



UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following published document, The manuscript has been deposited under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. <https://www.routledge.com/our-products/open-access-books/publishing-oa-books/chapters> and is licensed under Creative Commons: Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 license:

Ryall, Emily S ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6050-4353> and Borrie, Andy (2023) Making Reflective Practice More Meaningful: Saying the "Unsayable". In: Reflective Practice in the Sport and Exercise Sciences: Critical Perspectives, Pedagogy, and Applied Case Studies. Routledge, London, pp. 53-65. ISBN 9781003198758

Official URL: <http://doi.org/10.4324/9781003198758-7>

EPrint URI: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/12062>

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

Making reflective practice more meaningful: Saying the “unsayable”

1. Introduction

“Life is a journey to be experienced, not a problem to be solved.” – *Winnie the Pooh* (A. A. Milne)

This chapter is a collaboration between an applied philosopher with an interest in professional practice (Emily) and a practitioner with an interest in applied philosophy (Andy). Our aim is to stimulate readers to explore limitations to current approaches to reflective practice (e.g., many rarely engage in reflective practices that are meaningful) and consider alternative approaches that are better able to achieve the aims that those advocating reflective practice desire. We aim to present a different conception of reflection than those that currently dominate the sport and exercise sciences and, by changing perspectives, greater meaning is generated for the practitioner. Drawing upon the work of Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein we present several philosophical concepts that should influence approaches to reflective practice. What we are not doing is suggesting a new model or framework of reflective practice. Rather, we aim to reconceive of the notion of reflective practice itself. We argue that diluting the concept to models or frameworks is to misunderstand the nature of the practice itself.

The thoughts presented in this chapter have arisen from a collaboration that started with Emily’s supervision of Andy’s autoethnographic doctoral research looking at talent development philosophies. Within this research, Andy undertook a long and intense period of reflection on his career as a practitioner in world class sport. As a practitioner who engaged in, researched, and wrote about reflective practice in sport early in his career, part of the work became a meta-reflection on the influence of reflective practice on the evolution of his applied work. As a result of exposure to wider philosophical concepts within this meta-reflection, there was a fundamental shift in Andy’s approach to reflective practice. The shift moved Andy’s reflective practices from a more instrumental approach to reflection based on frameworks such as Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988), to more aesthetic and creative forms of reflection.

The discussion that follows is presented in a dialogic form because we think it makes it more accessible and enjoyable to read. We have also used the first-person tense in the chapter as a way of supporting the critique of scientific rationalism that we present. Our exploration of the interaction between philosophy and reflective practice begins with Andy articulating his thoughts on current approaches to reflective practice in sport. We then continue by introducing the thoughts of the twentieth century philosophers’ Heidegger and Wittgenstein which challenge us to think differently about reflective practice. Emily introduces each concept as a response to the question, “What can philosophy tell us that’s pertinent to reflective practice?” Andy then responds by articulating how that philosophical concept has impacted on his understanding of meaningful reflective practice.

2. Reflective Practice - the state of play?

Andy

Reflective practice in sport has shifted from being a barely used phrase in the latter part of the 20th century to being seen as a key element in a wide range of practitioner development programmes (Marshall, Keville, Cain, & Adler, 2021). It is now widely seen as being vital to effective practitioner development where it is commonly looked on as bridging the gap between craft knowledge drawn

from experience and professional knowledge that is explicit, codified and formally taught. In sport and exercise science the importance of reflective practice has been recognised in the need for trainee practitioners to evidence their use of reflective practices to underpin learning from their practicum experiences. This evidence is required before they are accredited to work independently with athletes or members of the public (British Association of Sport & Exercise Sciences, 2021). Reflective practice is normally seen as being a proactive, deliberate act that transforms practice by supporting the practitioner in understanding their own experience, raising awareness of critical issues and linking craft and professional knowledge (Cushion, 2018; Johns, 2017; Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, & Nevill, 2001). A range of reflective practice frameworks (e.g., Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Gibbs, 1988; Johns, 2006) are commonly presented as processes for supporting systematic, rigorous reflection on experience.

