



Genetic Enhancement: *Inside and Outside*

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Ethics, Enhancement, and Sport

- The ethics of enhancement are intelligible only within a comprehensive understanding of the goals, meaning and values intrinsic to the practice in question.
- Excellence in sport as expression of:
 - Natural talents
 - Virtuous perfection of those talents



From the Inside

- What is the relationship between this particular species of enhancement and the values intrinsic to the activity?
 - Does it support those values?
 - Does it not significantly impinge upon those values?
 - Does it undermine those values?



“Reasons for Why Baseball is the Best of All Games”

games. First: the rules of the game are in equilibrium: that is, from the start the diamond was made just the right size; the pitcher's mound just the right distance from home plate etc, and this makes possible the marvelous plays, such as the double play. The physical layout of the game is perfectly adjusted to the human skills it is meant to display and to call into graceful exercise. Whereas, basketball eg, is constantly (or was then) adjusting its rules to get them in balance. Second: the

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etc can enjoy the game together in
third: the game uses all parts of the
the legs to run, and to swing the
where you can't touch the ball.
throw, gifts of sight for
catchers, etc. And
plays of

we
to
namely
because he
the games wh
brilliance to s
gave these reason
games. First: the
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of the game is perfectly adjuste
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Whereas, basketball eg, is constantly (o
justing its rules to get them in balance. Second: the
game does not give unusual preference or advantage to
special physical types, eg., to tall men as in basket-
ball. All sorts of abilities can find a place somewhere,

as I and several others had break-
I've played baseball some I tried to
I'm also sure there were many more things
to stop.
for sending me the things. They are
o me.
Best
Jack



The Nature of Sport

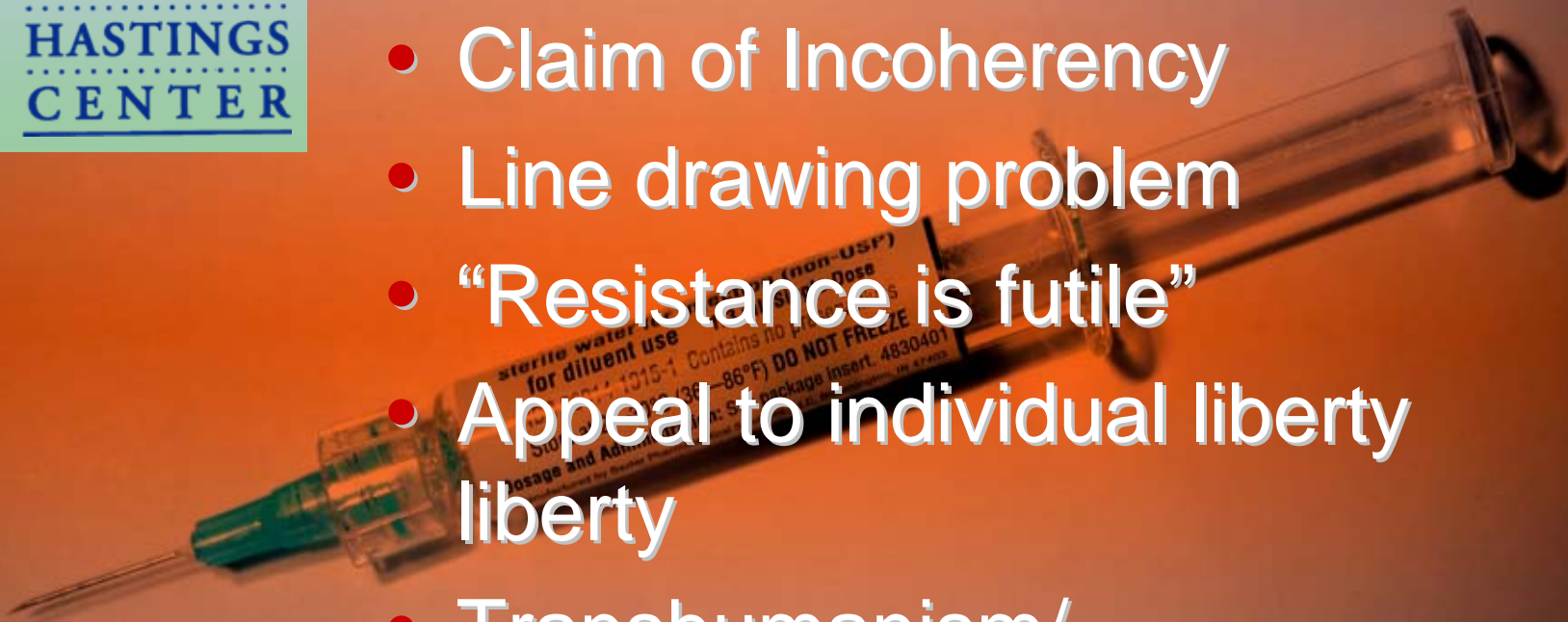
- To select from among all possible possible factors that could influence influence performance and success a success a finite set that foster the the display of certain natural talents talents and their virtuous perfection. perfection.
 - Rawls' description of the nitcher's mound





