

Bollywood Motifs: Cricket Fiction and Fictional Cricket

CHANDRIMA CHAKRABORTY

What is distinctive about any particular society is not the fact or extent of its modernity, but rather its distinctive debates *about* modernity, the historical and cultural trajectories that shape its appropriation of the means of modernity, and the cultural sociology (principally of class and state) that determines who gets to play with modernity and what defines the rules of the game.¹

India is the largest film-producing nation in the world and the primary consumers of Indian popular cinema, centred on the Bombay film industry popularly known as Bollywood, are the masses. Bollywood, or Hindi commercial cinema, is marked as popular culture with all its connotations of trivial, inferior and low culture. Indian intellectuals and urban elites criticize Bollywood for its unrealistic song-and-dance sequences and repetitive/formulaic use of the repertoire of mythical tales, traditional musicals and melodramas. They prefer to watch art cinema or parallel cinema, which is marked as 'high' culture, as opposed to Hindi commercial cinema. Art films range from those of the Bengali-language cinema such as Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (1955) and Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome* (1969) to films such as Mani Kaul's *Uski Roti* (1969), Girish Karnad's *Kaadu* (1973), M.S. Sathyu's *Garam Hawa* (1973) and Govind Nihalini's *Aakrosh* (1980). Film connoisseurs around the world are familiar with the works of many of these directors, as their films are shown in international film festivals. However, the academic and elite preference for and approval of art/parallel cinema has not translated into its embrace by the masses. Art films have miserably failed to attract or satisfy the non-literate and poor who comprise a considerable section of the paying customers in India. In the realm of sports, however, cricket has captured the imagination of both

the masses and the elite. India's dismal performance in international hockey and football competitions has led its citizens to shift their allegiance to the game of cricket. Cricket has acquired the lone status of 'national' sport in India and, at present, alone provides the possibility for India to gain recognition in the arena of so called 'world' sports.

Unlike the elite and the middle classes, who have various other entertainment avenues open before them, Bollywood and cricket are the only affordable forms of entertainment in which the subordinate and marginalized peoples (i.e. the masses) can be both active consumers and engaged spectators. Films such as *Bombay*, *Roja*, *Terrorist*, *Border*, *Gangajaal* and so on through their representation of national events and national anxieties have established Bollywood as a site for public discourse. In cinema halls populated by the masses, spectators return the film's hero's 'gaze' through critical comments and gestures – sighs, gasps, applause, whistles – and often through active debates as they leave the movie theatres. In extreme cases, angry spectators even burn down theatre halls to register their disapproval. In cricket stadiums too, the main spectators are the masses, as the elite and middle classes in India prefer to watch the game from the safety and comfort of their homes, away from the 'hooligans' and 'rioters'. Violence has become a common phenomenon in cricket stadiums all over the country. Violence often erupts when Indian cricketers fail to perform according to expectations of the paying masses, and this is particularly true of India-Pakistan matches. In India (and the subcontinent in general) India-Pakistan matches have become a release valve to express hostility, animosity, envy and pride against the neighbour. The national passion for cricket, which is utilized by radicals on both sides of the border, encourages the nations to patriotic fervour and frenzy.

The similarity between cricket and Bollywood is not restricted only to audience response. Close ties also exist between the film and cricket industry in India. Cricketers endorse products on television, launch films and music videos, and some of them even try their acting skills in Bollywood. Cricket matches for charitable purposes comprised of film stars and cricketers are also very common and usually draw in spectators in large numbers. Cricketers and film stars routinely campaign for various political parties and many of them have also been elected as ministers, thanks to their huge fan following.²

The close association of film stars and cricketers in the public imagination and the appeal that cricket holds for the Indian populace

have immense commercial value, evident from the success of the 2001 Bollywood blockbuster *Lagaan* ('Tax'), which shows a one-and-a-half-hour-long cricket match. It validates C.L.R. James's view that '[c]ricket is first and foremost a dramatic spectacle. It belongs with the theatre, ballet, opera and the dance' and Ashis Nandy's comment that 'in the Indian popular culture of entertainment, cricket-as-spectacle is closer to film-as-spectacle than to cricket-as-sport'.³

Directed by Ashutosh Gowariker and produced by popular film star Aamir Khan, *Lagaan* has won a number of national and international awards.⁴ The continuity of familiar narratives and aesthetic traditions explains its success in India and in the Indian diaspora. The picturesque landscape of rural Gujarat, lyrical music and the star cast have all contributed to the success of this film in the box office. But, as this essay argues, what has enthralled the Indian masses is *Lagaan's* unique theme: the subalterns' destabilizing of the history of colonial cricket.⁵ Thus this essay is about subaltern classes and modernizing devices, such as cricket and cinema, which, depending on the historical and social context, can enable or disable the subalterns' entrance into history. The crux of the argument revolves around the agency of the subaltern classes and the subversion of the civilizing mission of the British imperial enterprise through *Lagaan's* representation of cricket in the colony.

I start by exploring *Lagaan's* similarity with the subaltern studies project in recuperating the subjectivity and agency of the subaltern classes. The second section deals with the film's interrogation of cricket, which was considered one of the key civilizing devices of the British Empire. Cricket's transformation from a colonialist device to a nationalist game in various postcolonial nations is discussed in the final section. Drawing upon the filmic text of *Lagaan*, the essay shows how Indian popular cinema extends the subaltern studies project in the visual medium. It argues that Bollywood films with their appeal to the audience of uprooted peasants, industrial workers, unemployed poor and uneducated *can* effectively decolonize the imagination of the Indian masses.⁶ The anti-imperialist stance and the interrogation of the linearity of discourses of modernity in *Lagaan* demonstrate that Indian popular cinema *can* enable public debates within a culture where the majority of the population is non-literate, and therefore unable to partake in elite discussions of culture and modernity, usually articulated in academia. In other words, popular cinema, through films like

Lagaan, reveals its potential to empower the masses that are otherwise silenced, forgotten or marginalized in dominant discourses.

I

Lagaan is set in 1893 in a village called Champaner in colonial Awadh, a princely state in what is now central India. The East India Company looks after the defence of the state in lieu of taxes (or *lagaan*) paid by the peasants. Raja Puran Singh, the local ruler, is a nominal head, although responsible for the welfare of his subjects. In the year in which the film is set there has been no rain and we are told that there was very little rainfall in the previous year as well. Yet Captain Russell, the British official of the East India Company in charge of the region, demands double the usual amount of tax from the people.