However, more recently I have become aware of a number of authors who have started to question the idea that reflective practice, and dominant approaches to it, are a universal force for good. Cushion (2018) questioned the lack of clear definitions of the terms *reflection* and *reflective practice* in sport coaching and coaching's easy acceptance of reflective practice as being unproblematic. In addition, he raised concerns about the way that current approaches to reflective practice can constrain creative thinking by privileging particular perspectives on coaching. My personal experience is that this critique also holds true in the sport and exercise sciences. Outside sport, in the caring professions (social work, health care), researchers have also critiqued dominant approaches to reflective practice and have argued current interpretations may be limiting to the growth of the practitioner (e.g., Béres, 2017).

From a personal perspective, this shift in thinking mirrors my experience of reflective practice. In my early career as a practitioner, I was heavily engaged in championing a rigid and onerously systematic approach to reflective practice within the profession (cf. Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005; Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, & Nevill, 2001). The approach to reflective practice that is encapsulated in this early writing about reflection in sport seemed to me to just be a natural application of the critical thinking skills I had developed as a scientist. I did not see any limitations, only the power of guided introspection in creating a useful critique of practice that allowed me to enhance my professional skills. However, the engagement with key philosophical concepts, such as *monism* and *being* in the autoethnographic study of my professional career has led me to question the value of systematised and formulaic approaches to reflection. A growing awareness of the limits of my previous reflective practice allowed me to explore different ways of thinking and being, which in turn lead to richer learning. I moved beyond reflection on practice to deeper engagement *with practice* to consider much deeper issues of *value* and *meaning*.

In the rest of this chapter Emily and I want to outline some of the philosophical concepts that, when confronted, helped me generate a new perspective on my reflection.

Emily

For me, Andy's doctoral research demonstrated the power of combining deep reflection on one's own professional practice with philosophical theory. Since the most important philosophical questions are ultimately about what it is to be human and to live a worthwhile life, Andy showed why authentic reflective practice avoids attempts to distil the richness of the real-life experience down to a model or framework devoid of real meaning or sense.

In the remainder of the chapter, we would like to briefly introduce four concepts from the works of Heidegger and Wittgenstein (*technological attitude*; *dualism*; *being*; and *the unsayable*) and how they challenge current approaches to reflective practice.

3. Technological attitude: Influence and limitations

Emily

Whilst the *scientific method* – loosely defined as a systematic way of predicting and explaining phenomena in the world – is undeniably fruitful in helping us make sense of the world, both Heidegger and Wittgenstein warn us against becoming dogmatic in its use. That is not to say that they were anti-science, but rather they warn us against scientism; the belief that science can answer all questions of life. In their writings, they challenge us to think about questions of being, ethics and values differently. Heidegger (1977) used the phrase, the *technological attitude*¹ in this type of scientific thinking. In this, he is critical of the way “scientific man” extracts things away from their environment, objectifying and analysing them as separate components for our service and consumption. Heidegger argues humans approach the world instrumentally, asking, “What can we use this [mineral, tree, plant, water, gene] for?” or, “What can we use as a resource to build and power our [homes, cars, entertainment facilities]?” In sport, this technological attitude can be seen in the way the body is dissected into discrete elements and seen in the context of performance. The exemplar of this is in the way the mind and the body are disconnected and seen as separate spheres. Whilst such a way of seeing the world may be fruitful for solving perceived problems (e.g., how to recover from particular injuries in some individual cases) we need to recognise that it is only one way of seeing the world, and it does not represent the way the world really is. Heidegger uses the term *standing-reserve*² to depict the way in which we perceive the world as a stockpile of resources waiting to be consumed. Eventually, he argues, we will take ourselves as standing-reserve and instrumentalise our own being. As such, the technological attitude can be thought of almost as a mode of existence.

Andy

Heidegger rightly questions the dominance of the *technological attitude* in societal thought processes and its influence in reflective practice is now being directly questioned (Béres, 2017). My perception is that in the sport and exercise sciences we have allowed reflective practice to become framework driven and almost exclusively sequential in nature, pursuing a positivist epistemology and the empirical realism that Heidegger and Wittgenstein warn us against (Cushion, 2018). So much of the writing about reflection in sport draws on frameworks that seek to codify and explain the process of reflection in language that is drawn from this technological attitude. We are invited to describe experience as a disembodied observer, to deconstruct experience and to separate emotion from action. Analytical processes that all stem from a natural science approach to the creation of knowledge and understanding.

