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Abstract

What should professional development of knowledge and skills of academic sport scientists look like? We address this question by first dwelling in what 'being a professional academic' entails. Professionals work methodically, typically specialising their knowledge and skills while strategically planning how to progress their careers, often not rocking the boat of the academic discipline they call home. To gain promotion, they expertly work within predetermined disciplinary boundaries, and are typically adjudged on objectified metrics that demonstrate a 'track record' in meeting professional standards, closely linked to university performance measures. Disciplinisation and performance evaluation becomes an issue, though, when rules, regulations and conventions prevent academics from exploring beyond their disciplinary walls, instead being lulled into *playing the game*. The amateur, in contrast, typically studies for the love of it, enthusiastically embodying their interest as a way of life, maintaining the highest standards of knowing-in-becoming. This passionate exploration is not limited by disciplinary conventions or performance metrics, but by how far they wish to roam through boundaries of knowing. They are, in other words, a *wayfinder*, making their way through life by corresponding with what holds their interest as they go. Never neglecting the *ethos of amateurism*, we contend its potential value for professional development of academic sport scientists, embracing – and perhaps even rekindling – a love of continued learning with and from those we encounter.

Key words: Amateurism, professionalism, sport science, wayfinding, academia, knowledge, skill

Out walking in the frozen swamp one gray day,
I paused and said, 'I will turn back from here.
No, *I will go farther – and we shall see.*'
- Robert Frost, The Wood-Pile

Introduction

"*What is your five-year research plan?*" I (the first author) was asked following the award of my doctorate in sport science. Like most recent doctoral graduates, I had grown a slight boredom with what I had been studying for the last three or so years, so was eager to throw on my hiking boots and begin exploring new landscapes emergent on the horizon. Perhaps this is why when asked such a question, I remember feeling a sense of concern, unease, confinement and anxiety, knowing full well that aphorisms like 'publish or perish' circulated in academic disciplines, including sport science. If to avoid perishing, I had to publish, would I have time to explore – *for the love it* – the various things that jagged my attention? Or perhaps worse, would I even be *allowed* to venture beyond my disciplinary home in the hope of encountering, and weaving together, new knowledge, skills and experiences?

I would later learn that such an aphorism is a professional, academic ideology founded on a neoliberal model of capitalism and marketisation within the modern university (cf. De Rond & Miller, 2005). It should be noted, that it is hard to be overly critical of such a model here, as it is indeed a broader societal reflection more globally. Nonetheless, it is a model that sees colleagues as potential competitors and quantitative performance metrics as ways of evaluating, judging, and holding to account, 'expert work'. Oft-coming at the cost of studying for the love of it, a professional academic's focus typically shifts towards *gaining* things that can be added to a résumé in order to progress their career. This can be a stressful, overly-anxious and hostile environment, particularly for young, professionally-developing academics.

But, is there another way of looking at our engagement with knowledge and skills? Can we support intellectual freedoms of professional development for academic sport scientists – encouraging them to explore beyond the 'already known' of their discipline – potentially leading to genuinely novel, creative, and practically useful insights for the broader (sporting) community?

The aim of our paper is to explore this idea through the notions of professionalism and amateurism in the development of academic sport scientists. To do so, we first explore what professionalism commonly entails within a neoliberal society, and how this perspective runs at odds to the ethos of the amateur, who *studies for the love of it, as a way of life* (Said, 1996). To help us navigate these waters within the modern university, we lean on the sociological arguments of Brint (1994), who distinguishes 'expert professionalism' from 'social trustee professionalism', and Kalfa et al. (2018), who explore the Bourdieusian concept of 'the game', situated as a metaphor for working in the modern university. Then, weaving in the seminal work of Alfonso Montuori, we propose 'creative inquiry' for professional development of academic sport scientists through the approach of transdisciplinarity. This approach to inquiry is situated to take academics in-between, through and beyond disciplinary boundaries (cf. Woods et al., 2021b) – transcending norms and conventions as they go. It pushes back on the *disciplinary siloing* that can blight the quality of work through the pressure of specialisation that accompanies professionalism in the academy. Our arguments encourage developing academic sport scientists to replace the silo with the *tent* (Ingold, 2021), and the impersonality of networking with the relationality of *corresponding* (Ingold, 2013). These ideas on embracing an ethos of amateurism for professionally developing academic sport scientists should not be viewed as utopic, but active and transformative in their intent to foster and preserve the love of studying and the joy of inquiry (Montuori, 2008). After all, if that is not worth at least attempting to preserve in academic scholarship, then what is?