Objections to Doping Control in Sport

- Claim of Incoherency
- Line drawing problem
- “Resistance is futile”
- Appeal to individual liberty
liberty
- Transhumanism/
Prometheanism





The Incoherency Claim

- No conceptual, ethical or practical distinction among different means of enhancing enhancing sport performance performance

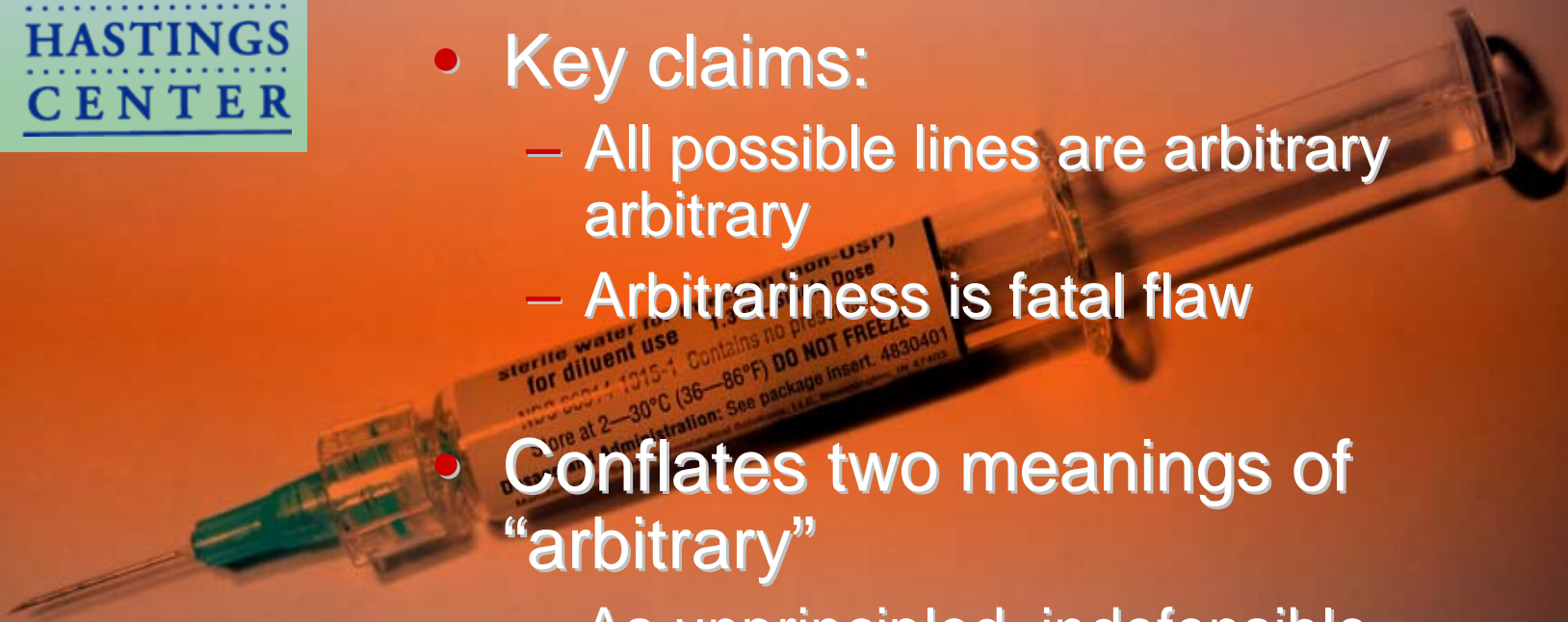
— The marathoner's shoes





The Line Drawing Problem

- Key claims:
 - All possible lines are arbitrary
 - Arbitrary is fatal flaw
- Conflates two meanings of “arbitrary”
 - As unprincipled, indefensible
 - As reasonable response when
 - Drawing SOME line is defensible
 - Placing line IN THIS PLACE likewise





“Resistance is Futile”

- Not a first-order ethical claim claim
- Primarily two empirical predictions
 - Control will be impossible
 - Bad consequences ensue
- Control is never perfect
- Depends upon
 - Public consensus
 - Effective enforcement