In my research, recognising the technological attitude influence in my own reflective practice allowed me to see how much the use of reflective cycles (frameworks) had driven a process of always trying to break my experience into constituent parts. I realised I had stopped seeing experiences as whole entities in which my experience was embodied, with indivisible physical, emotional, cognitive, conscious and subconscious elements. I had, therefore, imposed limits to what

¹ Heidegger uses the term *Gestell* which means ‘enframing’, i.e. a way of conceptualising the world.

² Heidegger’s term is *Bestand*.

I could reflect upon and how I could draw meaning from that reflection through the way I had structured my reflective process.

In Table 1, I present a reflective vignette written during my autoethnography about the experience of doing performance analysis on a sport tour. It was an attempt to break my reflection out of a technological frame and into a more holistic frame. The vignette does not describe one specific occasion, rather it is a generalised reflection on a situation that I experienced many times in my professional work. Whilst it is in essence a fiction, it is grounded in a myriad of embodied experiences. Each time I read the vignette I see something that is far more than an abstract description of practice behaviour. My recollections in the piece were visceral, connecting touch, taste, and sound. Reading the vignette helps me to experience again the hum of the laptop, the sound of the kettle, the taste of cold coffee and the feeling of tired and gritty eyes. All physical sensations that spoke to an overall sense of fatigue in the moment.

If I had adopted a technological attitude using standard reflective models then I could have reflected on creating better nutritional strategies for the situation, managing sleep patterns, or maintaining work:rest ratios to alleviate fatigue. At one level those would all have been reasonable lines of reflective thought in relation to enhancing practice effectiveness. But by simply accepting and writing about my physical responses as being part of an embodied whole I allowed them to tell me a deeper story. Through the vignette I accessed my deep sense of striving to achieve a competitive outcome in that situation. I started to see how the experience was linked to a performance narrative about needing to make sacrifices to feel I was legitimately in pursuit of a performance goal. The recognition of this narrative then raised deeper questions for me about purpose and meaning. Why was I sacrificing sleep and, more importantly, why was I reducing performance to just 'numbers and patterns'? By consciously stepping away from the technological attitude inherent in common reflective cycles (e.g., Borton, 1970), I accessed a more holistic form of reflection that opened a deeper appreciation of the experience.

The influence of the technological attitude on my practice also made my early reflective practice too instrumental in nature. I now appreciate that most, if not all, of my reflective practice was driven by a focus on understanding an experience for the purpose of altering it to achieve a pre-determined outcome. In essence, my reflective approach was always "if I better understand x then I can change how I do y and the end result will become the outcome I want". By thinking like this I limited the way in which I was going to see the world. I pursued a process in which I was most likely to only "see" the elements of an experience that I felt relevant to changing its outcome. Consequently, I blinded myself from seeing other aspects of an experience that may have had deeper meaning. Part of the process was also an implicit reduction of athletes or other practitioners to the status of being just a component part in a deconstructed experience. They were reduced to being objects that I could act upon, and potentially manipulate, in ways that suited my conceptualisation of the world.

The technological attitude that pervaded my reflective processes is something I now see as being problematic. By unquestioningly adopting a technological attitude I constrained myself to an instrumental view of the world and often positioned people as objects *standing-reserve*. I believe this limited my reflective process and hindered my understanding of meaning in my reflections. Now, when I step away from standard reflective cycles it becomes easier to access and feel an experience as a whole. For example I will now more readily use metaphor as a way of expressing my understanding of an experience. A particularly contentious meeting might be described as a "storm" which gathers, then breaks, is all encompassing for a while and then passes on. The metaphor captures the flow of the experience, its intensity, its impact and its aftermath but without attempting to break it down into specific components.

4. Dualism

Emily

The starting point for the technological attitude is Cartesian *dualism* where the human is both at the centre of the world and apart from it. Current approaches to reflective practice seem to assume that dualism holds true to allow us to stand back from our experience and analyse it as an external observer. However, for Heidegger the idea of the human existing apart from, or outside, the world makes no sense (Mulhall, 2000). Such a conception of the world will undoubtedly produce difficulties when we consider who or what we, as humans, are and how we address those deep philosophical questions that are at the core of our being; questions about meaning, ethics and value – since it suggests that there is a God’s eye view of the world from which such questions can be empirically solved. Heidegger believed the legacy of Descartes meant there has been a real impoverishment of diversity in the way we understand the world. The dominance of the technological attitude, and its reductionist approach moves us away from engaging with the richness of diversity in experience. We focus on physical entities (*res extensa*) to the detriment of engaging with spiritual entities (*res cogitans*), that is, we are limited in the way we conceptualise and make sense of the world if we see it purely as a scientist sees her specimens in the laboratory.