An attitude of professionalism

In a lecture titled *Professionals and Amateurs*, Edward Said (1996) argued that the greatest threat to today's intellectual was an 'attitude of professionalism':

> "By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you *do* for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, *professional behavior* – not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself *marketable* and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and '*objective*'." (p. 74, emphasis added)

The added emphases throughout this excerpt highlight key components of relevance to our paper that require brief commentary. First, Said (1996) notes that the professional separates or divides their work from other parts of their life in a type of *dis*embodiment. In other words, their work expresses a compartmentalised aspect of their identity, as if they are not 'whole' or 'entire' when working. Moreover, according to Said (1996), a professional's work is somewhat predetermined and disciplinised, fitting the convention of what one should look and sound like while in their position, staying on and within a well-defined path, being sure to not 'rock the boat'. The professional seeks to *productify* their performance to make themselves marketable for employment and promotion. This output orientation emerges, perhaps, so that they can rank higher when judged in metric analyses against peers – seen as competitors – or so that they can proclaim their performance objectivity when professing their expertise to those deemed ignorant (Said, 1996).

For Said (1996), this characterisation is fuelled by the pressure of specialisation – in that, the more academically qualified one becomes (i.e., the higher the academic ladder climbed), the narrower and more limited the focus of their area of knowledge. Indeed, this specialisation of knowledge is not necessarily a bad thing and can lead to important discoveries. But it can result in an attitude of *silo-ing*, becoming problematic when one loses sight, becomes blinkered or un-responsive to ideas, methods and insights outside the narrow confines of their 'professional speciality', regardless of their pertinence (Said, 1996). To exemplify, the professional development of academic sport scientists, with

a narrowing specialisation on data analysis, may detach them from synthesis – how data and insights can be (re)interpreted, articulated, applied, integrated and put to use – what it actually means for those (i.e., coaches, practitioners, athletes) in the field.

This detachment risks what Brint (1994) refers to as 'expert professionalism', which is defined as specialised knowledge that has little concern for how it can be collaboratively put to use in order to have a positive impact in the broader community. This narrow approach to professional expertise is at odds to what is referred to as 'social trustee professionalism' (ibid.), where professionals are seen as trusted sharers of public knowledge, carefully weaving it into practically and communally beneficial enterprises. As discussed in detail later, this is a view of professionalism that could help developing academics in sport science maintain both a love of what they study, and a humility that sees them continually learn *with* and *from* others encountered along their journey. The dogma of the 'expert professional', though, perpetuates when the opinions of those outside of the 'specialised few' are seen to mean little, lulling developing academics into following "whatever the so-called leaders in the field will allow" – after all, "*to be an expert* you have to be certified by the *proper* authorities; they *instruct* you in speaking the *right* language, citing the *right* authorities, holding down the *right* territory" (Said, 1996, p. 75, our emphasis). Stated differently, the pressure to specialise for the professionally developing academic is likely to drive a proliferating system that rewards compliance and conformity, where exploration and search are bound by the path dependencies of the discipline within which one is housed.

In the modern university, the pressure to specialise has gone hand-in-glove with the rise of managerialism, performance appraisals and marketisation (Allen-Collinson, 2000; Anderson, 2008; Sparkes, 2021). According to Allen-Collinson (2000), the rise of market-orientation within the university has resulted from cuts of government funding, leading institutions toward putatively 'entrepreneurial' practices. A consequence of this pervasive influence in the modern university is that

129 the personal identity of an academic may be subsumed, rather than allowed to flourish, into the
130 academic organisation's way of being.