The film's appeal to the peasant-spectators is enhanced by *Lagaan's* plot construction around a drought-affected peasantry and portrayal of parched lands. The first song of the film captures the Champaner villagers' desperate hope for rain. From pre-colonial to contemporary times, vast regions of India are periodically affected by drought with disastrous consequences for the peasant population. Interestingly, *Lagaan* was released at a time when large sections of western India were affected by severe drought. The newscasts at that time regularly showed peasants appealing to the Indian government to waive their debts and provide them with more financial aid.

In *Lagaan* the situation is similar and the Champaner peasants (like their real counterparts) approach their king with a request for a tax waiver. The king is watching a friendly cricket match between officials of the East India Company and the game cannot be interrupted. The peasants are asked to wait until the match is over. As they wait, they watch the British players and discuss among themselves about the *feringhee* (foreign) game. Bhuvan, a local youth and the hero of the film, explains to his fellow spectators that the British are playing a game similar to *gilli-danda*, which all the village children play.⁷ Recognizing the similarity between the two games, the villagers mutually agree that cricket is another version of the rural game of *gilli-danda*. They are amused to find adult men playing a children's game and joke about the immature behaviour of the colonizers. After the game is over the peasants are allowed to speak to the king. They make their request, but the king expresses his helplessness and states that the taxes have to be

paid. At this point Captain Russell intervenes. He is infuriated by Bhuvan's description of the British game of cricket as 'silly' and 'childish'. Angered by the disregard shown to a game that he believes differentiates him (the British) from the 'other' (the colonized natives), and unable to accept a colonized subject's casual dismissal of cricket, which is generally accepted as a marker of British morality, civilization, modernity and progress, he throws Bhuvan and the peasants a challenge. If the villagers can beat the British in a cricket match they will have the taxes of the entire province waived for the next three years. But if they lose they will have to pay three times the amount of regular tax that year. The peasants have no choice and hesitatingly accept the challenge. The film ends with the Champaner village cricket team defeating the British team in a climactic finish.

The ending of the film is not very surprising to Indian film spectators. It is possible to cite a number of Bollywood films that have as their theme the victory of Indians over British imperialists. In other words, *Lagaan* is merely repeating a popular Bollywood motif: defeat of British colonizers at the hands of colonized 'Indians.' But what is unique about *Lagaan* is its situating of the struggle for subject-constitution and decolonization on contradictory domains: cricket, an 'elite' sport, and subaltern politics. Historical evidence suggests that cricket was an elite sport in colonial times in India, patronized by the royal families and the local bourgeoisie. Even today, playing cricket is an expensive affair. The amount of time and money required to nurture and develop cricket skills are beyond the reach of the majority. The subordinate or poor classes are usually spectators in cricket stadiums, rather than participants on cricket fields. Yet *Lagaan*, defying history, writes the dispossessed of the colonial margins (the non-literate and poor peasant) into the history of a popular sport.

This is similar to the subaltern studies project's efforts to transform the writing of colonial Indian history. Several volumes of *Subaltern Studies*, edited and theorized most extensively by Ranajit Guha, critique conventional historiography – colonialist, nationalist and Marxist – for treating the subalterns of South Asian society as devoid of consciousness, and hence without the ability to make their own history. Colonialist historiography, as various critics have elucidated, aided and abetted the more overt brutalities of colonization by creating categories of the 'other', which were used for the subjection and objectification of native societies to justify imperial processes of discrimination,

subordination and oppression. Eurocentric perspectives claimed that Europe's colonization of 'the rest of the world' made it possible for the 'barbaric' natives to enter History and modernity.⁸ Nationalist historiography, on the other hand, has represented Indian nationalism, 'as the sum of the activities and ideas by which the Indian elite responded to the institutions, opportunities, resources, etc. generated by colonialism'.⁹ The subaltern studies historians have critiqued the Indian National Congress, which led the anti-colonial or freedom struggle, for appropriating a variety of popular resistance(s) under its own agenda and prescriptions for anti-colonial struggle. They have attempted to establish through a number of case studies how the Congress and Gandhian campaigns, far from leading movements of resistance, often intervened and subsumed movements that were generated independently and outside it. Marxist historians are critiqued for seeing in the history of colonial South Asia only the linear development of class consciousness and for 'emptying' South Asian history of the specific types of consciousness and practices of subaltern movements.

Thus subaltern studies historians have brought to light the absence of subaltern consciousness in these dominant historical discourses, and *Lagaan* extends the work of the subaltern studies collective in attempting to fill this 'emptiness'. The male narrator at the end of *Lagaan* suggests that the film's project has been to recover the experience, the specific and distinctive historical practice of a subaltern group, which has been lost or hidden by the processes of elite historiography. The film resists colonialist (mis)representations of native societies by foregrounding native agency. Further, it questions the 'universality' and 'authenticity' of official versions of Indian national history, the erasures and silences in it, and raises doubts in the minds of the spectators about its exclusive claim to 'knowledge' of the Indian past.

Rosalind O'Hanlon identifies a basic model of explanation 'beneath the tremendous variety in the empirical material' of the subaltern studies historians: 'a long tradition of exploitation, or a shorter-term economic dislocation, which provokes resistance and rebellion: challenges to landlords or the agents of the state, the appropriation or destruction of the signs and instruments of their authority'.¹⁰ *Lagaan* follows a similar pattern. The peasants' awareness of their 'long tradition of exploitation', and particularly their present destitution,

provoke dissent and anger. The Champaner peasants voice their anger against the imposition of double taxes based on an understanding of their condition: unethical and unjust imposition of high taxes, shortage of water for farming with no rain on the horizon and the British official's discriminatory treatment of them. As they reach the decision to meet their king with an appeal for a tax waiver they identify the English officer as the 'real' enemy, rather than their king. This scene in *Lagaan* can be read as a critique of the colonialist and nationalist assumptions that the peasants in colonial India were simple, ignorant and unaware that the fact of their poverty was the result of the exploitative nature of colonial rule, and therefore in need of guidance and leadership from outside to embark on effective political action. Partha Chatterjee in 'The Nation and its Peasants' notes that 'both colonial and nationalist politics thought of the peasantry as an object of their strategies, to be acted upon, controlled and appropriated'.¹¹ The villagers of Champaner do not need any elite political or social leader to enlighten them about the rapacious British official in charge of the region. The villagers are intelligent enough to recognize their oppressor of the moment, in Ranajit Guha's words, '*on their own*, that is, *independently of the elite*'.¹²