Heidegger asks us to see ourselves as an intrinsic part of the world that does not stand apart from it but is intimately connected to it. This is a view that is becoming increasingly accepted as can be seen in the growth of ecological approaches to issues, whether in environmentalism or sport and exercise science and coaching. Ecological approaches see the world not as the traditional detached, observer scientist would see it, but instead recognises the complexity, inter-relationship and non-distinctiveness of phenomena, and this includes our own existence in the world (see, for example, Næss, 1986; 1987).

Andy

My thoughts on *dualism* are an extension of my response to the technological attitude. The reflective work in my research reinforced for me that my experience was embodied, personal and contextual. I do not believe that I can be apart from the world therefore I cannot be a detached observer of my own actions. Consequently, I cannot, nor should not, attempt to reflect by simply trying to stand apart from the world. In addition, the Cartesian view contributes to us trying to compartmentalise problems in practice so that we can use the technological attitude to resolve them. By consistently standing apart from the world and breaking it in to component parts we run the risk of losing the essence of our holistic, complex experiences.

Unfortunately, when you examine commonly used reflective frameworks you could argue that many have been created based on a Cartesian view of the world. Even if not created from this view, practitioners may assume a Cartesian view in applying them. In rejecting a Cartesian view of the world, I am not suggesting that there is no value in attempting to look at our practice from the outside. I still see huge value in quietly, and with as little emotion as possible, seeking to understand different parts of my experience. Yet, in attempting to adopt the position of neutral observer I must accept that this position is unattainable and that my reflective observations are neither objective nor value-free. Consequently, this can no longer be the only way that I seek to access, interpret, and express understanding of my practice.

I believe I must seek additional complementary ways to engage with the richness of an experience. I need to actively seek to understand the *essence* of an experience engaging with issues like value, meaning, or the inherent spirituality in a moment as well as its physical elements. The vignette in

Table 1 is a reflection that sought to capture the essence of an experience. By accepting the embodied nature of the experience and reporting on the physical feelings of the moment I did not try to stand apart from it. By doing this it opened a route to exploring deeper meaning in the experience.

5. 'Being' and the 'unsayable'

Emily

Perhaps the most critical concept we need to address is that of *being*. Heidegger challenges us to consider the nature of being and what it means for our relationship with the world. As a way of resisting the technological attitude, Heidegger asks us to refocus our perspective on the question of being (or, in the case of human existence, what it is to be human³). In this, he wishes to return our attention towards the actual phenomenological raw-feel of experience rather than a detached, objective, scientific conception of reality.

Heidegger argued that when faced with the beauty of something like a tree in bloom or a vivid rainbow stretching across the breadth of the sky, we do not, and should not, regard it as would a scientist but instead simply appreciate and enjoy the moment of being with it and as part of our presence. For Heidegger, knowing the world comes second to existing within it. He urges us to disregard the traditional scientific method of answering the question, "What is it to be human?" according to necessary and sufficient conditions and replace it with a richer exploration of what it is to be an authentic human being. In relation to reflective practice, we need to move away from the question of, "How can I become more effective in solving this particular problem?" to, "How can I become more authentic as a being in my own right?" In this context "authentic" would refer to being able to recognise one's place and situation within the world. Such a view resonates with Eastern philosophies and religions that advocate meditation, contemplation, and a desire to become one with the world. It is a form of life that is incommensurable to the objective, sterile, scientific method that is advocated by Western approaches. As we adjust our attitude towards seeing the world, this results in not only seeing the world in a different way but in essence, seeing a different world.

This is a perspective also promoted by Wittgenstein (1978, p. 325) when he wrote, "Not empiricism, and yet realism in philosophy; that is the hardest thing." The use of the term "realism" here is arguably not to mean the truth, in a positivist sense, but rather acknowledge that empiricism only presents limited, and limiting, pictures of the world. Wittgenstein (1968, p. 127) urged us to resist theory and avoid abstracting phenomena away from their context⁴. For Wittgenstein, realism is essentially about the attitude one holds towards the world, one which recognises that science is unable to answer questions about ethics and value and that we can only gesture at moral truths rather than define or theorise them. Our reflective practices, therefore, need to deal with the holistic, complex and profound nature of *being* as much as break down experience in to component parts. Reflective practice, if done well, allows us to change our own attitude, and to change the attitude of others.

³ Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* to indicate the specific beingness of human being, as opposed to being (existence) in general.

⁴ In this Wittgenstein warns us that we should be careful to resist reifying his own observations into abstract theories as it is incredibly easy to attempt to formulate philosophical theories from Wittgenstein's writings even though it is exactly what he wanted to avoid. However, some academics have given up this battle and have simply rejected his anti-theoretical stance to be discarded as an unjustified anti-scientific prejudice (see Pleasants, 1999).

One of our challenges in being in the world, and reflecting in it, is to be able to express our relation to it without losing the essence of what we experience. In this regard, language can be a significant limitation especially when we constrain ourselves to writing in the forms considered acceptable within a scientific view of the world. In responding to this problem Wittgenstein repeatedly talked about the *unsayable* when referring to matters of ethics and aesthetics (i.e., what is important and valuable in living a life). If we are to be true to our understanding of being in the world there are thoughts that we cannot express in a reductionist way. If we try to express these thoughts, they lose that which is most profound. Whilst Wittgenstein recognises that there is no direct way to say the “unsayable” he suggested that there are things that can contain those things that cannot be said. For example, narrative works are ways in which such things can be communicated: “It can communicate some ineffable truth about life while talking about the growth of a sprig into a hawthorn bush” (Edwards, 1982, p. 51). It is exactly for this reason that Wittgenstein recommended reading novels and literature over philosophical theory because literature (and arguably, this includes any narrative work, including [auto]biography) do not try to utter the unutterable yet still importantly hold on to important ethical reminders that serve to alter our attitude. Toulmin (2001, p. 123) captures this in saying:

Convincing narratives have a kind of weight that mathematical formulas do not. They allow us to revive moral argumentation in disciplines that, since the eighteenth century, had aimed at value neutrality; in the process, they bridge the gulf between Science and Literature.

Andy

In my autoethnographic work it was the confrontation of *being* and how I presented reflections on being that caused the greatest challenge and the greatest learning. First, by becoming more aware of the concept of the *unsayable* I began to understand the influence of language on my practice and reflections. I also noted how the language of my performance world was the language of instrumental rationality. As Tekavc, Wylleman, and Cecić Erpič (2015) noted, the performance world clothed itself in the language of business and economics. In high performance, achievement of an end-result was the only purpose, so we spoke of targets, audits, KPIs, return on investment, “what it takes to win” modelling and other quasi-business concepts. Consequently, as the language of my practice world centred around these forms of rhetoric, so had my reflections. Combined with an underpinning technological attitude the language I had been using in my reflections had moved them away from the aesthetic towards the transactional and instrumental. By engaging with the works of Heidegger and Wittgenstein I came to realise that I needed to respond more holistically to being in the world. My understanding of my practice was limited by the language I used.

I also came to see the importance in recognising the embodied nature of experience. Botelho (2020), in drawing upon the idea of body phenomenology, recognised that our physical responses to situations inform us of things. When we smile involuntarily it is not a conscious response but a non-verbal reaction to experience. A response that is neither verbal nor accessible to introspection but nevertheless tells us something about the experience. We experience the world through our bodies which determines what we perceive through the limitations of our senses. As such we must recognise that we experience the world in a holistic way and that not every aspect of our practice will be available for conscious scrutiny (Cushion & Partington, 2016). However, when we accept the embodied essence of experience then we must also accept that parts of our practice will always be unsayable within the limitations of instrumental language and a technological attitude.

Through my autoethnography I realised that my reflective practice must evolve to meet the challenge of being in the world. To meet this challenge, I had to step closer to more creative

presentations of my reflections. In Table 2, I have shown a second reflective vignette from my autoethnography. This vignette is more aesthetic and is an example of how expressing myself differently allowed me to create a deeper understanding of my being in the world of my professional practice.⁵ Table 2 shows my attempt to holistically express reflections about being on a longitudinal performance journey. To express something of this longitudinal experience I found that my writing needed to become both metaphorical and allegorical rather than literal. This writing style allowed me to better capture thoughts that I simply could not convey in technological language. It allowed me to get closer to the unsayable in my experience and develop a deeper understanding of my being in the world. The vignette might not make sense to some readers whilst others might feel it resonates with their experiences. Its value is not in what it conveys for others but how the metaphors create meaning for me.

