Chapter 151
The Shrines of Sport: Sacred Space and the World's Athletic Venues

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151.1 Introduction

While visiting Anchorage, Alaska, George Sheehan—a medical doctor and popular distance running author—met a skeptical reporter who asked, "Is running your religion?" Pausing thoughtfully, Sheehan replied, "Running is not a religion, it is a place" (Sheehan n.d.). To explain this, he channeled insights from Henri Nouwen, a Belgian priest and noted author. Wearied by his unceasing routine of writing, traveling, and speaking, Nouwen retreated to a Trappist monastery in Genesee, New York, for 7 months. Solitude, reflection, prayer, and manual labor allowed the priest to reconnect with himself and his faith. Prior to his departure, though, Nouwen worried that he would slip back in to old habits, losing everything that he had gained. He sought council from a sagacious abbot, who instructed Nouwen bring Genesee home with him. In other words, he needed to infuse the habits of monastery life, such as regular prayer, with the habits of his normal life (1981). With Nouwen in mind, Sheehan likened running to "a monastery—a retreat, a place to commune with God and yourself, a place for psychological and spiritual renewal" (Sheehan). What prayer was to the priest, running was to Sheehan.

Although we tend to classify sports as a distinctly secular activity, for many who engage in the realm of play, it carries a certain religious weight. As religion scholar David Chidester posits, popular culture is rife with the "traces of transcendence, the sacred, and the ultimate." Comparison is a means by which we can uncover these "traces." In other words, just as Sheehan saw a parallel between a rigorous prayer life and the rhythms of distance running, we might discover other forms of religious life lingering in the world of sports. Comparison, Chidester notes, is a rather old tool in the religion scholar's toolbox. When Christopher Columbus landed in the

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S.D. Brunn (ed.), *The Changing World Religion Map*,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-017-9376-6_151

Caribbean in 1492, he branded the indigenous people atheists because they had no formal church or creed. Columbus's definition of religion, though, effectively began and ended with his Catholic worldview. Missionaries soon revised Columbus's conclusions after comparing the "familiar metaphors" of Catholicism to "the strange beliefs" of their Indian counterparts. For Chidester, popular culture—which includes sports—represents a largely uncharted religious domain, awaiting a new map to better define and categorize it (2005: 10, 50).

This task lies at the heart of the following essay, an examination of "sacred ground" at sporting venues around the world. These places are not empty vessels, meant merely to house games. Rather, these places contain symbolic potency, they are special, set apart from the ordinary. Here, throngs of people cheer their heroes, honor their homeland, and even mourn their dead. Examining these places, then, offers insights on how people identify themselves at their core, where what they are meets what they aspire to be. Put another way, a study of the sacred places of sports is also a study of the people who inhabit them.

151.2 Understanding Sacred Space

In ancient Roman temples, the *sacrum* was the area inside the temple, while the *profanum* referred to everything outside of the temple. The *sacrum* was reserved, set apart, designed to focus the attention of adherents on the pagan gods. The philosopher of religion Mircea Eliade used this image for describing the sacred more generally. "The sacred," he asserted, "always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from 'natural' realities." But Eliade stopped short of defining the sacred, certain that this numinous phenomenon resisted containment by mere prose. Instead, Eliade used negative terminology, referring to the sacred as "wholly other" or "wholly different from the profane" (1959: 10, 11).

Scholars have since built upon Eliade's notion of the sacred as "wholly other," while setting aside his conclusion that these places have a *sui generis*, nameless power. Instead, they have followed the lead of figures like Jonathan Z. Smith, emphasizing the role that individuals and groups play in "producing" the sacred (Nelson 2006). Smith argues that words like "sacred" and "profane" do not exist in on their own, but rather "in relation" (1982: 55). A sacred place becomes sacred when people interpret it that way, organizing it in contrast to other places deemed profane. Creations of the "wholly other," then, bear the stamp of those who make it so.