The Argument from Individual Liberty

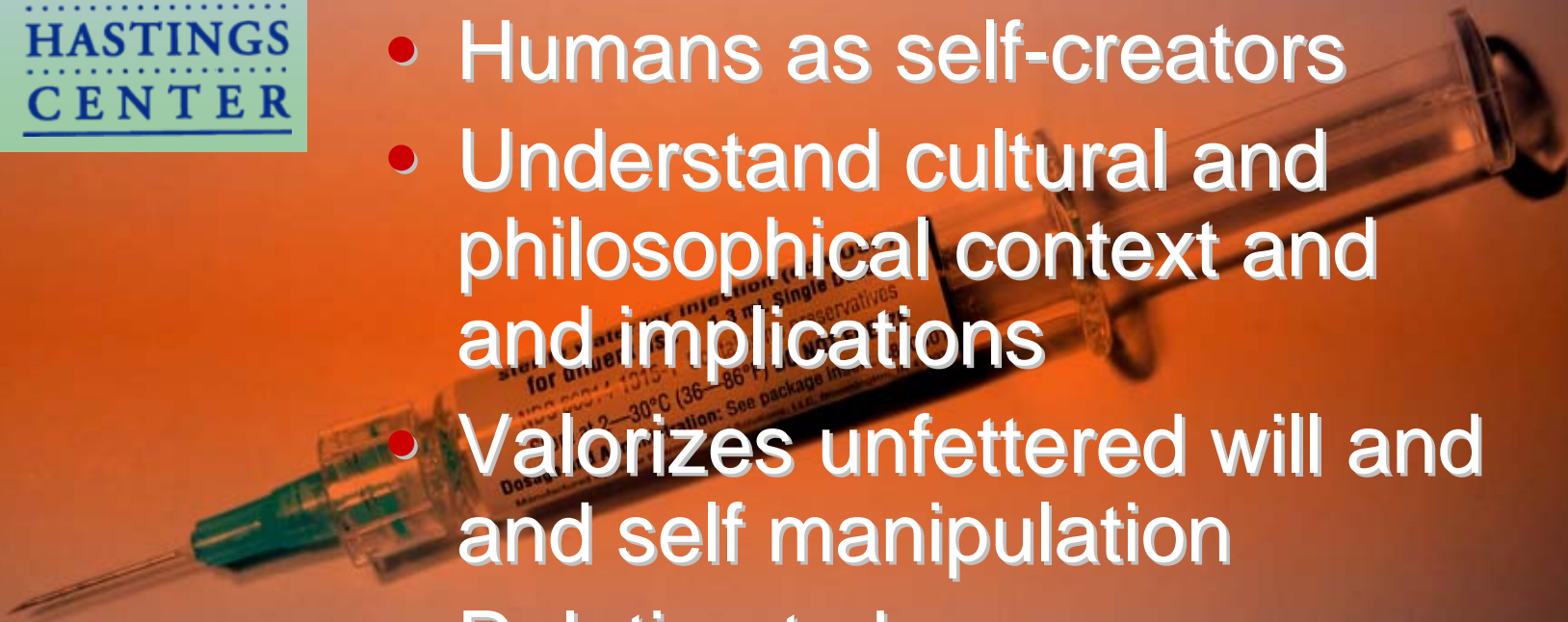
- Presumption in favor of liberty
- Paternalism difficult to defend with adult athletes athletes
- Hastings Center project
 - Coercive impact of drugs in in sport: The unlevel field





Transhumanism / Prometheanism

- Humans as self-creators
- Understand cultural and philosophical context and implications
- Valorizes unfettered will and self manipulation
- Relation to human flourishing?