The vignette conveys for me something of my understanding of the interaction of personal motivation, the lure of the end goal, and the positive nature of personal experience whilst recognising the inevitable sacrifice and loss that comes with choices made. By expressing my thoughts in this way, I felt better able to start to question how I, and others, drew meaning from those experiences. Additional value from writing in the style of this vignette emerged through the process of drafting and re-drafting the story. As a scientist, I initially found it hard to write creatively but with each successive draft presentation the process became easier and, more importantly, I gained new insight into my experience. I found that the process of writing creatively became an integral part of my reflective process. The writing was not simply a presentation of the output from a separate cognitive process. Writing and thinking were symbiotically linked in creating the final reflection. This reinforced for me how the presentational form you use to portray your reflection plays an active part in creating the reflection.

Moving forward I now believe we must step towards artistic and aesthetic forms of presentation and engage with the symbolic as well as the literal in our reflective practices. If I had allowed myself to remain rooted in language that was instrumentally focused and technological in nature, I could not have expressed what I understood of my performance experience. I could not have come closer to engaging with the unsayable element in my professional practice.

6. Conclusion

Reflective practice in sport has, understandably, largely focused on developing reflection through the use of systematic and structured reflective frameworks. There are many benefits to such approaches, which draw heavily on a natural science, reductionist approach to critical thinking. However, there are limitations and weaknesses inherent in the *technological attitude* that too often influences our thinking and our practice. These limitations have been discussed by 20th century philosophers such as Heidegger and Wittgenstein who challenged the dominance of this technological attitude. They suggested critical questions about life and experience cannot be considered as abstract questions that can be answered by turning to a formula or theory as directed by science.

Andy's autoethnographic journey highlighted that there is much to be gained from moving away from the technological attitude and an unquestioningly adopting a Cartesian view of the world. In reflective processes we need to allow ourselves to engage with a sense of being in the world in a holistic and embodied way because not all experience can, or should, be broken into constituent

⁵ In presenting my vignettes as creative pieces I am conscious that in autoethnography there are now many researchers engaging in performative methodologies that are far more creative using poetry, music and drama to express reflective thoughts.

parts. Reflective practice needs to support us to engage with deep philosophical questions relating to meaning, ethics, value and ultimately what it is to live a good life. These are personal questions that we need to ask ourselves as individuals knowing whilst being comfortable that we are unlikely to find neat, unambiguous answers. This is what Wittgenstein meant when he said, "What is ragged must be left ragged." (Phillips, 1992, p. 270).

By exploring deeper philosophical questions about what it is to be human and what it is to live a worthwhile life, and to recognise the importance of *being* in the world, rather than just deconstructing it, then the *unsayable* becomes clearer. When we allow ourselves to recognise our embodied and holistic experience of the world then the limitations of our language in describing that experience comes to the fore. To counter this we have to learn to engage with more aesthetic ways for expressing thoughts and ideas. We must learn to work with artistic and literary devices such as metaphor and allegory to better reflect what we know but do not have the language to say directly.

In conclusion, the experience of Andy's autoethnographic research process has led us to believe it is time to re-think reflective practice. Current structured practices, whilst of value, may be limiting reflection as much as they are stimulating it. We hope that this chapter has stimulated readers to reconsider what it means to reflect and how a technological attitude may be limiting their understanding of their experience. We would like to encourage practitioners to explore their being in the world and how they may use more aesthetic forms of expression to access the unsayable in their experiences and thus facilitate a more meaningful reflective process.

7. Bibliography

- Anderson, A. G., Knowles, Z., & Gilbourne, D. (2004). Reflective practice for sport psychologists: Concepts, models, practical implications, and thoughts on dissemination. *The Sport Psychologist*, 18, 188-203. <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.18.2.188>
- Béres, L. (2017). Maintaining the ability to be unsettled and learn afresh: What philosophy contributes to our understanding of 'reflection' and 'experience'. *Reflective Practice*, 18, 280-290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2016.1269003>
- Borton, T. (1970). *Reach, touch and teach*. McGraw-Hill Paperbacks.
- Botelho, N. (2020). Reflection in motion: An embodied approach to reflection on practice. *Reflective Practice*, 22, 147-158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2020.1860926>
- British Association of Sport & Exercise Science (2021). *BASES supervised experience guidelines*. https://www.bases.org.uk/spage-professional_development-supervised_experience.html
- Cushion, C. (2018). Reflection and reflective practice discourses in coaching: a critical analysis. *Sport, Education & Society*, 23, 82-94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2016.1142961>
- Cushion, C., & Partington, M. (2016). A critical analysis of the conceptualisation of coaching philosophy. *Sport Education and Society*, 21, 851-867. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.958817>
- Edwards, J. C. (1982). *Ethics without philosophy: Wittgenstein and the moral life*. University Press of Florida.
- Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. FEU.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). *The question concerning technology and other essays*. Harper Row.