David Chidester and Edward Linenthal fall within Smith's intellectual lineage, bringing attention to the role of human agency in generating sacred space. Moreover, the scholars introduce three "defining features" of sacred space. First, sacred space is "ritual space," or "a location for formalized, repeatable symbolic performances." Rituals thicken the sacred air of a location through enacting the central narratives and symbols of a community. Additionally, the rules of ritual often only make sense within a sacred place, since these geographic points of origin relate directly to the

group's collective identity. Next, sacred space is "significant space," in that "it focuses crucial questions about what it means to be a human being in a meaningful world." In a sacred place, people affirm, define, and defend their worldviews, the lens through which they interpret existence. In doing so, they engage the ultimate questions of life, death, and meaning. Finally, sacred space "is inevitably contested space, a site of negotiated contests over the legitimate ownership of sacred symbols." As individuals and communities generate sacred meanings, they do so in contrast and competition with others. The lines drawn around the sacred, in other words, create a world of "Us," but also a world of "Them." Thus, a sacred place might have multiple interpretations, making it into a river of competing discourses (1995: 9, 12, 15).

This essay employs this tripartite schema of sacred space as a structure for examining the interplay of religion, sports, and place. Overlap between these categories is inevitable, but the case studies sufficiently illustrate each dimension. This essay *does not* address "religion" and sports. Rather, it is about the adjectival "religious" experience of sports. The former evokes images of church structures and formalized creeds. But the latter ventures into the ambiguous realm of wonder, awe, inspiration, and transcendence—categories associated with traditional religions, but not entirely owned by them. When people walk into a soccer stadium or ball park, they continue to be Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, atheists, or seekers. At the same time, contact with these places awakens religious sensibilities. As Gary Laderman states, "God or no God, play can animate religious energies that bind communities of fans, athletes, and teams together around idols that are worshipped in ways that, for some, create shared experiences and memories as impressive and meaningful as any other sacred encounters in this life" (2009: 62). What follows, then, is an investigation of the creative ways that people do religious things, speak religious words, and have religious feelings—all in seemingly secular places.

151.3 Ritual Space

"One of the most easily identifiable ritual actions associated with baseball," writes religion scholar Joseph Price, "is the journey of pilgrimage" (2006: 144). As anthropologist Victor Turner has explained, a pilgrimage involves purposeful travel to a "center out there," a sacred place with a certain spiritual allure. Through ritualized travel, the pilgrim sustains a hope for enlightenment, certain that contact with the objects and structures along the route and at its terminus will enable some degree of transformation (1973). For Price, the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, is baseball's "center out there." "Enshrined there," he elaborates, "are tributes to the mythic heroes and their incredible achievements in the game" (2006: 146–147).

Any true baseball pilgrim would certainly want to see the "Sacred Ground" exhibit, which showcases over 200 artifacts from baseball's storied past (Fig. 151.1). As visitors enter, they walk under an impressive stone arch to a ticket booth that had serviced Yankee Stadium for 50 years. On the booth, a sign announces,

Fig. 151.1 Sacred Grounds exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (Photo by Milo Stewart, Jr., 2005, used with permission)

"Ballparks are baseball's sacred ground. The total ballpark experience goes beyond hot dogs, luxury boxes and video scoreboards. Ballparks provide the stage for the game, a frame for memories of games past, and the promise of future games enjoyed with family and friends" (Mock n.d.). From here, visitors amble past six themed sections: "Fans," "Ballpark Business," "Evolution of the Ballpark," "The Stadium World," "Reverence," and "Ballpark Entertainment." Throughout the 1,800 ft^2 (167 m^2) exhibit are famous baseball bats, bumper stickers, score cards, rings, trophies, and bleacher seats. Interactive exhibits allow visitors to see, hear, and even smell these ballparks. Dale Petroskey, a former president of the Hall of Fame, referenced his own baseball autobiography to describe his love of the exhibit. "Growing up in Detroit, Tiger Stadium was like a second home to me," he recalled. "It was where my friends and family came together. It was where we celebrated, where we built memories, and saw bits of history play out on a field of green. This exhibit captures that magical connection that forms between fans and their ballpark" (Holmes 2005).

For those who ritually process to and through the Hall of Fame, this "magical connection" orients their attention to the sacred realm of "America's pastime." No doubt, in America, the game has strong ties to what it means to be America (Evans 2002). Baseball, though, is a global sport with multiple "centers out there." Each year in Japan, players and fans flock to Koshien Stadium near Osaka for the National High School Baseball Championship Tournament. To gauge the importance of this stadium, consider that after teams play their final games here the players return to the field and scoop up containers of dirt. "The dirt of Koshien is sacred for Japanese baseball players," observed one tournament staffer. "High school baseball players think the dirt of Koshien is a precious thing, a treasure" (Baker 2012).