131 It should be noted, that it is not our intention to criticise entrepreneurism in the university, as such
132 practices can be truly supportive of academic freedoms. But when coupled with the worst tendencies
133 of managerialism, they can perpetuate performance evaluations, coupled with compliance and 'box-
134 ticking', relative to standard, university-wide, metrics (Anderson, 2008; Sparkes, 2021). This is a
135 concern because Kallio et al. (2016) noted that the rise of 'objective'[1] performance appraisals in the
136 university has led to the emergence of a 'new academia', one where colleagues become competitors
137 and performance evaluations the organisational tools of comparison. In such an environment, rooted
138 in a 'culture of audits' (see Sparkes, 2021), academics are inadvertently lulled into expressing their
139 speciality by *playing the game*, or risk being left on the bench!

140 Indeed, this Bourdieusian concept of 'the game' has recently been explored in the university by Kalfa
141 et al. (2018), who uncovered the particular pressures that developing, early career academics feel
142 when starting their journey in academia. Specifically, it was noted that many quickly focus on 'playing
143 the game', accruing as much (performance outcome) capital within the university, as fast as they can
144 – manifest in focusing exclusively on publication quantity, chasing high teaching scores and
145 evaluations (despite being widely accepted as misguided assessments of teaching quality (see
146 Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)) and submitting many applications for grant funding. This is because their
147 academic performance is judged on such tabulated metrics, being ranked against colleagues in order
148 to progress their career. There is a significant risk to intellectual autonomy through such blunt
149 statistical distractions – with (inter- and intra-) university metrics quickly becoming what developing
150 academics focus on (De Rond & Miller, 2005; Kalfa et al., 2018). This focus is likely to contrast with the

[1] While not elaborated on further, we wish to note that the myth of objective evaluation is an operationalisation of an idealised way of conceiving performance (see, Hammond, 1996). It is not neutral, nor objective. The illusion of objectivity is detrimental because it does not instigate change or improvement. Rather, it accepts a biased view of performance to be the optimal view. But optimisation is always relative to a given definition and the rules that operationalise such definition.

development of collegiality, the joy of inquiry, collaboration, exchange and debate, the embracement of challenge and uncertainty, and the excitement of 'finding out'; things which – to us at least – should be at the 'beating heart' of a developing academic scholarship (also see Montuori, 2008, 2011). Do not misinterpret us here: there is a limited place for carefully-considered performance metrics in modern universities as guidelines, not used as blunt measures, like (inter- and intra-institutional) league tables so often pored over by managers. As an aside, we do wonder how many 'professional development training programs' embedded in modern research universities and institutes support the development of the latter (i.e., collegiate debate, collaboration and exploration) with the equivalence of the former (i.e., how to write for grant applications or journal article requirements). Undoubtedly, the former is an important aspect of professional development in academia, but as poignantly highlighted by Evans (2012, p. 426), professional development of academics "is not only about making researchers better at researching", but about shaping a culture of improvement through inclusivity, supporting academic freedoms in research and practice.

What we have argued thus far does seem to be a rather pessimistic view of professional development of academic sport scientists. Our intent, though, is the counter – to find and emphasise an optimistic way forward. A way that sees developing academic sport scientists wrestle back some of the key elements of Brint's (1994) notion of social trusteeship and have a positive influence on community practice at all levels of sports participation. Perhaps in searching for such an optimistic way forward, we can even start to alleviate some of the pressures of having to play the game in the hope of 'getting ahead', while preserving the joy of, and love for, inquiry. What we now go onto propose, is that this optimism may sit at the core of what is a seemingly counterintuitive ethos to that of professional, academic behaviour.

An ethos of amateurism

Said (1996) proposes that the ethos of amateurism can mitigate pressures of professionalism for the academic – an ethos defined as:

> "[…] the desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by love for an unquenchable interest in the larger picture, *in making connections across lines and barriers*, in refusing to be tied down to a speciality, in *caring for* ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession." (p. 75, our emphasis)