- Johns, C. (2006). *Engaging reflection in practice: A narrative approach*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Johns, C. (2017). *Becoming a reflective practitioner*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Knowles, Z., Borrie, A., & Telfer, H. (2005). Towards the reflective sports coach: issues of context, education and application. *Ergonomics*, *48*, 1711-1720.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00140130500101288>
- Knowles, Z., Gilbourne, D., Borrie, A., & Nevill, A. (2001). Developing the reflective sports coach: A study exploring the processes of reflective practice within a higher education coaching programme. *Reflective Practice*, *2*, 185-207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623940120071370>
- Marshall, T., Keville, S., Cain, A., & Adler, J. R. (2021). On being open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible: A review and synthesis exploring factors enabling practitioner development in reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, *22*, 860-876.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2021.1976131>
- Mulhall, S. (2000). *Heidegger and being and time*. Routledge.
- Næss, A. (1986). The deep ecological movement: Some philosophical aspects. *Philosophical Inquiry*, *8*, 10-31. <https://doi.org/10.5840/philoquiry198681/22>
- Naess, A. (1987). Self-realization: An ecological approach to being in the world. *The Trumpeter*, *4*, 35-42. <http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/623/992>
- Phillips, D. Z. (1992). *Interventions in ethics*. Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Pleasants, N. (1999). *Wittgenstein and the idea of a critical social theory: A critique of Giddens, Habermas and Bhaskar*. Routledge.
- Tekavc, J., Wylleman, P., & Cecić Erpič, S. (2015). Perceptions of dual career development among elite level swimmers and basketball players. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *21*, 27-41.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2015.03.002>
- Toulmin, S. (2001). *Return To reason*. Harvard University Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1978). *Remarks on the foundations of mathematics*. Basil Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1968). *Philosophical investigations*. Basil Blackwell.

Table SEQ Table * ARABIC 1 Vignette describing undertaking performance analysis

The low hum from the laptop fan fills the room, its amazing how much heat one electronic device can create. Its been crunching numbers and slicing video clips for hours now and there is a still more to get done ... so why am I thinking about this now? My mind is starting to wander, the hum and the heat are a potent combination, I am beginning to crave sleep. I look at the clock and realise that midnight is a distant memory ... 2.30 am ... but its almost done. Another 30 mins and the analysis will be complete.

I roll my neck and hear it crunch. I rub my eyes, again, and they hurt like there's a mound of grit in each one. But what should I expect? I've been in front of this screen since 10pm. I reach for my coffee ... it's cold ... but I drink it anyway. God knows how many cups I've had in the past four hours. If I could find a way to have it intravenously it would be so helpful.

But these are the moments when you have to concentrate harder. These are the moments when you make mistakes ... you start to miss a couple of events and skew your stats ... you don't 'see' a critical passage of the game ... you don't record the one example of a play that may unlock the coaches' understanding the game ... you miss the moment that might make a difference.

It's all there in the numbers, its all there in the sequences of events. Somewhere there's a pattern and if we can find that pattern we can work out how to beat it.

So you get up and move around the room, open the window and breath in some cold air. Let the draft play over your arms and face to wake you up. You move back across the room to put the kettle on again. You don't want another coffee really and your body certainly doesn't need one but you make a cup just the same. It's the act of doing it that's important, it helps you find the energy. Your body moves and by doing so it wakes up your brain just enough to let you can concentrate for another 30 mins.

You look at the screen but you don't see the game any more. You muted the crowd long ago. Who wants to be distracted by the ebb and flow of the emotions of a few thousand spectators. They aren't important. Its understanding player movement that is the only thing. When did they move, where did they move, how often did they move ... pass, feed, shoot, intercept, pass, feed, shoot numbers and patterns, numbers and patterns. The players' experiences are irrelevant, the determination and effort etched on faces, the magic in a deft sleight of hand, the power in an intercept, the intensity of the contest ... wonderful things, but not important. Numbers and patterns ...