Contrary to reviews of the film that argue that 'the other' in *Lagaan* belongs outside the 'nation', the film, in my view, demonstrates layers of otherness. The 'other' that defines the subaltern's self-consciousness, both historically and in the film, is not only the white outsider/the racial other (the officials of the East India Company), but the various 'others'. It is equally the *raja* (the feudal lord); the comprador bourgeoisie (Ramnath, the translator); marginalized groups lower or outside the caste hierarchy (the untouchables); the subordinate and discriminated (the disabled or mentally ill) and the other gender (the women). As Tanika Sarkar notes in her case study on Jitu Santal's Movement in Malda, for the subaltern, 'striving to maintain a distance' not only from the elite but also from the classes and groups lower in the social hierarchy 'may be the most important content of his self-image and self-respect'.¹³ The film accurately conceives of the subaltern as a shifting signifier, i.e. as a context-relative category constructed according to the specificities of local power relations as opposed to a static, homogeneous and universal category.¹⁴ It recognizes that the construction of a cricket team of villagers draws together varied social groups into novel alliances. Thus *Lagaan's* detailed delineation of the

processes of specific and complex negotiations involved in creating a cricket team transcending class, caste and religious barriers does not exorcize the reality of unequal identities or the inequalities of the indigenous, social structures that the subaltern inhabits.

The peasant society is not egalitarian, in terms of the basic means of production, namely land. For some peasants of Champaner it is a struggle to retain their only means of existence, their farming land; for others it is a matter of losing some land and cattle. The contentious and differing opinions negotiated by the hero are an acknowledgement that many peasants were simply too poor to approve the risky challenge that Bhuvan accepts on behalf of his village. Consequently, the impression of unity that the film forcefully exhibits at the end does not erase the relationships of power between the subalterns that continue to exist. The hierarchy of social relations is evident not only from the depiction of the economic disparity between peasant landowners with varying amounts of farming land, but also from the Thakur, the village headman; Lakha's uncertainty whether the Muslims would be allowed to be part of the Champaner village team; Kachra's double marginalization because of his caste and disability; and finally the women, who are not granted membership in the cricket team due to their gender. According to Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, 'First World Cinema, on the rare occasions that it talks about peasants, usually sentimentalizes them as passive victims or as example of pastoral purity'.¹⁵ *Lagaan* falsifies such populist idealizations of the peasantry as a homogeneous and harmonious community, free from internal dissensions. Contrary to Boria Majumdar's assertion, Champaner is definitely not a 'filmic embodiment of a pristine village community'.¹⁶ The film unequivocally demonstrates that Champaner's condition at the time of (or before) the colonial contact was neither just nor homogeneous. Domination in rural Champaner is not uniform, but multivalent, operating through a plurality of discourse. An exploration of the animosity to the inclusion of Kachra in the Champaner cricket team elucidates this well.

Kachra (literally 'garbage' or 'waste') is an untouchable and a disabled village youth who is visually presented as inhabiting the margins. We first see Kachra with a broom in his hand crouched on the margins of the village cricket field. Bhuvan accidentally discovers the disabled youth's bowling skill and makes an impassioned plea for Kachra's inclusion in the cricket match. The entire village is up in arms but the articulate hero conveniently and temporarily resolves the

resistance by referring to Hindu mythology. Kachra's acceptance on the cricket field, however, should not be interpreted as an indication of a change in the casteist perceptions of the villagers. It points to the improvisational modes of peasant political agency, as the untouchable youth is *allowed* to be part of the cricket team because of his exceptional spinning capability, which could potentially facilitate a victory for Champaner. Kachra's demeanour of servility and muteness throughout the film also cautions against applauding this supposedly upward mobility of the disabled untouchable. Boria Majumdar, for instance, describes Kachra's incorporation in the Champaner team as 'a triumph of meritocracy'.¹⁷ This belief in an open meritocracy implies disbelief in the barriers of race and class. The onus falls on the individual (of the 'other' gender, the 'other' class, the 'other' caste or the 'other' religion) to move up socio-economically. But unless the broader structural factors and systemic discrimination, such as sexism or racism or casteism, get addressed, a particular individual's efforts or aspirations will not (and cannot) be effective. In the film the invisible (or not so visible) structures of caste, class and gender, and not merely the visible structures of race, define the workings of the socio-economic system in rural Champaner.

As Partha Chatterjee reminds us, 'the notion of community as itself a differentiated unity operates not merely between peasants as a community and their dominators, but between peasants themselves'.¹⁸ The representation of varying degrees and densities of power and domination in Champaner suggests a *strategic alliance*, where socially differentiated individuals with different interests and motivations come together as a community to resist the current oppression of the white 'other.' Mobilization to create a Champaner cricket team is done on the basis of what Ranajit Guha describes as 'traditional organization of kinship and territoriality'.¹⁹ Bhuvan, the protagonist, reminds his fellow-villagers of the bonds of solidarity that already exist between them as he urges them to be united. Thus, Bhuvan's response to Lakha's treachery does not draw upon their mutuality of interest, but is a chastisement of a kinsman for not doing his 'duty' according to the norms of the kinship relations.²⁰ The local ruler in *Lagaan* may himself be his compatriots' oppressor (the collaborationist role of the bourgeoisie has been historically recorded), but in the scheme of the film he is also oppressed by the colonial state. There is a scene where Captain Russell goads the raja to eat meat, in lieu of a request he has

made to the British administrator. The king refuses, and to punish him for his insolence Captain Russell doubles the taxes of the region. Raja Puran Singh decides to follow his religious tenets rather than save his peasants. He is presented as an effete and ineffective ruler, who does not consider fighting the whimsical and tyrannical Captain Russell as a possible alternative. Moreover, he depends on the poor peasants to compensate for his lack of authority/agency and reclaim his dignity. The support of the elite (Raja Puran Singh) for the peasants' cause establishes the specificity of the Champaner case. It would be ingenious to regard anti-colonial alliances such as these as permanent or immutable, as the social structures do not change in the course of the film's progress. However, it needs to be noted that *Lagaan's* peasant hero (Bhuvan) points to the need for unity to fight all kinds of oppression, foreign and indigenous. He gestures to the possibility of fighting against the local ruler, if need be, at an undetermined future. Thus the Champaner villagers' acceptance of the white man's challenge gives birth to a vision not of equity but of self-sustenance and survival, and this is directly political in intent.