As one journalist explained, the ritualized collection of dirt connects players with "something bigger than the outcome of any one particular game" (Baker 2012). The "something bigger" here—its "wholly otherness"—relates to the transcendent fusion of baseball and Japanese identity. The tournament began in 1915. Organizers theorized that baseball could be a valuable tool for teaching the Japanese youth about mental, spiritual, and physical discipline. Additionally, they aspired to reinforce a broad social value known as *wa*, or social harmony. Put simply, the concept of *wa* valorizes the forsaking individual interests for the good of the community. Accordingly, the "sacrifice bunt" is a common sight at Koshien, since it is a microcosmic performance of this defining social value (Whiting 1990).

Soon after its introduction, the tournament became *the* "universal Japanese experience." For 2 weeks each spring, fans stream to Osaka wearing regionally distinct colors, brass bands play celebratory tunes, and professional talent scouts watch for the next great player. The great player at Koshein often embodies what the Japanese call the "fighting spirit." As one fan summarized, "Koshien is a big festival. … Only it's dedicated to spirit and guts." In 1969, pitcher Koji Ohta threw four consecutive complete games, with the third going for 18 innings. While his final game was a 4-2 loss, he was still elevated to hero status for his show of resilience (Whiting 1990: 247, 262, 246). In 1998, Daisuke Matsuzaka threw 250 pitches and 17 innings to win a quarterfinal game. The next day, he played outfield with his pitching arm wrapped in bandages. And the day after that, he returned to the mound only to throw a no-hitter and win the championship. "Nobody will ever forget what Daisuke did," remarked one journalist. "It was an unbelievable three days" (Larimer 2000).

Despite the spirited atmosphere at Koshien, there is little in the way of unrestrained rowdiness. Crowds and players generally live out the inscription on centerfield, "Without principles, nothing can be done" (Belson 2011). People do not challenge umpires, even when they make bad calls. If an errant pitch strikes a batter, the pitcher immediately gestures a bow to apologize. And when players enter and exit the field, they bow to centerfield, because, as Robert Whiting says, "this stadium is a very special repository of the spirit—like a cathedral. One should pay it utmost respect" (1990: 258).

The rituals performed within this sacred place reinforce key elements of Japanese identity. In the face of tragedy, these rituals functioned as a healing rite. Four months after the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami hit northeastern Japan, a team from Tohoku High School arrived at Koshien Stadium. The school itself was relatively unharmed. But many players had lost relatives and experienced property damage. After the disaster, the team debated whether or not to play, but reasoned that it was an opportunity to honor their region and to display their "fighting spirit." Tohoku lost in the first round, but the crowd gave them a resounding cheer before and after the game. As the team manager remarked, "there are no words to describe how it feels to have people cheer for you" (Belson 2011).

151.4 Significant Space

In the wake of unthinkable destruction, the rituals of Koshien made an unstable world a little bit more stable. In this context, the stadium assumed a new meaning, one related to the realities of human loss. Death, writes philosopher Thomas Attig, "disrupts the continuity of our life stories" (1996: 149). To manage this disruption, individuals and groups develop ritual acts as a means of making this transition meaningful. Funerals, prayer services, burial rites—each seek to reorder worldviews in light of loss. These acts generally occur in designated spaces, sacred environments like a church, mosque, or burial ground (Grimes 2000: 217–284). For the Japanese, a baseball stadium became a shelter for mourning. In one African country, a soccer stadium served a similar function.

Soccer came to Zambia by way of the British, who had colonized what was then known as Northern Rhodesia in 1911. When Zambia gained independence in 1964, the British left, but soccer remained. In fact, the sport became a consuming passion. Yet, on the world stage, their national teams had little success. Then, in 1988, Zambia finished tied for fifth at the Seoul Olympics. Many of those players stayed with the team as the 1994 World Cup neared, where Zambia looked to be a strong contender (Darby 2005: 130–131).