Romantic/Promethean: Case of Anorexia

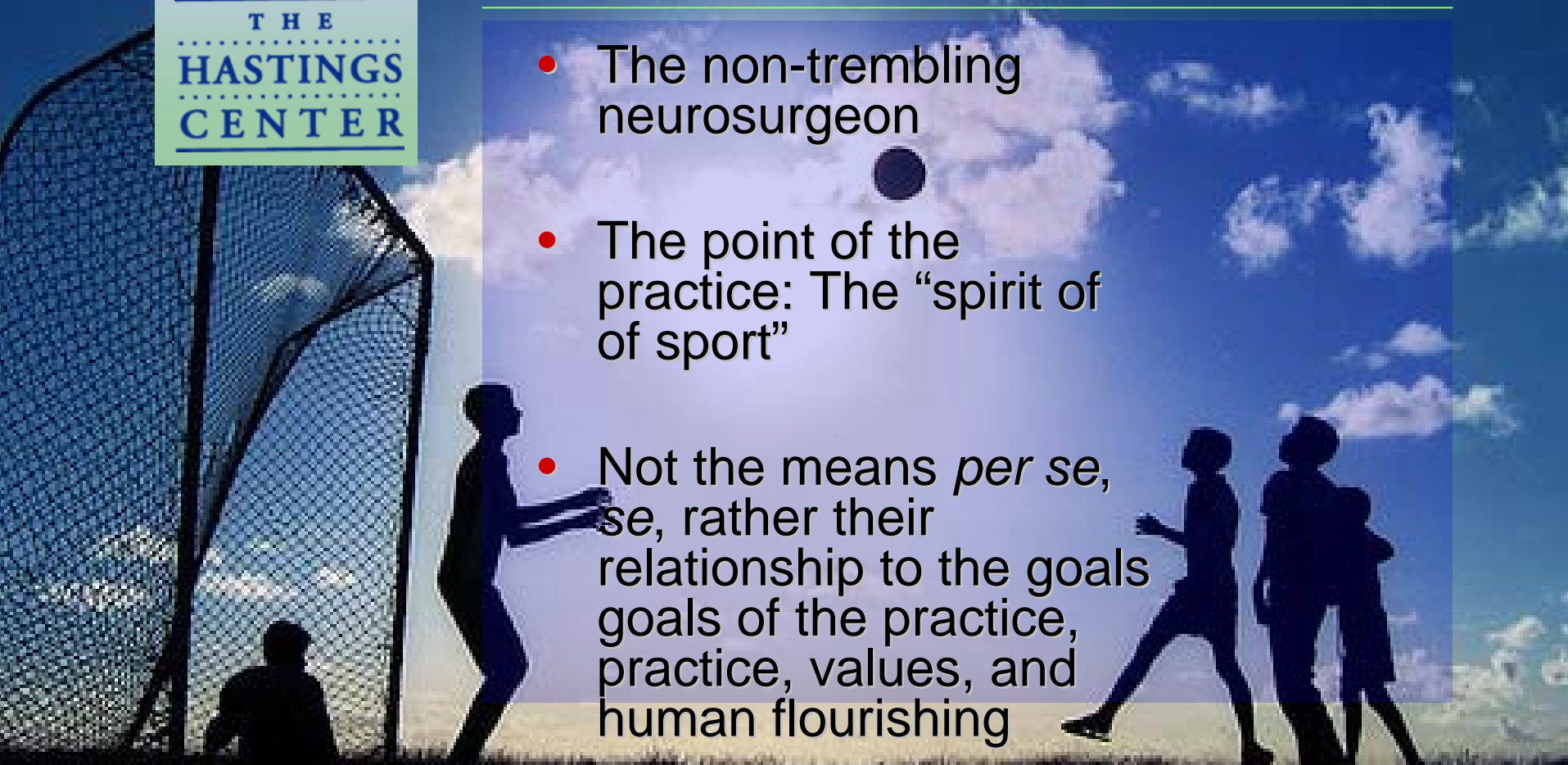
- *Anorexia is the cultivation of a specific image as an image—it is a purely artificial creation and that is why it is so admired. Will alone produces it and maintains it against considerable odds.*

Noelle Casky, 2003: 129



Ethics of Enhancement in Context

- The non-trembling neurosurgeon
- The point of the practice: The “spirit of of sport”
- Not the means *per se*, rather their relationship to the goals of the practice, practice, values, and human flourishing





Challenge of Genetic Enhancement in Sport

- What do we value in sport?
 - Natural talents
 - Virtuous perfection of those talents
- What do we disvalue?
 - Distortions of relationship between natural talent, virtues, and athletic excellence



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On the Outside

- Pressures to use
- Unequal access
- Impacts on health
- Complicity with unjust/unwise norms
- Waste



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Pressures to Use

- The use of enhancement technologies may be at best quasi-voluntary, perhaps highly highly coercive
- Pressures
 - Competition (e.g. MCATs, SATs)
 - Athletes
 - Cognitive enhancing drugs
 - scientists
 - children



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Unequal Access

- If there is unequal access to access to enhancement technologies that are socially valued or rewarding, rewarding, morally suspect inequalities may be piled upon inequalities inequalities
 - e.g. hGH and height



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Impacts on Health

- A libertarian approach to drugs and sport could pressure athletes to take higher doses and novel combinations of drugs
- Health risks are not fully understood, but unlikely to be benign
- This is public health ethics



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Complicity with Unjust/Unwise Norms

Breast augmentation surgery

- *we should have special, and deep, concerns about medicine participating in practices that reflect and reinforce certain suspect norms of appearance... For while we want to alleviate what can be very real [physical or psychological] pain, the danger arises that, in doing so, we will be acting in a way that is complicitous with the very evils that give rise to it."*

Margaret Little, "Cosmetic Surgery, Suspect Norms, and the Ethics of Complicity" in *Enhancing Human Traits: Ethical and Social Implications* ed. Erik Parens (Georgetown University Press, 1998)



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Waste

- The Egalitarian response to heightism: Who benefits? benefits?



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