The film depicts everyday resistance to forms of domination such as speaking out against the British officials through insults, slurs, gossip and physical gestures, but the villagers do not take an initiative to save their 'nation' from alien rule. They seize the opportunity made available to them due to the egoism and arrogance of the imperial ruler and use it for their betterment. Thus it is solidarity for a specific cause that makes the villagers of Champaner become active historical agents and exert some control over the conditions of their present and future. As Sudipta Kaviraj has argued in the context of late nineteenth-century Bengali literature, there is no 'necessary connection between being patriotic and being Indian'.²¹ Equating the political and the nationalist is an agenda of a nationalist ideological account which 'disallows any opposition to colonialism other than itself, any dissent organized on other lines the title to oppositional glory'.²² The organized cricket portrayed in the film is one particular peasant community's response to colonial rule. Cricket nationalism is depicted as temporary and provisional and thus different from nationalist politics, which sees itself as linear and evolutionary. It would be therefore anachronistic to read the specificity (local and contextual) of the fictional past depicted in *Lagaan* in terms of the present, where cricket has become 'an instrument for mobilizing national sentiments'.²³

Lagaan's representation of peasant participation and competence in an elite sport allows the colonized peasants of Champaner to go beyond being mere voyeurs of cricket matches and inert victims of colonial policy, like Raja Puran Singh. However, dismantling structures of indigenous oppression is presented as beyond the scope of the subalterns. The film does not show the peasants to be fighting against the system (colonialism, racism, feudalism) that produces the monsters although it gestures towards such possibilities here and there. It presents the colonial problem as a character disorder of one individual (Captain Russell), rather than as a systemic problem. Moreover, the fragile bonds of unity forged across the divisive lines of caste, class, religion and so on are made possible due to the tyranny of Captain Russell and his men. Therefore, once the British leave the rural scene – as in the end of the film – the strategic alliance is left without a *raison d'être*.

Thus the limit of the peasants' identity is fixed by the very conditions of the subordination under which they live and work. According to Ranajit Guha, 'the initiatives which originated from the domain of subaltern politics were not, on their part, powerful enough to develop the nationalist movement into a full-fledged struggle for national liberation'.²⁴ He concludes from his study of a number of peasant movements in colonial India that the insurgent consciousness was 'negative consciousness' in the sense that its identity was expressed solely through an opposition, namely its difference from and antagonism to its dominators. Further, Guha claims that in its paradigmatic form subaltern consciousness is in fact organized and 'political', but this organization shows no lasting traits that could be extrapolated into an actually existing historical movement. Javeed Alam notes this seeming contradiction in his review of the first volume of *Subaltern Studies*. He writes:

Can autonomy be equated with episodic actions, whatever be the sources or motivational mainsprings of action? . . . In none of these studies do we find any evidence from which it could be inferred that the domain of peasant politics had come to acquire the character of a stable condition that defines the availability of concrete options and choices for these classes or strata in a long term sense.²⁵

Guha emphasizes that the paradigm of authority and rebellion reappears 'cyclically over the centuries' rather than as a continuous or teleological development.²⁶ Yet the question remains: if the possibility of peasant insurgency remains merely imminent or cyclical, how does that affect the rewriting of history?

II

As the subaltern studies contributors have shown, subaltern consciousness has never been accurately recorded by historians, and subalterns themselves do not leave historical records that could be admitted as new evidence to the historical record. Thus any search for subaltern consciousness must be an interested representation by those committed to its recovery, and must be limited to correcting the inaccurate, earlier historical records. *Lagaan* is an important film because it 'interrupts' the linearity of the commonsensical knowledge of cricket historiography. As Richard Terdiman writes: 'Discourses of resistance ceaselessly interrupt what would otherwise be the seamless serenity of the dominant, its obliviousness to any contestation . . . counter-dominant strains challenge and subvert the appearance of inevitability which is ideology's primary mechanism for sustaining its own self-reproduction'.²⁷

The 'serenity' and 'inevitability' of colonialist narratives is interrupted through the film's fissuring of cricket history with subaltern history. The 'voice' of a subaltern consciousness in *Lagaan* questions the strategies employed by Western imperialism to reduce the 'other' to the position of the marginal and the subordinate. In other words, *Lagaan's* most significant contribution to popular culture lies in its ability to convincingly portray how cultural improvisations by subaltern groups can co-opt and critique the master forms and tropes of the West.

As noted earlier, Bhuvan, a fictional, colonized, peasant, makes the game of cricket familiar to the Champaner masses by comparing it to *gilli-danda*. He asserts that their game is an indigenous version of cricket, a game that the native children have been playing for centuries in the villages. The naming of the game of the 'master' as a variation of a rural children's game, not only denies colonial cricket its glamour, but it also reduces the game to immature behaviour by the (British) colonizers. A reversal of the terms and tropes of colonialist discourse is evident here: the colonized male, usually denied adult status and

described as 'childlike', 'ignorant', and 'boy', now names the 'civilized' as child. It points to the irony of the supposedly mature East India Company officials' assumption of the heavy responsibility of civilizing the naive and childlike natives. Also, the vernacularization of the game results in the indigenous, non-official village game of *gilli-danda* being placed in the same trajectory as the 'official' colonial game, of supposedly Victorian origins. Thus this popular film desecrates the British subject's originality and the 'purity' of cricket's roots.

The Champaner village folk and *Lagaan's* viewers are introduced to cricket in the colony in the scene where the villagers decide to meet the king to express their concerns over increased taxation. It is significant that the peasants are made to sit outside the official cricket field, outside the public space of imperial sports. As the cricket ball rolls towards them, the curious villagers pick it up. The response from the British officials is to hit the peasants – that is, punish *them* for daring to touch *their* cricket ball. In defiance of this colonial practice and strict marshalling of the sacrosanct space of imperial performance, *Lagaan* links colonial cricket to indigenous sports. The cricket pitch and the cricket paraphernalia (ball, bat, wicket, gloves etc.) that are kept rigidly 'pure', free from native contamination, are destabilized through the native assertion of the similarity of cricket and *gilli-danda* and later through their excellence in the game. Thus, the film successfully decentres the British subject and foregrounds the colonized natives and their systems. It gestures to the possibility that the British subject, the assumed original, is perhaps *merely* a sophisticated copy.

