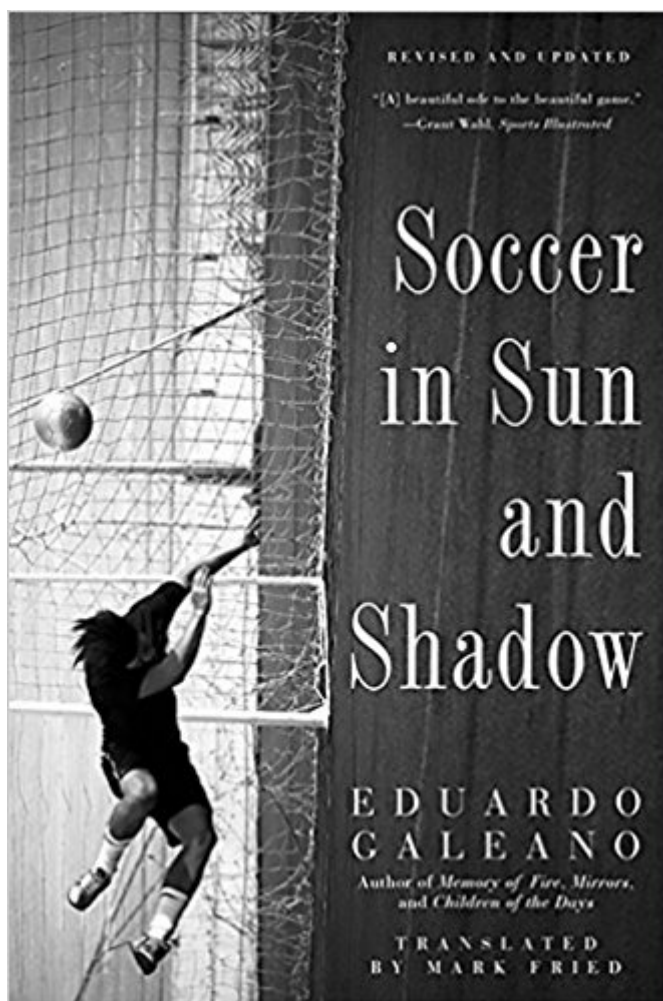


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# Soccer In Sun And Shadow



## Synopsis

In this witty and rebellious history of world soccer, award-winning writer Eduardo Galeano searches for the styles of play, players, and goals that express the unique personality of certain times and places. In *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, Galeano takes us to ancient China, where engravings from the Ming period show a ball that could have been designed by Adidas to Victorian England, where gentlemen codified the rules that we still play by today and to Latin America, where the 'crazy English' spread the game only to find it creolized by the locals. All the greats—Pelé, Di Stéfano, Cruyff, Eusebio, Puskás, Gullit, Baggio, Beckenbauer—have joyous cameos in this book. Yet soccer, Galeano cautions, is a pleasure that hurts. Thus there is also heartbreak and madness. Galeano tells of the suicide of Uruguayan player Abdón Porte, who shot himself in the center circle of the Nacional's stadium; of the Argentine manager who wouldn't let his team eat chicken because it would bring bad luck; and of scandal-riven Diego Maradona whose real crime, Galeano suggests, was always the sin of being the best. Soccer is a game that bureaucrats try to dull and the powerful try to manipulate, but it retains its magic because it remains a bewitching game—a feast for the eyes ... and a joy for the body that plays it—exquisitely rendered in the magical stories of *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A history of the sport of soccer, the poetic title of this volume, originally published in 1995 as *El fútbol a sol y sombra* and now in its fourth edition, is a dead giveaway that this is not a purely

historical accounting of the world's most popular game. While Galeano covers the sport's origins in China five thousand years ago to the 2010 World Cup in chronological order, it's how he tells the story in this rather poetic history that sets the book apart from others. Galeano, a renowned Uruguayan author and journalist, brings a personal passion to football's most memorable moments that can only come from a true aficionado. Whether describing great games, momentous goals or extraordinary players, each story has that distinct magical realism so prevalent in Latin American literature that it doesn't matter that from one sentence to the next the writing moves from clichéd to poetic, as when he describes the great Pelé: he cut right through his opponents like a hot knife through butter. When he stopped, his opponents got lost in the labyrinths his legs embroidered. Focusing mostly on the international aspects of the game, Galeano's Catholic upbringing, socialist politics, and the injustice he's seen as a journalist seeps into his commentary, and gives his narrative a refreshing perspective that captures soccer's spiritual roots, corruption by greed, and role as a global equalizer that puts royals and dictators at the mercy of minorities and slum kids. (Aug.)

