this time the Pakistan attack was led by Imran Khan, who in his prime was one of the best bowlers of his era, backed by a less fast but quite impressive Sarfraz Nawaz. At this time the English attack in the early phase of Gavaskar's career was led by Snow and in the later part, by Bob Willis and Ian Botham. The New Zealand opening attack was led by Richard Hadlee who was perhaps one of the best fast medium bowlers of all time.

Every one of these pace bowlers faced by Gavaskar was, with the fleeting exception of Larwood, head and shoulders above any pace bowler faced by Bradman. How Bradman would have fared against the fearsome West Indian quartet of Roberts, Holding, Garner and Marshall or even his fellow countrymen Lillie and Thompson, on the hard pitches of Perth or the Caribbean, remains an open question. The possibility of his attaining a test average of 99.94, would certainly have been far more contestable.

In the area of spin bowling Gavaskar faced less of a challenge. The best spinners were Lance Gibbs, the West Indies off-spinner who was in the twilight of his career when Gavaskar began his, Underwood the left arm spin bowler who sustained the England attack through the 1970s and Abdul Quadir the Pakistani leg spinner who was one of the best of his kind, ever. Here again these three bowlers were better than any faced by Bradman, except for his fellow Australians, Grimmet and O' Reilly.

Sachin Tedulkar: The Modern Colossus

Moving from Gavaskar to Sachin Tendulkar the quality of bowling faced by the latter is no less formidable. Sachin, at the outset of his career had to face Curtley Ambrose and Courtney Walsh, who were two of the best fast bowlers to serve the West Indies. Ambrose, 6'7" tall, was a bowler in the mould of the giant Joel Garner whilst Walsh was closer in style to Holding. Once this duo retired in the early 2000s from the West Indies attack and they were never replaced and West Indian cricket went into terminal decline.

During this same period and well into the 1990s, Sachin faced the Pakistani pace attack of Wasim Akram and Waqar Yunus in their prime. He also faced Imran Khan in the early phase of his career but the great Khan was by then, probably past his best. Wasim and Waqar were, at their best, two of the deadliest bowlers, ever, to open an attack. At that time these two pace bowlers were backed by the excellent off spin bowling of Saqlain Mushtaq, who supposedly invented the doosra, a leg break bowled with the action of an off-break.

During the 1990s the Australian team, led by Steve Waugh, was reaching its peak. The pace attack was led by Glen McGrath, a fast medium bowler of uncanny accuracy who accumulated a formidable record of wicket taking, backed by excellent support from the likes of Jason Gillespie and the incredibly fast, Brett Lee. However, Sachin's principal challenge from Australia, came from Shane Warne, an authentic magician in the practice of the dark art of leg spin bowling, who was arguably the best spin bowler of all time, superior, it is said, to both Grimmet and O' Reilly.

Those who saw Tendulkar thrash Warne, so severely in the test series in India, that he was rendered virtually impotent, proclaimed that the art of playing spin bowling demonstrated by Sachin had attained an altogether higher level. Whilst Tendulkar's batting was rarely sufficient to carry India to test victory against the much more formidable Australians team first led by Waugh and then by Ricky Ponting, Sachin, for over a decade, dominated the field.

It may be argued that the quality of the bowlers faced by Bradman, was significantly weaker than those faced by the contemporary greats.

Outside of the Australian and Pakistani bowlers, Tendulkar had to cope with Alan Donald and Shaun Pollock who constituted an impressive South African opening attack. However, Sachin's most formidable challenge came from the Sri Lankan off-spinner, Murli Murliatharan, who has emerged as the highest wicket of all time in both test and one-day cricket. Murli is arguably of the same level as Shane Warne and his career is far from over.

To have scored his record number of centuries in both test and one-day cricket, at a time when both Warne and Muliatharan were at their best, puts Tendulkar in a special class. Bradman never met anyone in his test career who came close to the level of these two formidable spinners or indeed could match, (Larwood excepted), the pace bowling of Ambrose, Walsh, Wasim, Waqar, or even Donald. Tendulkar may