It is worth noting that this view of amateurism is at odds with its more contemporary interpretations. Such perspectives tend to view the amateur as lower in status than the professional – labelled 'hobbyists' or 'dabblers' – engaging in activity as a pastime, not like their expert counterparts who do so professionally (Alberti, 2001). But as emphasised in Said's excerpt above, the amateur (from the Latin verb *amare*, which means *to love*) is far from the hobbyist they are often portrayed as being. For example, the amateur is one who actively researches for the love it, focusing on the topic(s) that holds their curiosity, not just on the professional metrics that objectify it. The amateur follows their interests where they lead them, transiting through disciplinary boundaries, as they are not tied to paradigmatic ways of being and doing that risk over-constraining the search and exploration of the professional. This means they have a deep care and longingness for what holds their interest, humbly professing an uncertainty about the world, but with an unceasing desire to go further (cf. Ingold, 2021). In other words, they follow what Montuori (2011, p. 834, emphasis added) refers to as an "epistemology of *not*-knowing".

Because of this, the amateur studies with all of what they are – *it embodies them* – it is not just what they study *about* for fulfilling a job or pre-determined metrics (Said, 1996). For example, Masschelein and Simons (2013) recount that amateurs often lose track of time while corresponding with their interest. They do so because their interest forever draws them into a presence in the present (Masschelein & Simons, 2013), grounding them in actively attending to what they are seeing, hearing, feeling, or tasting, not what they should be looking at, sounding like, or acting as. A timely example of this in sport and physical activity reflects the differences between a child who *plays* neighbourhood football with their friends – *for the love it* – strongly identifying with the co-designing of rules,

diversification of teams, bringing their own, customized footballs to 'pop up' games, having to be reminded to return home after having been out playing all day. Contrast this with a child who *goes to* formalized – *professionalised* – football training sessions between defined hours, being co-opted into the 'routinized trappings' that accompany the formalisation and commodification of children's play, such as being instructed to wear an exclusive uniform, comply with established organisational identities and conventions, and rehearse ideological ways that the game 'should' be played, perhaps established by a national syllabus in order to standardise (or professionalise) practice in compliance with a pre-determined cultural identity (for empirical examples, see Rothwell et al. (2018) and Keeler and Wright (2013)).

For these reasons, Said (1996) argues that the university scholar of today ought to embrace an *ethos of amateurism*. In doing so, they can "transform the merely professional routine most of us go through into something much more lively and radical; instead of doing what one is supposed to do one can ask *why* one does, *who* benefits from it, *how* can it reconnect with a personal project and original thoughts" (p. 83, emphasis added). As we now go onto discuss, the ethos of the amateur resonates with an approach to inquiry captured by *transdisciplinarity*. Thus, in searching for ways to preserve and stimulate the ethos of amateurism coupled with a social trusteeship for professional development of academic sport scientists, transdisciplinary inquiry could be a good place to start.

In-between, through and beyond discipline boundaries

The creative inquirer

Differing to inter- and multi-[2], transdisciplinarity is a creative approach to scientific inquiry that takes academics *in-between*, *through* and *beyond* disciplinary boundaries (McGregor, 2015; Woods et al., 2021b). While still a fledging approach to inquiry within sport science (cf. Vaughan et al., 2019; Toohey et al., 2018; Woods et al., 2021b), it is flourishing elsewhere, helping researchers in tackling large,

[2] While not dwelling on these differences here, interested readers could consult the work of Songca (2007) for a more detailed differentiation between these approaches.

complex – *wicked* – challenges (Bouma, 2015; Herrero et al., 2019). Alfonso Montuori (2019), a pioneer of creative inquiry framed through transdisciplinarity, suggests that it is an approach synonymous with 'weaving', where academics detect and then knot together pertinent sources information (i.e., lines of inquiry) from various landscapes to view a topic complexly. From this perspective, 'trans' can be understood in a transitory way, as the academic moves with their interests, carefully attending and selectively responding to where it leads them, enriching and growing their knowledge *of* (note, not just *about*) a topic as they go. The knowledge of the transiting academic, then, grows into an unbound and ever-forming *meshwork* of ideas and inquiries (Ingold, 2007, 2011, Woods, 2021), entangled by what captures their interest. This means that knowledge growth is not accumulative or bounded, but *narrational* and *ongoing*, extending for as far as the academic seeks to roam, occurring "in the passage from place to place and the changing horizons along the way" (Ingold, 2000, p. 227).

