and has seemingly never looked back.

To say it has been successful around the world would be a profound understatement, but to say it is good for the game is a whole different topic. To understand its importance and the place it currently occupies in the world game one must go back to its roots. It was simply just another way to garner public support for the ailing English game, county attendances were low and they still had a ridiculous system of one day competitions that pitted the same old teams against each other. It was essentially a remixed version of one day cricket, trying to lure a new audience to the game as well as making some money, that must never be forgotton.

They succeeded beyond their wildest imaginations, all of a sudden grounds around England were full of enthusiastic youngsters, the money was rolling in and there was a renewed interest in cricket. Then the greed kicked in, they started adding more qualifying matches so that more Twenty20 games would be played and then the biggest betrayal of them all, a Twenty20 match was even held at the spiritual home of cricket, Lords. This was a ground where for over a 100 years women were not allowed in the pavilion and now they were hosting a 20 over bat-a-thon. 27000 people crammed into Lords to see a Twentry20 game, the revolution was now too large to control and as expected it spread around the globe.

Test cricket is the only real yard stick to measure a cricketer by, these days even that thought seems dated; one day cricket has become part and parcel of everyday life whether the purists like it or not. While the ultimate "test" was an examination over five days, one day cricket became vitamin tablets in lieu of that test. A few a day would keep the real doctor at bay. The one day revolution came in two stages, the inaugural few World Cup's which quickly became cricket's showpiece event and then came a man called Kerry Packer.

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Only an Australian could do what he did to the game, he is viewed as a revolutionary these days, "the man who changed cricket" people say. But very often there is a thin line between a revolutionary and a mercenary. Essentially what he did was hijack world cricketers (who were severely underpaid then), so that he could extort the Australian government into giving him the sole rights to broadcast cricket in the nation. What he did was from a super league of sorts with the disgruntled cricketers of the world and in the process robbed the world of some of the finest cricketers around. They played each other in one day matches that were astonishingly played under lights and with coloured clothing. There was professional commentary crews and for the first time cameras at both ends of a ground. Modern cricket is severely in debt to him and his vision for the game, but essentially it was all done for money and not for the real betterment of the game.

That point can be argued in many different ways but the fact of the matter is that since his intervention crowds have flocked around the world to see ODI's while audiences for test matches have steadily declined. In an effort to keep those crowds coming in the game has evolved so that it is more of a crowd pleaser rather than a test between the cricketing abilities of two teams. Crowds like to see runs, therefore everything has been changed to suit the batsmen. Tight decisions for wides, especially on the leg side, field restrictions now up to 20 overs to let the batsmen have more of a slog, short boundaries and most importantly flat batting tracks. In an effort to please the audiences' cricket degraded itself, into a batsman's game, but to date it is viewed as the increased development of the game, when in fact it is anything but that. And all of this, just to move with the times, the price was to a high to pay. These days the pitch for a ODI game is called good if its flat and provides lots of runs. It already seems like Twenty20 is having a similar effect on cricket.

With the formation of the breakaway Indian Cricket League (ICL) it seems like there are new Kerry Packers to be found, that coupled with an increasing number of international Twenty20 games is seemingly the new road ahead for cricket. Just like ODI cricket was revolution turned wrong, this has all the makings of following in its father's footsteps. Navjot Sidhu said it best: if one day cricket was known as pyjama cricket, then Twenty20 is underwear cricket. Twenty20 cricket will mushroom, there will be newer innovations flatter pitches, broader bats and in general more misery for bowlers, but it is adding nothing to the foundations of cricket. The test between bat and ball is now only 120 balls an innings, that is what an opening batsman would see through just to get to lunch. Twenty20 cricket much like one day cricket is an abomination, it provides cheap thrills for an even cheaper price. The soul of a noble game is being raped and then sold, all for watching a game of cricket at 7 in the evening holding a warm beer as a batsman slogs the hell out of a bowler.

It is widely rumoured that in his meeting with the Australian Cricket Board in 1976 to negotiate the rights to televise cricket, the mercenary/revolutionary(?) Kerry Packer said "There is a little bit of the whore in all of us, gentlemen. What is your price?" Cricket has sold its soul to the devil and all bit of money and cavernous loss of respect. Cricket is the new Dr. Faustus.