On April 27, 1993, however, 18 members of the Zambian national soccer team and 12 of their support crew died in an airplane crash off the coast of Gabon in Africa. They were headed to Senegal for a World Cup qualifier game. The tragedy left an indelible mark on the Zambian psyche. "For that entire week I wasn't worth anything," remarked one soccer fan. "I didn't want to talk with anyone. I just wanted to be alone." When the bodies returned, a national day of mourning was declared and a funeral service was held at Independence Stadium, the largest sporting venue in Zambia. While approximately 30,000 mourners sat inside the stadium, roughly 100,000 more gathered outside. All watched as the deceased were buried next to the stadium. In the coming weeks and months, their graves became objects of veneration, drawing streams of mourners. Officials soon posted a security detail to guard the graves. "This is sacred ground," one guard remarked. "These are our national heroes" (Montville 1993).

Pangs of sorrow soon turned to hopes for redemption. "From the ashes of disaster," proclaimed a Zambian soccer announcer, "our soccer program is headed for glory, glory hallelujah." Zambia hastily assembled a team and forged ahead with their World Cup ambitions. A mere 10 weeks after the crash, the fresh team faced Morocco at Independence Stadium. Down 1-0 early, the Zambian crowd almost all collectively gazed upon the graves outside the stadium, beckoning the departed for supernatural assistance. Zambia scored twice and won. The word "miracle" was in no short supply. With momentum on their side, the team had a remarkable run, beating South Africa and shooting a tie with Zimbabwe. "After the tragedy and all, this team has been sort of the focal point for the entire country" the team's coach remarked. Young people across the country were excited to watch and play. "If you ever could put together the financing," he speculated, "some African country is going to come very close to winning the World Cup very soon" (Montville 1993).

Zambia's last test was in Casablanca against Morocco. A win or tie would get to them to the World Cup in America. Players visited the graves once more before leaving. One remarked, "In Africa we believe that the spirits must be satisfied. If someone dies, everything must be done properly for that person. Everything has been done properly here" (Montville 1993). Despite a valiant effort, Zambia lost. But the nation used soccer to make meaning of a tragedy, and affirm what it meant to be Zambian.

This bundling of nationhood and soccer also defines the symbolic contours of Mexico City's Aztec Stadium. Built in 1966 in anticipation of the 1968 Olympics, Aztec Stadium is a massive structure, able to hold 126,000 fans. As one sportswriter noted, it intended to show "that Mexico is no longer a stepchild in the family of nations" (Smith 1968). In addition to the Olympics, the stadium hosted the World Cup twice, in 1970 and 1986. Describing the atmosphere of the 1970 event, one journalist invoked the Spanish word *la locura*, "a mixture of madness and folly." Music, crowds, and heightened emotions ruled the landscape. And while police tried to maintain some sense of order in the city, near Aztec Stadium, "chaos" reigned. Pedestrians jammed the streets, cars struggled to inch ahead, and crowds waved Mexican flags yelling, "Meh-he-co, Meh-he-co" (Maule 1970).

With this pervasive sense of national pride brimming, hurt feelings resulted when the English team arrived with their own food, fearing that the local fare would be unsanitary. "We consider them our *huespedes*," remarked one merchant. "You know, when you have guest in your house, is for him everything of the best. The best to eat, the best to drink, the best of your courtesy." To have this hospitality turned away was a dishonor. So the locals reacted by serenading their guests with clanging pots and pans in the early hours of the morning. And when team England played Brazil, Mexicans cheered for their fellow Latin Americans, and jeered the opposition. Mexico eventual lost in the quarterfinal, but locals delighted in watching Brazil continue their dominance, enabled by the superhuman play of their star, Pelé (Maule 1970).

In 1986, the World Cup returned to Mexico City and so too did *la locura*. Argentinian Diego Maradona left a longstanding mark on the event. In the championship game against England, he scored two goals, both of which would be given titles. The "Hand of God" goal came when he slipped the ball into the goal using both his head and hand. Referees did not notice the hand ball, so the goal counted. When questioned afterward, Maradona quipped that the ball was struck both by "the head of Maradona" and by "the hand of God" (Wells 2008). The second goal came near the end of the game. This one was legitimate and it gave Argentina a 2-1 victory. A plaque at Aztec Stadium commemorates this "Goal of the Century" (Adams 2013).

While venerated in Mexico and Argentina, however, Maradona has no such reputation in England, where fans only remember the "Hand of the Devil" goal (Teale 2009). Crafty gamesmanship for one group was perceived as cheating to another. Thus, Aztec Stadium conjures competing memories, derived from different historical interpretations of this single goal.

