"Cheating and Fair Play in Sport"

Leaman

with criticisms from Dixon

Strategy

- To show how difficult it is to define cheating
- To show how difficult it is to say why cheating is wrong
- To consider whether cheating is just “part of the game”
What Is Cheating?

- Take One: Luschen's definition — p. 201
  - Problem is that it omits an agent's intentions
- Take Two: McIntosh's definition — p. 202
  - Problem is that McIntosh thinks his account is too simple and prefers Luschen's

McIntosh's Useful Dichotomy

- McIntosh's appeal to Luschen results in a useful distinction
  - Cheating — intending to deceive
    vs
  - Breaking the rules — without an intention to deceive
- Cheating violates principles of justice and other norms of behavior
Cheating and Lying

• Lying occurs when someone tells an untruth and intends to deceive or gain advantage from an untruth

• One might tell an untruth but not intend to lie, because one does not intend to deceive

• There appears to be nothing morally wrong with telling an untruth

• It is morally wrong to intend to tell an untruth, even if that untruth is so outrageous as to fail at deceiving

• The problem is that lies put the liar in a "position of undeserved superiority," even if unintended

• Those lied to suffer an injustice, which is even worse if the intention was to deceive

Luschen's Principle of Equality

• Luschen appeals to a principle of equality to determine when someone is cheating

• Cheating occurs when a person acts in such a way as to change the chances for winning beyond the means of skill and strategy (as a means to winning)

• The problem is that this appeal to equality will not lead to clear answers in some cases

• For example: repetitive shoe-tying and psyching out your opponent

• Is this a case of cheating? Is the repetitive shoe-tier gaining an unfair advantage even if he is not doing anything illegal?

• Neither McIntosh's nor Luschen's definitions provide a clear analysis
"Latently Agreed Upon" Practices

• Luschen's account leads to the question of what are "latent agreements" to sporting contests
  • Why assume there are latent agreements in a sport?
  • If one assumes there are, what are those latent agreements? How can one determine the "latent agreements" when some participants do not abide by them?
  • Why assume someone is obligated to follow these latent agreements when these are not part of the explicit rules?
  • "...we frequently resort to talking about latent agreements when some people do not want to comply with a behavioral norm and we are trying to prove that they ought to be appealing to some non-explicit rule which they are obliged to follow." (203-4)

Why Is Cheating Wrong?

• Huizinga: Cheating is wrong because it violates "fair play"
  • Leaman's Problem: It is not clear what "equality, fairness and impartiality for all' means in a sporting context" (204)
  • When “the rules of the game are being followed” depends on whether one has a narrow (including latent agreements) or broad (only the rules necessary) definition of the rules of the game
Keeping The Rules and Essence of Play

- Leaman questions whether "keeping the rules" is the "essence of play"
- Assuming cheating does not invalidate the game (a la Suits), then why think players or fans should endorse fair play?
  - Cheating might make games more interesting
  - Cheating might display strategic behavior
  - Cheating is part of the player and spectator expectations of the sport

Cheating Is Not Unjust

- "What I am suggesting is that the fact that people may cheat is part of the structure of sport and is taken into consideration in the rules of the sport, so that cheating in a sport can be built into audience and player perceptions of the game. If it is true that cheating is recognized as an option which both sides may morally take up, then in general the principles of equality and justice are not affected." (205)
  - If there is a policy of cheating within a sport, then no one is deceived. There is nothing unjust.
  - Since everyone who plays the sport is trained in the same skills of playing within and without the rules, then everyone is on equal terms. Equality is maintained.
Rules and Referees

- The formal rules of the game guide behavior as long as it serves one's advantage. If it is more advantageous to break the rules, then one will and will suffer the appropriate penalty.

- The presence of referees (or some authority) "enshrines cheating in the structure of the game" (206)

- The referee (authority) is there to maintain fairness and regulate cheating
  - Players must follow the formal rules to play a sport at all, non-morally speaking
  - But, morally speaking and with reference to fairness and justice, Leaman thinks one needs to understand how the players and fans "perceive those rules rather than to an abstract idea of the rules themselves." (206)

Dixon's Definition

- Dixon defines cheating as "an attempt to break the rules of a game while escaping detection and punishment." (168)

- What wrong with cheating is that victories resulting from cheating are neither deserved nor a result of athletic superiority
  - "...the athlete who deserves to win is the one who performs better within the game's rules and under conditions of equality." (168)
Dixon's Critique of Leaman

- Given Leaman's view of cheating as a skill and legitimate tactic that all players accept within the formal rules of the game, then "deserving to win" might include cheating.

- Dixon, however, argues that cheating is not essential to sport and does not advance sports' central values.
  - Dixon admits that cheating might require some "skill," but this kind of skill is not what sports are intending to measure.
  - Cheating "sabotages one of competitive sport's least controversial goals: to determine which team has most athletic skill, including, as we have just seen, mental abilities like shrewd tactics as well as physical prowess, as permitted by the rules of the game." (169)