This disciplinary transcendence is important for professional development of academic sport scientists because it encourages them to broaden their paradigmatic assumptions. This stimulus pushes back on what Said (1996) recounts within the attitude of professionalism, which is that developing academics can get (informally and formally) coerced into following what 'the experts' say is 'the' way of doing, often at the expense of attending to what others – outside of the 'specialised few' – may have to say. There are signs of such 'expert' blinkering in the sport sciences, with Fullagar et al. (2019) recently highlighting a gap between research questions designed by academics and the needs of coaches and other practitioners in the field, leading the production of research that lacks applicability. Indeed, this is not to dismiss the significance of disciplinary specialists within sports science, but to recognise that there are other ways of being and doing that are yet to be encountered, ways that could enrich the discipline one is in (Montuori, 2005). In other words, for the transdisciplinary academic, disciplinary specialists could be viewed as *guides to*, not *gatekeepers of*, knowledge, skills and various experiences.

Weaving together the cornerstones of transdisciplinarity and the ethos of the amateur

These propositions are surmised by Montuori (2005 – 2019) within what is referred to as the *cornerstones of transdisciplinarity*. While others have elaborated on these cornerstones and their application in the sport sciences elsewhere (see Woods et al., 2021b), they are important to briefly emphasise here given their alignment with Said's (1996) ethos of the amateur. First, transdisciplinarity is inquiry, not disciplinary, based. This means that questions emerge through continued correspondence with a *topic*, which may not be housed to a specific disciplinary norm. In other words, an inquiry-based approach pushes against what Montuori (2008) refers to as 'reproductive education' – where a developing academic simply seeks to reproduce an established body of knowledge in order to compliantly 'fit' within a defined disciplinary boundary[3]. An interest in performance preparation, for example, may take a professionally developing academic sport scientist through many disciplines – following their inquiry, not 'a' disciplinary way of being or doing *per se*. This, though, does not lessen the importance of learning disciplinary ways of doing (i.e., methods or concepts), but rather encourages the developing academic to venture *beyond* them, which is an integral part of many contemporary theories of performance preparation and athlete development (e.g. O'Sullivan et al., 2021; Woods et al., 2021a).

Second, transdisciplinarity adopts a complex systems perspective, which counters the traditional, disjunctive, reductive and linear thinking that both Montuori (2005) and Said (1996) argue is common to disciplinary specialisation that accompanies professionalism (also see Morin, 2008). Appreciating this, the professionally developing academic sport scientist with an interest in performance preparation would likely root their inquiry within a theoretical framework that draws on a *plurality* of disciplines and knowledge sources to empirically investigate the phenomenon (for an example of this, see Rothwell et al., 2020). Third, transdisciplinarity includes the academic in the inquiry (through means of participant observation); it does not seek to expel them from it in the hope of maintaining

[3] Capturing this sentiment eloquently, Michael Foucault, cited in Plumwood (2009), stated, "endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimising what is already known".

objectivity. In striving for embeddedness, the academic can attempt to remain 'in touch' with their inquiry (preserving its contextuality), countering the detachment that typically characterises what Brint (1994) calls 'expert professionalism'. Moreover, by being embedded in their inquiry, the academic can learn to continually attend and selectively respond to it, getting to know it more intimately. This relational knowledge of one's inquiry aligns with Said's (1996) characterisation of the amateur's ethos – one who studies *for the love it*, *as a way of life*. In other words, when they study, they are whole, they put all they are into it; the transdisciplinary academic is not just passively describing or documenting what has occurred through a vertical integration of knowledge (cf. Ingold, 2011), but actively transforming *with* what they directly seek, experience and discover. This approach requires careful reflection by the academic, routinely considering what or who is shaping the way they are approaching the inquiry (Montuori, 2013).

