, the study explored the manner in which issues of “race” and “nationalism” infiltrated the public discourse surrounding independence and positioned West Indies cricket as a potential catalyst for a political break from Britain? In the lead up to independence, politicians in the region utilized political strategies to sway their constituents toward their anti-colonial goals. The establishment of a link between the political rhetoric of these politicians and the socio-political history of West Indies cricket was crucial in deciphering the role that the latter played in the eventual realization of independence.

One of the first undertakings of this study was to investigate the role that British colonialism played in the infliction of the psychological scarring of West Indians, a process that left West Indians with a belief in their own inferiority to the British. Through the colonial mission, West Indians were taught to appropriate all aspects of English culture. The use of Frantz Fanon and Trevor Rhone’s literature aided in exposing the totalizing nature of this process, through the depiction of an idealization of whiteness in their respective books, *Black Skin, White Masks* and *Old Story Time*. The introduction of cricket in the colonies, in part, served the purpose of transplanting yet another facet of British culture to the colonized. Cricket taught West Indians not to question authority (the decisions of the umpire) and how to be the perfect English gentleman and the game’s ethic stressed civility, a key component of maintaining order in a post

emancipated society. It was against the backdrop of Englishness suppressing the development of a West Indian identity that cricket emerged, ironically, as a way for the colonized to express themselves and lay claim to their own self worth. This would be a long and arduous process, but one that became more achievable as more and more West Indians gained access to cricket in the twentieth century.

The granting of test status to the West Indies cricket team in 1928 marked the birth of West Indian cricket on the international stage. The arrival of Learie Constantine and George Headley as the first great West Indian cricketers was a landmark moment as they were powerful symbols of the potential for West Indians to overcome the belief of their own inferiority. The two cricketers showed the Caribbean and world that West Indians could play cricket just as well, if not better, than their English masters. This was a crucial starting point for the positioning of West Indies cricket as a political weapon against colonialism and a voice for its people. Due in large part to the successes of pioneering black cricketers like Learie Constantine, George Headley, and the Three W's (Frank Worrell, Clyde Walcott and Everton Weekes), the accepted superiority of Englishness was no longer tenable, at least on the cricket field. The legacy of colonialism was one of West Indians having belonged to other peoples for hundreds of years. Between 1928 and 1950, the success of black West Indian cricketers was a symbolic statement for the ability of West Indians to control their own destiny, no longer shackled by the tentacles of colonialism. West Indians were ready to take control of their own lives, no longer tethered to the colonial doctrine that held Englishness as the ultimate standard. By 1950, the political climate in the West Indies was such that the idea of an independent region was increasingly a possibility rather than a distant dream. West Indies cricket made political strides toward its own autonomy from the colonial elite ahead of the political process. Thus, its political power was capitalized upon by political actors, who took impetus from the gains of West Indies cricket toward their own political machinations off the field.

The unseating of England as the premier cricketing nation in 1950 was the most definitive concretization of the cultural infiltration made by West Indies cricket since its inauguration in 1928. The critical discourse analysis (CDA) used to analyze this event revealed a sentiment within the region that West Indians' time had arrived. The dethroning of the colonial

master was a galvanizing moment for West Indians in the Caribbean and those who had arrived as migrants to England in 1948. The analysis of the *Jamaica Gleaner* positioned the success of the cricket team as having made a statement for the reputation of the region in a post-war world. The analysis of political speeches by Norman Manley and Eric Williams showed concerted appeals to West Indians to band together due to a common racial heritage, as part of their attempts to capitalize on the cricket success and make a similar political break from England. The “massa day done” narrative made a connection between the dethroning at Lord's in 1950 to the continued independence movements for the next twelve years. After beating England in 1950, the promise of cricketing autonomy was stifled by the non-appointment of Frank Worrell to the post of captain in the ensuing decade. The campaign waged by C.L.R. James in 1960 to complete the Worrell captaincy selection started a decade earlier, ensured that West Indians took full control over their cricket. The removal of “massa” from the helm of West Indies cricket inspired politicians and West Indians to do the same in their political lives, in the process removing Englishness as the ideal and making initial strides toward a new West Indian identity.

### *Conclusions*

West Indies cricket served as one important catalyst for independence in the region because of its ability to challenge the colonial master and the legitimacy of colonial rule, on the cricket field. It was what these challenges represented and what was being challenged that proved the potency of West Indies cricket. Whether these challenges were due to white superiority/West Indian inferiority, the question of West Indian readiness to self-govern, the belief that the black man/colonial pupil was unintelligent, the calypso cricketers were able to provide the answers with bat and ball. In beating England on their home turf, on the hallowed grounds of Lord's, the cricketers showed that they were every bit the equal (if not the game masters) of the British. Frank Worrell's ascendancy as captain in 1960 showed that West Indians were capable of leading themselves outside of the mothering eye of England. Finally, the proliferation of the wildly successful black batsman, as embodied by Headley and the Three W's, proved that West Indians possessed the intellectual wherewithal to master the long-held domain

of the white man. In all these ways, West Indies cricket turned the master/pupil dichotomy on its head and gave agency to the development of a West Indian identity.