Various writers have noted that colonial cricket was a vehicle for communicating the values and ethics of the Victorian upper classes in England to the natives, an effort at civilizing the natives – 'the white man's burden'. Arjun Appadurai notes that cricket was seen as 'a quintessentially masculine activity', and *Lagaan's* fictional rendering of cricket in the colonial margins also casts the game as an exclusively masculine skill.²⁸ The film repeats the stereotypical portrayal of women in Indian popular cinema. All the women's roles are assigned in relation to the male protagonists – their lover, mother or the 'other' woman – and this maintains the male characters' centrality. There is a sustained effort to present the women characters in the film either as sexualized beings (Gauri and Elizabeth) or as victims (Bhuvan's mother and the wives of the other villagers). The women are granted companionate and supportive roles. They provide food, sing songs and pray for the success

of their male counterparts. Captain Russell's sister Elizabeth, too, is not included in the British cricket team. She is pushed to the margins in the colony as a temporary visitor and a tourist. Her brother assigns her the role of a mere spectator, both of the colonial spectacle and the cricket tournaments. However, Elizabeth's appropriation of the (masculine) role of the cricket coach and teaching the Champaner peasants the intricacies of colonial cricket disrupts the masculine preserve of the game. It allows the film's spectators to locate the 'other' gender's challenge to rigid systems that maintain sports culture as a male enterprise.²⁹

Sport was central to the late nineteenth-century vision of manliness, claims Ronald Hyam, and athletics was seen as relevant to empire as 'football, cricket, and boxing were seen as "moral agents" in running the empire'.³⁰ Hyam traces the changes in British masculinity through the nineteenth century: 'A shift from the ideals of moral strenuousness, a Christian manliness, to a culture of the emphatically physical ... a shift from serious earnestness to robust virility, from integrity to hardiness, from the ideals of godliness and good learning to those of clean manliness and good form.'³¹

Lord Baden Powell formed his Boy Scouts in an attempt to instil this vision of masculinity into the new generation, to make them 'good citizens or useful colonists'.³² The emphasis on development of physical culture in the latter half of nineteenth-century India was a response to British allegations of effeminacy and emasculation of the colonized male elite. In his essays, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, for instance, bemoans the elites' neglect of the physical culture of *akharas* and indigenous sports. His novel *Anandamath* (1882) was an attempt to demonstrate the urgent need for the development of physical strength and a martial culture that could create men worthy to be citizens of the incipient 'nation'. Boria Majumdar highlights the nationalist urges behind the patronage of cricket clubs.³³ In contemporary times, the resurgence of Hindu nationalist militancy in India is evident from the Sangh Parivar's exercise regimen and spiritual militancy for the Hindu people and the Hindu land. The intense male anxiety about emasculation and fear of pollution has resulted in an emphasis on the development of physical strength through drills and exercises.³⁴

Thus sports, more often than not, have been intricately linked with politics and, depending on the social and historical context of their articulation, can be harnessed both for imperialist missions and for anti-

imperial/indigenous oppositions. Cricket, according to Arjun Appadurai, was regarded 'as the ideal way to transmit Victorian ideals of character and fitness to the colony' and became 'an unofficial instrument of state cultural policy'.³⁵ It attempted to teach the 'barbaric'/'uncivilized' natives 'sportsmanship, a sense of fair play, thorough control over the expression of strong sentiments by players on the field, subordination of personal sentiments and interests to those of the side, [and] unquestioned loyalty to the team'.³⁶

Manthia Diawara, in the context of the Caribbean, notes that the very introduction of cricket to new places was 'a way of asserting British cultural presence, a way of linking sports to politics'.³⁷ Similarly, Keith A.P. Sandiford argues that cricket 'played at least as crucial a role' in the indoctrination of the non-English subjects 'as did commerce and Christianity'.³⁸ In *Beyond a Boundary*, C.L.R. James validates these critical opinions as he explicitly states how the introduction of cricket in the colonies contributed to the interpellation of the colonized natives. He writes about his schoolmates and himself thus:

We learned to play with the team, which means subordinating your personal inclinations, and even interests to the good of the whole. We kept a stiff upper lip in that we did not complain about ill-fortune. We did not denounce failures. . . . We were generous to opponents and congratulated them on victories, even when we knew they did not deserve it.³⁹

Later, in the same book, he writes:

It was only long years after that I understood the limitation on spirit, vision and self-respect which was imposed on us by the fact that our masters, our curriculum, our code of morals, *everything* began from the basis that Britain was the source of all light and leading, and our business was to admire, wonder, imitate, learn; our criterion of success was to have succeeded in approaching that distant ideal – to attain it was, of course, impossible.⁴⁰

All the valorized ethical codes of sportsmanship are questioned in *Lagaan*. The critique of 'fair play' strikes at the very foundation of colonial cricket and allows the film to destabilize originary discourses of the game. The film suggests that there cannot be a level playing field in

a game initiated by an egoist to feed his desire for power and domination over a poor, uncoached, group of villagers whose life is at stake. It is reminiscent of C.L.R. James's statement that 'social and political passions, denied normal outlets, expressed themselves so fiercely in cricket (and other games) precisely because they were games'.⁴¹ In *Lagaan*, Captain Russell and his men constantly make fun of the villagers' clothes, physical characteristics and their poverty. They provoke the Champaner team players, reminding them of their abject poverty, and deliberately injure them to punish them for their loyalty to their team or their ability to play well. The subaltern cricket team, by excelling in the game, pays back the colonizers on their own terms. Therefore a defeat in the cricket pitch is a massive blow to English honour and pride, and the humiliated English contingent soon decides to leave Champaner.

Thus *Lagaan* explicitly links subaltern politics to sports culture. The cricket match between the British officials and the Champaner villagers in *Lagaan* becomes a representation of the character of the cricketers (and by extension of the people each side represents). The villagers in *Lagaan* turn their opposition to the ontology of the white world into a performance that combats the portrayal of natives as inferior objects of colonial philanthropy. Appropriating cricket competence becomes a tool for the Champaner peasants to recuperate their subjectivity and articulate their agency in the process of decolonization. Their performance on the field eclipses their subordinated position off the field. Their fortitude and goodness of character compensate for their lack of social grace, wealth and education. Their strength of character, posited against the material wealth and political power of the British officials, celebrates the 'gentlemanly' qualities of the peasant class, rather than reconfirming the qualities of the Victorian gentleman, which the officer class of the East India Company supposedly represented.