151.5 Contested Space

The phrase “moral geography” refers to the intersection of moral and spatial order. As cultural geographer Tim Cresswell has noted, people inscribe on to public places moral prescriptions about who can use this space, and how it ought to be used. Often, the exact parameters of these rules emerge only when an outside group misuses the space, and is deemed “out-of-place” by the majority (1996). So space is not morally neutral. Rather, decisions made about its design and usage carries moral weight. As the “Hand of God/Devil” goal indicates, the world of sports has its own, unique moral geography where events, symbols, and structures are subject to figurative tug-of-wars between competing interests.

Writing in 1907, golf enthusiast A. J. Robertson voiced his concern over the “congestion” at the Saint Andrews Old Course, which in his view was the best course in the world. But the Old Course was under threat by a new “evil,” namely, the golfer with little regard for the game. Some men play in large groups and women “who ought to know better” wander the course “staring off gaily.” Meanwhile, “good players” wait and are often unable to complete a round. Robertson offered a solution: charge a fee for playing the Old Course, which at the time was free. He doubted this would happen. Robertson grumbled that townspeople would not do anything to dissuade tourism, their financial lifeblood. He found this short-sighted. For Robertson, the “sacred ground” of the Old Course had to be preserved for the “genuine golfer” and not for the “cheap tourist and tripper” (1907: 572).

For Robertson, the moral geography of the Old Course demanded that only a qualified player shadow its sacred links. Plenty of other golfers have expressed reverence for the Old Course. “The hair on the back of your neck stands up when you are here,” marveled Padraig Harrington, as he prepared for the 150th anniversary of the British Open in 2010. “The setting, the history, all the things that have happened here in the town and on the golf course.” He continued, “It’s spine chilling. There is no other place in the world like it” (DiMeglio 2010). A former superintendent once reported, “I’ve seen American visitors come to Saint Andrews, walk down the steps to the No. 1 tee and bow down and kiss the turf.” He also claimed to have witnessed a man drive a ball off of the first tee, then leave. “I hit a golf ball at Saint Andrews,” the player stated. “Now, I can die when I go back to the states tomorrow with my wife and children” (“Sacred ground,” 1970: A10).

History is one significant part of the Old Course’s allure. It claims to be the oldest existing golf course, dating back to the fourteenth century. And while most contemporary courses are designed with golfers in mind, the Old Course evolved over time and adapted to the local surroundings. One legend says that the bunkers formed when animals sought shelter on the course during inclement weather. This at least accounts for the course’s randomly placed bunkers, which number over 100. Other anomalies include shared fairways, blind shots, and double greens that measure in yards rather than feet. It is a unique golf course that scarcely looks like a golf course (Fig. 151.2). In 1946, professional golfing great Sam Snead arrived at the Old Course for the first time, surveyed the scene, and wondered where the course

Fig. 151.2 Valley of Sin (Photo by Kevin Murray, kevinmurraygolfphotography.com, used with permission)

was. To Snead's astonishment, it was right in front of him. "Until you play it," Snead marveled, "St. Andrews looks like the sort of real estate you couldn't give away" (Shackelford 2003: 15).

For the golfing faithful, the Old Course draws its sacredness from its historic roots, and seeming unchanging landscape. But the course has changed, ever-so slightly, especially in the mid-nineteenth century as professional golf began to develop. Custodians smoothed greens, strengthened bunkers, and made fairways slightly more distinguishable. The game itself also changed. The first standardized golf balls were made of small leather sacks packed with goose or chicken feathers. In 1848, Allan Robertson became the first official custodian of the Old Course and he fancied himself a craftsman of these "featheries." Innovation, though, was on the horizon. The gutta-percha ball was made from the dried sap of the Sapodilla tree, found in Malaysia. These balls were more durable, cheaper, and hit further than the old feathery ball. Robertson was not impressed. He called them "the filth," and tossed any gutta that he found into the fireplace at Saint Andrews. Then, in 1850, he witnessed his longtime protégé, Tom Morris, approach the final green experimenting with a gutta-percha ball. Enraged, Robertson fired Morris on the spot, even though the two had stuffed featheries for 10 years together (Shackelford 2003: 17–18).