Last, given its transitory nature, transdisciplinarity is trans-paradigmatic, not intra-paradigmatic. This perspective liberates academics from the (perhaps unseen) confines of their discipline, encouraging them to push back on conformist ways of doing by constantly questioning why things are the way they are (Montuori, 2013). Such research in sports skill acquisition, for example, has taken researchers into a variety of complementary disciplinary paradigms – from social anthropology (Woods et al., 2021a), to ecological psychology (Araújo, Davids & Hristovski, 2006), and dynamical systems theory (Davids, 2012); each adding new, integrative, unique and significantly richer insights than before. This approach, however, raises an important question for our current paper – what is the role of the discipline with regards to transdisciplinarity for professional development of academic sport scientists?

Wayfinding tent dwellers

Indeed, transdisciplinary inquiry does call for considerable blurring and even transcendence of disciplinary lines and boundaries (Mahan, 1970). It would be a mistake, though, to think that the discipline does not have a role within trans*disciplinarity*. To clarify, it is a role that should not constrain

297 or limit one's search, but rather, start and stimulate it (Montuori, 2019). Ecological economist, Robert
298 Costanza (2003, p. 655), metaphorically surmised this notion rather eloquently when proposing a
299 future vision of science, rooted in transdisciplinarity:

300 > "In the future, disciplinary boundaries will be as porous as many state and national boundaries are
301 > today. Likewise, one's disciplinary background will be noted much as one's place of birth is noted
302 > today – an interesting fact about one's path through life, but not a central defining characteristic."

303 This proposition is deeply rooted within a core profession of transdisciplinarity, which is a humble
304 appreciation of *not* knowing (Montuori, 2008), and an unceasing desire to 'find out' (Montuori, 2019).
305 Stated differently, the goal of transdisciplinary inquiry is not about reaching a terminus destination
306 seen from the start – an end point, a definitive solution, an all-knowing vantage – but about
307 uncovering entanglements, more *related* lines of inquiry to follow on with. This process appreciates
308 that the phenomenal world is not fixed and ready-made, broken and categorised into pieces,
309 locations, objects and *disciplines*, simply waiting to be known *about*. Rather, the world and its
310 inhabitants, are deeply entangled, related and forever *becoming-with* (Haraway, 2016; Ingold, 2015).
311 In other words, every*thing* is on its way to becoming some*thing* else – professionally developing
312 academics included! Henri Poincaré, emphasised this eloquently, in stating that "the aim of science is
313 not things themselves […] but the *relations* among things" (1905, p. xxiv). Extending this perspective,
314 we weave in the words of the eminent anthropologist Tim Ingold, who in discussing the relational
315 constitution of being alive to the world, declared that "things *are* their relations" (2011, p. 70,
316 emphasis in original).

317 *The humility of not knowing… but an unceasing desire to search*

318 The epistemology of *not* knowing, underpinning transdisciplinary inquiry, captures the humility of the
319 amateur's ethos in a way that Ingold (2021) refers to as 'imposter syndrome'. Its symptoms, according
320 to Ingold (2021), are detected in the feeling of being totally underqualified to speak on matters that
321 you are *supposed* to be authoritative about. Indeed, we (the authors of this paper) have all been

diagnosed with such a syndrome at various stages of our lives. It is, though, nothing to be ashamed of, as the syndrome is associated with the rise of 'expert professionalism' – where the pressure to specialise for the academic sees them claim for a (false) certainty about the world (Ingold, 2021). The real imposter, then, is perhaps the one who professes to 'know it all', closed off to what the world and its inhabitants – outside of their discipline – can share with them. This is because the discipline, for the detached expert, is akin to a *silo* (Ingold, 2021) – housing all they need to know in order to profess their certainty about the world. The walls of these silos – that is, the boundary markings between disciplines – become thicker with the ever-increasing pressures placed on academics to specialise (Said, 1996). The disciplinary landscape can become a hostile environment, with the pressure of exclusivity and specialisation seeing academics claim and defend their turf from 'outside attacks', rather than welcoming 'interjections' (Montuori, 2008). This is apparent in sport science by academic journals that clearly define the work that is 'allowed' to be published there (defined as 'within the disciplinary scope'), along with how works 'should' be formally written and presented.