The one-and-a-half-hour long cricket match, with differences in skin colour, attire, batting, bowling and fielding techniques, becomes an expression of racial and cultural difference. The vernacularization and indigenization of colonial cricket hijacks cricket from the monolithic structures of Englishness. *Lagaan* demonstrates to its viewers the subversive potential of repetition. It shows that repetition or 'mimicry' can (if not reinstate) gesture to the possibility of different histories. The film convincingly establishes that the peasant-cricketers' copying of the

colonizers' game does not foreclose the possibility of agency. Thus to applaud *Lagaan's* representation of subaltern politics should not be seen as an attempt to reintroduce the subaltern as a sovereign subject, but rather as a rejection of the overestimation of the power of Western imperialism at the expense of the agency of the indigenous subalterns. Extending Manthia Diwara's insights on Caribbean cricket to *Lagaan's* fictional representation of colonial cricket, it can be said that *Lagaan* detaches cricket from Englishness and de-Victorianizes the national sport of the modern United Kingdom. The film's presentation of the cricket tournament between British citizens and rural subjects in the colony weaves an indigenous identity into what Diwara describes as 'modernist instruments which had hitherto made the colonized subject into an object'.⁴²

III

The phenomenal success of *Lagaan* in both elite and subaltern circles raises the question: why do postcolonial nations/subjects derive such pleasure from scoring against the West, be it in a real cricket tournament or in a cinematic portrayal of a game of peasants versus the colonial masters? The answer, perhaps, lies in Indians vesting their self-esteem in their cricketers, expecting them to be 'ideal citizens'.⁴³ Writing about Trinidadian cricket, C.L.R. James says that 'the cricket field was a stage on which selected individuals played representative roles which were charged with social significance' and that the excellent performances of Caribbean cricketers on the cricket pitch often 'atoned for a pervading humiliation, and nourished pride and hope'.⁴⁴ James draws a historical parallel between the colony's feelings of euphoria on the excellent performance of its cricketers and the Greeks' iconization of their athletes: 'The Greeks believed that an athlete who had represented his community at a national competition, and won, had thereby conferred a notable distinction on his city. His victory was a testament to the quality of his citizens'.⁴⁵

Similarly, the victory of *Lagaan's* fictional cricketers is a testament to the quality of the Champaner villagers, and perhaps by extension, as nationalist readings of the film would argue, to that of India's citizens. It points to the transformation of cricket from a civilizing device (similar to Christianity and English literature) in British imperial policy to a national sport of nations as varied as Trinidad, Barbados, India,

Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Africa – a game invested with nationalist hopes and desires. As Ashis Nandy explains:

Cricket heroes have become, for the increasingly uprooted, humiliated, decultured Indian, the ultimate remedy for all the failures – moral, economic and political – of the country. If India, according to these Indians, is constantly losing out to its erstwhile imperial rulers in the game of development and is unable to bend its recalcitrant neighbours into docility despite its newly acquired nuclear teeth, the cricketers should correct the nation's feelings of inefficiency and emasculation.⁴⁶

Lagaan has succeeded in the domain of the popular because the spectators are entertained through the acting, choreography and beautiful landscape images, but primarily because of the cricket spectacle. The cricket match in the film entertains because it reflects the spectators' wishes that the Champaner village team, and by extension their Indian team, will be victorious against other foreign teams. As Teresa de Lauretis writes in her book *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*:

To succeed, for a film, is to fulfil its contract, to please its audiences or at least induce them to buy the ticket, the popcorn, the magazines, and the various paraphernalia of movie promotion. But for a film to work, to be effective, it *has* to ... offer ... spectators some kind of pleasure, something of interest, be it a technical, artistic, critical interest, or the kind of pleasure that goes by the names of entertainment and escape; preferably both.⁴⁷

Sudhir Kakar, in his psychoanalytical study of Indian popular cinema, describes popular Hindi cinema as 'a collective fantasy containing unconscious material and the hidden wishes of a vast number of people'. He argues that the producers and directors of mainstream cinema 'must intuitively appeal to those concerns of the audience which are shared; if they do not, the film's appeal is bound to be disastrously limited'.⁴⁸ *Lagaan*, Aamir Khan's first venture into film production, was motivated of course by the desire to make large sums of money, which involved understanding the public's likes and dislikes. Since films and their spectators mutually determine one another, a popular

film such as *Lagaan*'s interrogation of conventional historiography and its clearing of spaces for voicing native histories are a reflection of the audiences' 'concerns' and 'wishes' (to use Kakar's terms).

Lagaan's decentring of colonial cricket from the subaltern perspective might not hold good for all Indians or all former colonies, but it is surely one indication of disturbance in global historiographies of sports. It points to the illusory hold of hegemonic colonial narratives on the subjects it purports to govern. Boria Majumdar claims that *Lagaan* helps to 'rectify certain conventional wisdoms about the evolution of cricket in India'.⁴⁹ He cites Bengali tracts to validate *Lagaan*'s assertion of the similarity between cricket and *gilli-danda* and applauds the film for being 'a first and crucial cinematic tribute to India's buried cricket history'.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Arjun Appadurai states that cricket's 'history in England goes back into the pre-colonial period, and there is little doubt that the sport is English in origin'.⁵¹ *Lagaan* does not try to answer whether cricket originated in 'India' or England, but through the presentation of a subaltern group's appropriation and intervention in elite discourses to voice their suppressed or erased histories, it reiterates the subaltern studies project's call for 'an opening up and restructuring of the received disciplinary boundaries for the study of peasant movements'.⁵²

Appadurai believes that there is 'a part of Indian culture today that seems forever to be England and that is cricket' and it is in the sphere of cricket that 'the urge to cut the ties with the colonial past seems weakest'.⁵³ The socio-historical interrogation of cricket in *Lagaan*, with its appeal to the masses, itself becomes an act of critical intervention. In the view of mass media historian Eric Barnouw, 'there really is no country like India where the film industry has had such a hold over its public'.⁵⁴ *Lagaan* demonstrates how Bollywood can, perhaps unconsciously, enable the (post)colonized subjects of India to participate in debates on colonialism, subalternity and modernity. The film's portrayal of the East India Company's cricket team, and particularly the tyrannical Captain Russell, indicates to *Lagaan*'s spectators that Englishness was a construct designed to present the British colonizers to the colonies, rather than represent them. The class and racial rivalries that exist in everyday life in the colony create a gap between idealized Englishness and real, living Englishmen. *Lagaan*, through its demonstration of the gap between 'ideal' and 'real' British citizens and the indigenization of cricket, which is widely accepted as a Western

trope of modernity, successfully draws the poor and subordinate classes into debates about modernity and history. It allows the peasant-cricketers of Awadh, the spectators of the cricket match within the film's narrative as well as the real film spectators of *Lagaan* to assess the British colonial rulers by (British) values reflected in the official philosophy of cricket, and find them wanting.