Another 30 mins and you can summarise ready for the morning and then you can sleep. Asleep by 3.15 sounds good. Alarm set for 7am, coaches' meeting at 7.30, players meeting at 9.00, off to training by 10.....

Just the 3 hours sleep again but that's fine if we can crack their patterns we can take them. Its almost within reach, the last couple of games we have been there or there about. We are starting to believe, if we can bridge the gap a little more then we are one step closer to the podium. So you settle back in to the seat, flex your fingers and start the video rolling again somewhere in this data we can find another hint on how to win a medal numbers and patterns ... numbers and patterns ...

Table SEQ Table * ARABIC 2 Vignette capturing reflections around purpose in

It's like looking at a series of islands stretching out in to the sea. The island you want to get to is a hazy outline on a distant horizon and in between there are all these other islands. Some big, some small, all different ... and to reach across the sea in to the haze you have to visit each island in turn. Sometimes you can rest on an island for a while but most times you land, explore the island and have to press on towards the next in the chain.

And the sea of life flows around the islands ... at times the crossings are smooth, the voyage is gentle, relaxed, easy, fun but then there are the storms that can spring out of nowhere unexpected currents or tides that try and push you off course ... or the wind dies and you become becalmed, unable to move forwards.

So what may have seemed like a simple crossing between islands can become anything but .. it becomes a battle, a contest ... between you and the sea or you and the boat or you and yourself. It's not something to be enjoyed, its something to be endured but you keep moving forwards because it's the only way to reach that distant island sitting in the haze.

And every now and then another boat sails across your path and you see friends and family on its deck and you want to go on their journey you want to see what they are going to see, be a part of their experience but you can't. Or its your employer and they want you to be on their journey and a part of their 'team' but you can't commit. And you know at this moment in time you can't follow anyone else because once you step off this boat you can't get back on. You'd have to wait for another boat that's sailing to that distant, hazy island but another one might never come along or if it does there is no room onboard for you. So you stand and watch as other boats pass by and sail away from you.

And then there's the issue of the crew. When you start you know that not everyone you see around you will be there at the end. People will be lost along the way ... at anytime someone can succumb to injury, can fail to perform ... and the boat can't carry passengers ... only crew, only people who can make it go faster or at least stay in a straight line... so the weak get cast adrift as the boat sails on.

And as the boat sails on all the while you practice, you train, you perform, you learn and change comes slowly, incrementally. Collectively and individually you keep looking for the small gains in performance, the 'inches' that can make the difference between winning and losing.

So why be on this boat, why go on this journey well its simple really.

There is a Siren sitting on that final island and it's her song draws you on. It's a song at's about testing yourself, expressing yourself, about triumph, about the elation that comes with victory. So many things that you want to experience and you know that the only way to experience them is to be on this boat and on this journey ... and yet ...

Cushion, C. (2018). Reflection and reflective practice discourses in coaching: a critical analysis. *Sport, Education & Society*, 23(1), 82-94. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2016.1142961>

Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing : a guide to teaching and learning methods*. [London]: FEU.

Johns, C. (2017). *Becoming a reflective practitioner* [1 online resource](Fifth edition. ed.). Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1512431>

<http://www.myilibrary.com?id=1008980>

<https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=0460B3DB-57C0-4E24-99EC-7FFD0FAF63D4>

<http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4851929>

https://nls.ldls.org.uk/welcome.html?ark:/81055/vdc_100043856414.0x000001

<https://samples.overdrive.com/?crd=0460b3db-57c0-4e24-99ec-7ffd0faf63d4&.epub-sample.overdrive.com>

<https://img1.od-cdn.com/ImageType-100/0128-1/{0460B3DB-57C0-4E24-99EC-7FFD0FAF63D4}img100.jpg>

<http://ra.ocls.ca/ra/login.aspx?inst=conestoga&url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&AN=1512431>

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/macewan-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4851929>

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/norquest-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4851929>

Knowles, Z., Gilbourne, D., Borrie, A., & Nevill, A. (2001). Developing the Reflective Sports Coach: a study exploring the processes of reflective practice within a higher education coaching programme. *Reflective Practice*, 2(2), 185-207. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.derby.ac.uk/10.1080/14623940120071370>