"Old Tom" Morris eventually found his way back to the Old Course in 1864, after Robertson had left. Morris made some of the most significant changes to the course, to include adding two new greens, a move that made some traditionalists uneasy. Still, Morris left an indelible mark at the final hole, which is named after him. He relocated the green just beyond a massive depression that he called the "Valley of Sin." On this hole, hitting a short approach puts a golfer in definite peril. In 1933, Leo Deigel had a chance to win the British Open until his ball landed in the

valley. He finished with a bogey, missing a playoff by one stroke. A similar fate befell Doug Sanders in 1970. On the final day of regulation, his ball bounced into the depression, resulting in a tie with Jack Nicklaus who beat Sanders in a playoff the next day (MacKie 1995: 159).

This final hole, then, has an infamous history of failure, one that golf enthusiasts recite in order to reflect upon the humbling nature of their game. But not everyone stands in awe. When the British Open returned to the Old Course in 2010, one journalist dared to call the 18th a "terrible finishing hole." Despite the notorious "Valley of Sin," he did not think that it was challenging enough. He believed that an additional fairway bunker might produce slightly more drama. Of course, the journalist knew that this was a rhetorical exercise, since modifying the Old Course like this would be "sacrilege" (Achenbach 2010).

While the symbolic competition at the Old Course described here relates to the game itself, the 1960 Olympic Marathon brings a geopolitical edge to this conversation. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia and, along the way, looted the Obelisk of Axum. Constructed in the fourth century, the 179-ft (55 m) funerary stele had been a distinguishing feature of Axum, the birthplace of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. While religiously significant for Ethiopians, it was a mere war treasure for Mussolini and his troops. British and Ethiopian forces managed to defeat the Italians in 1941, but the Obelisk remained in Italy until 2005 (Pankhurst 1999). Ethiopian Abebe Bikila would help to re-interpret this relic en route to winning a gold medal.

Bikila grew up the son of a shepherd in the small village of Jatto, just north of Addis Abada, the capital of Ethiopia. There, he tramped about barefoot, minding his herds, and playing a game called *ganna*—a soccer-like game where goals are separated by several miles rather than yards. By 1951, his family moved to Addis Abada and he began serving with the Imperial Army. Bikila soon met Onni Niskanen, the director of physical education for the Ministry of Education. Niskanen believed that Ethiopia could gain national stature by excelling on the international athletic stage. He saw promise in Bikila and recruited him for Ethiopia's marathon team. By 1960, with two suits and $150, Bikila and his teammate, Abebe Wakjira, traveled to Rome (Judah 2008).

While physically fit and ready to run, one question remained—their shoes. Both runners had been accustomed to running barefoot. But they worried that their unshod feet might reinforce negative stereotypes about Africans. They tried shoes just before the race, only to develop blisters. So when the starting gun sounded, the Ethiopian runners took off in their orange shorts, green shirts, and bare feet. The press knew very little about Bikila, but took note of the runner as he nudged ahead to the front pack. By the final miles, Bikila was in the lead with Moroccan Rhadi Ben Abdessselem. Bikila's stride looked effortless, even as he negotiated the jagged cobblestone streets of Rome. One journalist described him as "running so lightly that his feet scarcely see to touch the ground." Then, at 39.9 km, the runners passed the Obelisk of Axum. Here, Bikila surged ahead, separating from the Moroccan for the remainder of the race. The crowd was stunned as the barefoot Bikila strode into the stadium in a new world record of 2:15:16. The first African to win a medal at the Olympics, he returned to Ethiopia a conquering hero (Judah 2008).

Bikila again won marathon gold in the 1964 Olympics, this time wearing shoes. He continued running competitively until 1968, when a car accident left him paralyzed. Bikila died on October 25, 1973, at the age of 41. Over 75,000 people attended his funeral, including the Emperor who declared it a national day of mourning. Above his grave stands a massive bronze statue, depicting him running barefoot through the streets of Rome (Robinson 2008).

151.6 Conclusion

As Tim Cresswell explains, "Place is the raw material for the creative production of identity rather than an *a priori* label of identity" (2004: 39). Physical locations, in other words, are not static products used solely for pragmatic ends. They are instead pregnant with meaning. As this essay has shown, the world's sporting venues are indeed "raw material" for the formation of collective identity. Stadium seats, grassy fields, and cobblestone roads serve as platforms for ritual performances, for making life meaningful, and for defining and redefining the vital symbols of a community. In acquainting ourselves with these sacred places, we also acquaint ourselves with the people inside them.

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