Lagaan's demonstration of the participation of subaltern groups in the fate of their province and in the fate of their future foregrounds for the audience that 'colonized subjects are not passively produced by hegemonic projects but are active agents whose choices and discourses are of fundamental importance in the formation of their societies'.⁵⁵ Further, *Lagaan's* filmic rendering of a subaltern cricket team comprised of various 'others' (disabled, untouchable, religious minority and provincial outsider) legitimizes the presence of the 'others' in the creation of the cricket team, and thereby of the 'Indian' nation. The film's narrative brings together individuals from different classes, castes, ages, regions and religions and in the domain of the popular recognizes each one's participation and contribution in the united struggle against the white colonizer/oppressor. However, the emphasis on village unity and the incorporation of normative outsiders in *Lagaan* is an effort to remind the paying spectators of the film about the past unity of the freedom struggle and to emphasize that unity was forged through such numerous, forgotten, popular, anti-imperialist struggles. Popular films such as *Lagaan* locate the fractures within the nation by projecting a national edifice and the discontent with it. The portrayal of the untouchable and the women characters disrupt the nationalist narration in *Lagaan* to reveal different and silenced histories. The mute Kachra and the marginalized women in the film point to repressive strategies and practices within this subaltern tale of victory; they alert the film's viewers to the possibility of multiple histories (gender, class, caste, ability, religion) and other silenced tales of colonialism, anti-colonialism or nationalism that need to be told.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak locates the 'general political importance of Subaltern Studies' in 'the production of knowledge', that is, in 'educating the educators'.⁵⁶ *Lagaan* shows how Bollywood can go beyond the parameters of the 'educators' to encourage the masses to actively and critically engage with mass culture in order to rethink forms of received knowledge and history. It can open up spaces for alternative voices and empower 'the people' to actively engage with

master texts and master codes. *Lagaan's* presentation of an alter/native view of subaltern history or cricket history resists the closures of history and gestures to the possibility of other perspectives and histories. It can enable (post)colonized subjects (in India and beyond) to decipher fractures and fault-lines that can free them from the discursive capture of various terms and tropes of imperialism and nationalism. It allows the film's spectators to imagine the possibility of freedom from new forms of imperialism or neocolonialism that continue to persist in contemporary times.

Lagaan's interrogation of institutionalized discourses of modernity and history through an anachronistic representation of colonial cricket in the margins of the Empire reveals a novel approach to history. Engaged in a discursive struggle over the interpretation of material reality and subaltern identities, *Lagaan* brings about a contestation between story and history. The abstraction of history from the film, rather than history authorizing the film's narrative, is significant. The delineation of a climactic moment in a specific village in colonial India is essentially an intervention in the politics of the present. Its reinscription or re-mapping of a fictionalized past to highlight the hollowness of homogenizing elite discourses (colonialist and nationalist) is obviously an effort to rewrite the present. It is a strategic and political act that validates Appadurai's comment that 'for the ex-colony, decolonization is a dialogue with the colonial past, and not a single dismantling of colonial habits and modes of life'.⁵⁷ *Lagaan* shows that 'decolonizing the mind', to borrow Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's apt phrase, involves destabilizing official discourses to illustrate the interpellation of the subaltern into the colonialist/nationalist episteme as primarily responsible for their continued subjection and objectification.⁵⁸

The film argues for a self-consciousness of the masses as historical subjects: first, by pointing to the portrayal of subalterns without any consciousness or agency in the master-narratives of colonialist/nationalist history; and second, by destabilizing the beginnings of colonial cricket. Through dreamed-up pasts this popular film contests and writes over the given narratives of modernity and history. It charts a field of contest in its assertion of 'the fragility and instability of the "givens" of history'.⁵⁹ *Lagaan's* presentation of an event in a village in colonial Awadh is a proof that popular cinema in India (and possibly in other postcolonial nations around the world) can successfully interrupt and disturb the linearity of discourses of modernity. It emphasizes the

existence of popular cinema as a site on which issues of history and modernity can be rearticulated and rewritten to enable and empower (post)colonized subjects to engage in debates that generate counter-pressures to dominant representational practices.

NOTES

1. Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge, 'Public Modernity in India', in Carol A. Breckenridge (ed.), *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p.16.
2. M.C. Ramachandran and N.T. Rama Rao, demigods of the Tamil film industry, were chief ministers of their state. Film stars such as Sunil Dutt, Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Pradha, and cricketers such as Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, Kapil Dev and Manoj Prabhakar have all tested their luck in politics.
3. C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Stanley Paul, 1963), p.192; Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.46.
4. It won eight National Film Awards (2002), including Best Popular Film, eight 47th Filmfare awards (2001), seven 3rd India International Film Awards (2001), eight 5th Zee Cine Awards (2002), two Star TV Screen Awards (2001), nine International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA 2001), the audience prize at the Nightfilm Festival Award in Denmark (2002), the audience prize at the Locarno Film Festival (2001) and was nominated in the 'Best Foreign Film' category at the 2001 Academy Awards.
5. Throughout this paper I use the term 'subaltern' from Antonio Gramsci in the sense that Ranajit Guha uses it in his introductory chapter to *Subaltern Studies I*. See 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp.1–8.
6. A film *can* decolonize the mind, but whether it *will* or not depend on the viewer's affiliation, perception, experience, etc. Sonia M. Livingstone writes in *Making Sense of Television: The Psychology of Audience Interpretation* (Pergamon Press, 1990), p.23, that the creation of meaning through the interaction of films and spectators is best conceived as a process of negotiation and struggle. Frantz Fanon throws light on the unstable nature of cinematic identification in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove, 1967), p.153. Geoffrey Woods demonstrates how gay males picked their own resistant readings from texts that excluded or demeaned them. See Geoffrey Woods, "'We're Here, We're Queer and We're Not Going Catalogue Shopping'", in Paul Burston and Colin Richardson (eds.), *A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.147–63.
7. *Gilli-danda* is a local game that is still played in Indian villages and suburbs. It is played with a thick stick and a small wooden ball. There is no bowler; the player uses the stick to raise the ball in the air and then to hit it. He continues to play until a fielder catches the ball. The players before the start of the match agree upon a certain score and whoever achieves it first is the winner.
8. See Abdul R. JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, 12, 1 (1985), 59–87; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage Books, 1978); and Mary Louise Pratt *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
9. Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', p.2.
10. Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: *Subaltern Studies* and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, 22, 1 (1988), 213.
11. Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nation and its Peasants', in Vinayak Chaturvedi (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London: Verso, 2000). p.9.
12. Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', p.3 (emphasis in original).