Stands out like Pele on a field of second-stringers. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Eduardo Galeano is a renowned author in Uruguay and across South America is well known. He is also a life-long football fan. This little volume does not pose as an encyclopedic history of soccer (for that, see the outstanding history of football, 'The Ball is Round'), so do not expect such. If you just begin reading, without pre-existing assumptions, I think you will be entertained, enlightened, and find something to enjoy on almost every page. Written in the form of a collection of very short essays, running from half a page to two or three pages each, this volume covers a range of topics and moments in football that have significance to the author. Not every side or famous figure or aspect of the world's favorite sport is presented, but every essay presents something interesting. I have had previous editions and re-read it before every world cup, having read it perhaps five or six times now. And I still enjoy it each time. Some of his writing is exaggerated--the author is, after all, a poet--but his pure passion for the sport and its magic moments, and greatest players, shines through in every essay. I think any reader can enjoy this book, even someone with little former exposure to football. However, some individuals, whose political ideas lean to the right, may be turned off by the author's obvious leftist slant on world affairs. My advice: get over it! Put it aside! This is one man's passionate, poetic history of the game he loves more than any other, and is well

worth reading despite of, or perhaps even more so, because of the way he involves his own passions in the pages here. Highly recommended. Jeff Tucker.

This is a wonderful book, really just a series of vignettes, all varying in readability; some breathtaking, some mundane. Geleano has a clear passion for the beautiful game, and this comes through in certain lyrical passages. My personal favorite is the one that stands out most in my memory is the vignette about referees. Furthermore, Geleano communicates a not so subtle political viewpoint in each and every preface to his description of the world cups (He covers all of them until 2010) which turn out to be (the descriptions) quite snarky and entertaining. This book has gotten a place on my top shelf for its attempt to put into words what we all feel when we watch this game while rooting for club or country, and also because he doesn't shy away from taking some justified jabs at some pretty large organizations (looking at you, FIFA) along the way.

Galeano and his translator have produced a beautiful series of fan's notes on the beautiful game. But these are the meditations of an outsider and provide very little insight on the game as it is played on the pitch. And increasingly, and by the end of the overwhelmingly, the book is more about the author's politics than it is about soccer. This is one of those books that appears on lists of essential soccer books, but I think it's a bit overrated.

This book uses language to express the beauty of soccer from its inception. With humor and metaphor the author tells the big stories as well as the small ones throughout the times. Towards the end he condemns soccer for what it's become with a heavy socialist point of view which can become grating, but overall very entertaining.

Great anecdotes about a host of forgotten or half-forgotten figures from the game's past, particularly from the first half of the century, and particularly from Latin America. A little cursory in terms of analysis or detail, but it's clearly not meant to be a history, more a series of vignettes or impressions. At times I found the writing a little too flowery for my tastes, a personal bias when it comes to writing that is about sports. Unique and worth reading.

Great book. The vignettes trace a wonderful history of soccer and its greatest players over 150 years. The author weaves soccer through the political backdrops that often accompanied a certain

era. This is a must read for any fan of the beautiful game.

The two most talked about topics in the world are the weather and soccer/football. Galeano's lyrical style of writing bites and pulls on heartstrings. He is realistic about the state of soccer today (and of the soccer of his own country, Uruguay, diminished after the early-years domination of the sport) and does not pretend to be an expert. In his first anecdote, "Confession of the Author," he writes that he is a "poor beggar for good football" and "for the love of God, let there be a phenomenal play." He tells stories about great soccer players and the influences they have had on world culture. He makes you double over with laughter and pinches you hard with irony. Galeano has a very singular gift and if you should be looking for a magical look at a sometimes brutal sport, this Uruguayan writer deserves to be read.

This is an unabashed tribute to the beautiful game. The short chapters wonderfully described players and goals of history. As well there is an underlying political statement of the left which is well stated using futbol as a prime example. As a leftist futbol lover I found this lovingly written book very enjoyable.

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