As we have emphasised, though, the amateur does not feel such pressures – instead, relishing the freedom to roam as far as their interests take them. The role of the discipline within transdisciplinarity, then, is one akin to a *tent*, not a silo (see Ingold, 2021). Indeed, a professionally developing academic sport scientist needs time and a shelter to gather their thoughts, record their ideas and to note their observations, which the 'tent-as-discipline' affords. Further, given the transitory undertones of transdisciplinarity, the tent can be easily packed up, and the professionally developing academic sport scientist can set out again, following what has jagged their attention (cf. Ingold, 2021). An important feature of the tent, in this respect, is that it is *pitched in the ground* – meaning that the academic never loses touch with their inquiry, as they are (figuratively) grounded in it. This is important for professional development of academic sport scientists, as it encourages them to maintain regular *correspondence* with various sources of experiential and empirical knowledge – i.e., from coaches, athletes and other support staff in the field, to perhaps social anthropologists and ecological psychologists in completely different landscapes! More than a professional life dedicated to models

or theories, data or their treatment, sport scientists would benefit from a robust correspondence with reality (the phenomena of sport performance and preparation). This process of correspondence would be impactful on the nature of experiential and empirical knowledge.

While Montuori (2008) refers to transdisciplinary scholars as 'detectives' or 'investigators', to us, they are better understood as *wayfinders* (see Woods et al., 2020), who although professing a humble uncertainty about the world, never stop searching to know what it is that captures their attention and directs their making. Given the tenets of transdisciplinarity, their expertise, if anything, sits within their attentiveness in seeking out pertinent sources of information to be *woven* together while taking refuge within their tent. Such an itinerant is, in other words, the "connoisseur of loose ends" (Ingold, 2021. p. 165).

Entangled lines of correspondence

Indeed, follow up advice to being asked about my (the first author) five-year research plan mentioned in the introduction, was to *"expand your 'network'"* – since, according to the proverb, "it is not what you know, *but who you know*!" To us, this is a rather shallow and impersonal view of engaging with people, and perhaps another manifestation of the rising market-orientation within the university (Kalfa et al., 2018). For example, similar to teaching evaluations, publications and grant funding, the sentiment of 'networking' appears to be about gaining capital (Ingold, 2021) – social capital in this instance – simply playing the game just to get ahead professionally.

This proposition, by no means, implies that collaborative engagement with people should not be a priority for professional development of academic sport scientists. After all, "inquiry always occurs with others, whether they are physically present or not, with predecessors in different times and spaces, with our friends and foes who have approached a subject we are interested in" (Montuori, 2008, p. 18). Our contention, though, is that this engagement should not be driven by a shallow agenda of gaining social capital through the addition of names to joint publications, a curriculum vitae or followers to various social media platforms and accounts. But about a *genuine, response-able*

relationship, deeply woven through sharing a common interest in studying a topic for the love it. This latter description of engagement is precisely what is meant when we refer to 'corresponding' throughout this paper (also see Ingold, 2013). Specifically, by corresponding, we mean actively participating with the ideas of others we encounter – not in the sense of reaching a fixed point, but in the sense of growing knowledge, of *carrying on* in a unique direction, together (Ingold, 2013, 2020, Woods, 2021). Corresponding, then, is open-ended and emergent, as through its responsivity, new knowledge can continually arise. This means that to correspond, one has to attend and be open to things (i.e., people, places, substances, and events) as they are, and *respond* to what these things have to say with care, sensitivity, and humility. "To correspond with the world", says Ingold (2013, p. 108), "is not to describe it, or to represent it, but to *answer to it*" (emphasis in original).

For professional development of academic sport scientists, relationality encourages an appreciation that we have as much to learn *from* and *with* coaches, athletes, other support staff – and indeed disciplinary expert specialists – as we would each have to learn *from* and *with* the professionally developing academic. The reciprocity of learning emphasises the deeply relational undertones of correspondence, resonating with Said's (1996) descriptions of the amateur, who *cares* for ideas regardless of the profession. Further, it aligns with Brint's (1994) descriptions of social trusteeship, where *collaboration* is central to the sharing of public knowledge for the greater good. Stated differently, as the wayfinding tent dweller transits in-between, through and beyond disciplinary boundaries, they accumulate not a dotted network of names and second-hand experiences, but *grow a meshwork of entangled lines of correspondence, knotted together by a shared love of what captures their interest.*