The primary way in which issues of race drove the development of West Indies cricket and influenced the movements toward independence was through the desire to disprove the belief that the colonial whiteness was superior to West Indian blackness. Whether this was in the form of privileging English culture, language, physicality, or creating a hierarchy in colonial society that tightened access to social and political institutions, blackness was a limiting factor for West Indians after emancipation. Cricket was a way in which the colonial pupils could prove to themselves and the world that there was nothing unequal about the colours of their skin relative to the colonial master. When George Headley scored runs in a manner that drew comparisons to Don Bradman, both the colonizer and colonized discerned the symbolic significance. Through the achievement of black cricketers, West Indians were able to disavow the worthlessness imposed on them, the insignificance that they accepted for centuries.

Cricket established its place in the West Indies as a means of recreation for British soldiers in the garrisons. Its code was disseminated through schooling, and the game developed into the incorporation of the WICBC and the achievement of test status in 1928. That the collection of British colonies played together under the banner of the West Indies cricket team, was in itself a political statement. The bringing together of a disparate group of Caribbean people toward one goal (winning cricket matches), planted the seed of togetherness that led to the team having the symbolic power to impugn the shackling legacies of colonialism. From the seemingly benign initiation of the game in the garrisons, West Indies cricket was made to become, through a variety of factors, a symbol of national unity around the region. A West Indian consciousness may have developed regardless of the existence of West Indies cricket, but the unlikely journey of the team to the historic events of 1950 legitimized the claims of politicians to that end.

The political narratives surrounding West Indian independence featured calls for “the time is now” to move forward with a political break from Britain because the “massa day done,” and that West Indians could do so because they were “one people” bound together by a common history rooted in colonialism. These narratives were made possible and legitimized by the successes of the West Indies cricket team and Frank Worrell’s captaincy in dethroning the

colonial master on the cricket field. The “time is now” narrative won out as independence became a reality starting in 1962 with Jamaica and Trinidad. This was in large part due to the pervading belief in the region that it was no longer tenable for England to maintain the socio-political control that it held over West Indians for so long. The removal of “massa” from the helm of West Indies cricket served as a template for “his” banishment from political spheres as well. However, the rhetoric of West Indians being “one people” was less successful, as evidenced by the decision of Jamaica to leave the Federation and seek independence by itself. Although West Indies cricket provided a strong symbolic example of how West Indians could work together toward a common goal, economic considerations, particularly in the distribution of resources, proved prohibitive in realizing political independence from Britain as a unified West Indian entity.

#### *Recommendations for Research*

The political utility of West Indies cricket was a central question of this study. The West Indies cricket team was proven to have tremendous political power in the region by the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, as evidenced by the widespread and feverish coverage of the team in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, the game occupied a special place in the Caribbean consciousness. This study established a link between the primacy of West Indies cricket in Caribbean culture and the movements toward independence. Future researchers may be interested in plotting the strength and weakness of West Indies cricket in the public consciousness after independence was achieved around the Caribbean. Though politicians promised independence would bring prosperity for West Indians, life after its realization was still hard. Concurrently, the West Indies cricket team failed to live up its expectations for the ensuing 15 years after independence. Researchers may be interested in how the relationship between West Indies cricket and its people was affected by the failure to build on the promises of the previous decade.

The twenty year period between 1975 and 1995 saw the West Indies team dominate world cricket, only to be followed by a period of precipitous decline that continues to present day. What were and are the reasons for this decline? Do West Indians still possess the same level

of interest in the game? Is there a relationship between the strength of the political symbolism of West Indies cricket and the fortunes of the team? This research may consider a comparison between West Indies cricket and other teams that saw a reversal of fortunes in the opposite direction. What were the reasons why the performance of the West Indies team fell so sharply while team such as Australia and India were able to supplant the calypso cricketers as the dominant forces in the game?



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## **APPENDIX A: Timeline of Significant Events in West Indies Political Development**

1609 – Bermuda became the British Empire's first acquisition in the West Indies.

1660s – By this time the British Empire consisted of: Bermuda, St. Kitts, Jamaica, Montserrat, Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas and Anguilla.

1834 – Abolition of slavery.

1886 – A West Indies cricket team toured North America for the first time.

1895 – First English team toured West Indies

1928 – West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) founded.

1948 – Everton Weekes, Frank Worrell and Clyde Walcott (The Three W's) debuted for West Indies

1948 - First wave of West Indians migrated to England.

1950 – Historic first test match and series win against England at Lords.

1958 – West Indian Federation founded.

1960 – Frank Worrell appointed as first permanent black captain of West Indies.

1961 – Dissolution of West Indian Federation.

1962 – Jamaica and Trinidad became first colonies to be granted independence from Britain.

## APPENDIX B – “Len Hutton’s Nightmare”



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## *Curriculum Vitae*

**Name:** Jonathan Newman

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** Ithaca College  
Ithaca, New York, United States  
2003-2007 B.A.

The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2008-2013 M.A.

**Honours and Awards:** Leadership Scholar, Ithaca College  
2003-2007

Dana Intern, Ithaca College  
2006-2007

Award for Professional Excellence, Sport Studies, Ithaca College  
2007

**Related Work Experience:** Teaching Assistant  
The University of Western Ontario  
2008-2010