13. Tanika Sarkar, 'Jitu Santal's Movement in Malda, 1924–1932: A Study in Tribal Protest', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.153.
14. In a limited fashion Ranajit Guha notes this in his clarification of the subaltern–elite distinction in his 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', pp.1–8. Gramsci himself noted that the subaltern classes are not unified, by definition. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, eds. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), p.52. For discussion of the problem of shifting boundaries of solidarity in terms of the changing context of struggle, see Gyanendra Pandey, 'Encounters and Calamities: The History of North Indian Qasba in the Nineteenth Century', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.231–70; David Hardiman, 'The Bhils and Shahukars in Eastern Gujarat', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.1–54; Sarkar, 'Jitu Santal's Movement', pp.136–64.
15. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.259.
16. Boria Majumdar, 'Politics of Leisure in Colonial India, "Lagaan": Invocation of a Lost History', *Economic and Political Weekly* 35 (1 Sept. 2001), 3399.
17. *Ibid.*, 3401.
18. Chatterjee, 'The Nation and its Peasants', p.17.
19. Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', p.4.
20. Lakha, a youth of the village, forms a pact with Captain Russell to aid the English team by making his team lose the cricket match. Driven by his love for the heroine, Gauri, who loves Bhuvan (the hero), he sees it as a possible way to demolish Bhuvan's stature.
21. Sudipta Kaviraj, 'The Imaginary Institution of India', in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.8.
22. *Ibid.*, p.10.
23. Arjun Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket', in Breckenridge, *Consuming Modernity*, p.42. In 'The Imaginary Institution of India', p.8, Kaviraj writes that '[a]n anachronistic view would imply that when we are looking for a history, i.e. the origins, the earlier stages of Indian nationalism, we must encounter it in some suitably smaller, paler, or otherwise immature form, a smaller-scale version of the later full-blown nationalism. . . . This view finds it much more difficult to acknowledge a patriotism for something else as an ancestor for Indian nationalism because today these two patriotisms would be politically opposed.'
24. Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', p.6.
25. Javeed Alam, 'Peasantry, Politics and Historiography: Critique of New Trend in Relation to Marxism', *Social Scientist*, 117 (Feb. 1983), 47.
26. Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.335. The early work of the Subaltern Studies group has focused upon moments of insurgency in Indian history when subordinated groups have risen up and offered violent and self-conscious resistance to elite power. There is a tendency to conceive of everyday life as an extended period of subaltern submissiveness punctuated by sudden, violent irruptions and contestations of elite dominance. Such a model of resistance effaces the variety of strategies and modes of resistance undertaken by the 'relatively disempowered' on a day-to-day basis. More nuanced accounts have gradually emerged which pay greater attention to everyday forms of resistance. See Douglas Hayes and Gyan Prakash, *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia* (???, CA: University of California Press, 1992).
27. Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp.39–40.
28. Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity', p.25.

29. For a detailed discussion of the problematic portrayal of the white woman character in *Lagaan* as tourist and saviour of the brown man from the white man, see my 'Subaltern Studies, Bollywood and *Lagaan*', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 (10 May 2003), 1882–3.
30. Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: the British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p.73.
31. Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*, p.72
32. Ibid.
33. Majumdar, 'Politics of Leisure in Colonial India', 3402–3.
34. The Sangh Parivar (combine) consists of 56 organizations, prominent among them being the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). The Hindu religious assertion in politics spearheaded by the Sangh Parivar reached its peak on 6 December 1992, when the Babri Masjid was demolished.
35. Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity', p.27.
36. Ibid., pp.26–7.
37. Manthia Diawara, 'Englishness and Blackness: Cricket as Discourse on Colonialism', *Callaloo*, 13, 4 (1990), 838.
38. Keith A.P. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (London: Scolar, 1994), p.158.
39. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, p.34.
40. Ibid., pp.38–9.
41. Ibid., p.72.
42. Diawara, 'Englishness and Blackness', 841.
43. Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, pp.xviii–xix.
44. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, pp.72, 99.
45. Ibid., p.154.
46. Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, p.xix.
47. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), p.136.
48. Sudhir Kakar, 'The Ties that Bind: Family Relationships in the Mythology of Hindi Cinema', *India International Centre Quarterly*, 8, 1 (1981), 12–13.
49. Majumdar, 'Politics of Leisure in Colonial India', 3399.
50. Ibid., 3400.
51. Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity', p.25.
52. Chatterjee, 'The Nation and its Peasants', p.21.
53. Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity', p.23.
54. Interviewed by Chidananda Dasgupta in *Span* (New Delhi), Jan. 1980, p.40.
55. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (ed.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p.4.
56. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview', in Vinayak Chaturvedi (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, (London: Verso, 2000), p.325.
57. Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity', p.23.
58. For details see; Peter Nazareth, *Critical Essays on Ngugi Wa Thiong'O*, (NY: G K Hall, 2000).
59. Gyanendra Pandey, 'Voices from the Edge: The Struggle to Write Subaltern Histories', in Chaturvedi, *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, p.296. I use the term 'fragment,' in the sense in which Pandey uses it, as 'a disturbing element, a disturbance' (p.296).

Copyright of International Journal of the History of Sport is the property of Frank Cass & Company Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.