Concluding remarks

Here, we sought to explore some implications of an ethos of amateurism for professional development of academic sport scientists. Leaning on the work of Said (1996) and Brint (1994), we first contrasted two views of professionalism – a detached expertise, and a social trusteeship. In

arguing for the benefits of the latter, we discussed the value of creative inquiry through the approach of transdisciplinarity for professional development of academic sport scientists. Leaning on key ideas from Montuori, it was contended that this approach could free academic sport scientists from the disciplinary confines that can be built around them, given the pressure to specialise within organisations (i.e., universities, sporting clubs, and academies). Our philosophical argument led us to conceptualise the discipline of sport science not as a silo but as a tent (cf. Ingold, 2021), and the academic not as a specialist but as a wayfinder – unceasing in their journey to weave together loose ends that jag their attention. Thus, this paper could be seen as a manifestation of its very message, in that by following various inquiries rooted in the topic of professional development of academic sport scientists, it wove together key works from a humanist, sociologists, a creative inquirer, and an anthropologist. What 'discipline', then, would this paper call home?

Indeed, the challenges of managerialism, the pressures of 'playing the game', and the 'researching straight jacket' that many academics are often forced to wear within the modern neoliberal university, are deeply rooted issues that this paper does not claim, nor seek, to resolve. They need to be challenged on both philosophical and systemic fronts, both theoretically and pragmatically. It would be naïve, though, for us to not acknowledge the immense difficulties academics – especially early career academics – face when universities continue to judge performance on abstracted (inter- and intra-institutional) metrics intended to denote 'productivity'. Indeed, we – the authors of this paper – are research academics who regularly feel such pressures. Moreover, the structure of the modern university is not often supportive of deeply collaborative – transdisciplinary – research that transcends the discipline, instead compartmentalising academics into sub-disciplinary departments with areas of supposed speciality. And, according to our experiences in the peer review process, neither are some journals, who continue to call for highly disciplinised, authoritative research despite the growing calls from the field for deeply integrated scientific support to address some of sports most pervasive problems (cf. Toohey et al., 2018; Vaughan et al., 2019). Recognising such real limitations, though, should not make our paper seem utopian, nor contradictory. Rather, it means that we appreciate that

there is an unfortunate inevitability in having to play the game at various levels until this change occurs. But first, another way of looking at things needs to be signalled if change is going to emerge. Perhaps a paper such as this, then, could offer sport science with a (small) step required to incur such a large systemic change – encouraging people to rekindle an ethos that can be crucial for *all* – from professionally developing to senior academic sport scientists. What is not to admire about studying for the love of it, as a way of life? Is that not the reason we stumbled into academia anyway? An ethos of amateurism, when coupled with a view of professionalism framed through social trusteeship, should, thus, be seen as being active in its intent to positively transform lives at both individual and societal scales.

If, like suggested earlier, corresponding with the world is about answering to its infinitely variegated ebbs and flows, could it not be argued that life is a question we are *all* posed? Indeed, this would imply that life is lived in an ongoing search; a search that has no end, but that carries on. For if there was an end – a final solution; a boundary; an answer – then, contradictory to Robert Frost's poem with which we opened, we would stop in the frozen swamp one gray day, *but there would be nowhere farther to see*. Perhaps, then, it is on the journey – not the destination (i.e., citation numbers, H-indexes, pools of grant funding, teaching evaluations) – for which we should focus when seeking to support the development of academic sport scientists? Although speaking about the reader of poetry, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, we feel, would agree:

> "The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, not by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution, but by the *pleasurable activity of the journey itself*" (cited in Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 3-4; emphasis added)

Thus, in following Coleridge, we hope to have encouraged readers of our work to preserve their amateurish love of study and joy of inquiry – whatever their topic of interest. Of searching for answers, but just uncovering more questions – more loose ends – and being comfortable with that *un*comfortability. If we are to take this proposition seriously in the development of academic sport

scientists, then perhaps instead of asking "*what is your five-year research plan?*", it would be more apt to ask, "*what is the inquiry that interests you now, and what loose ends are you off to explore next….?*"

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