More-than-human agency on the Pacific Ocean
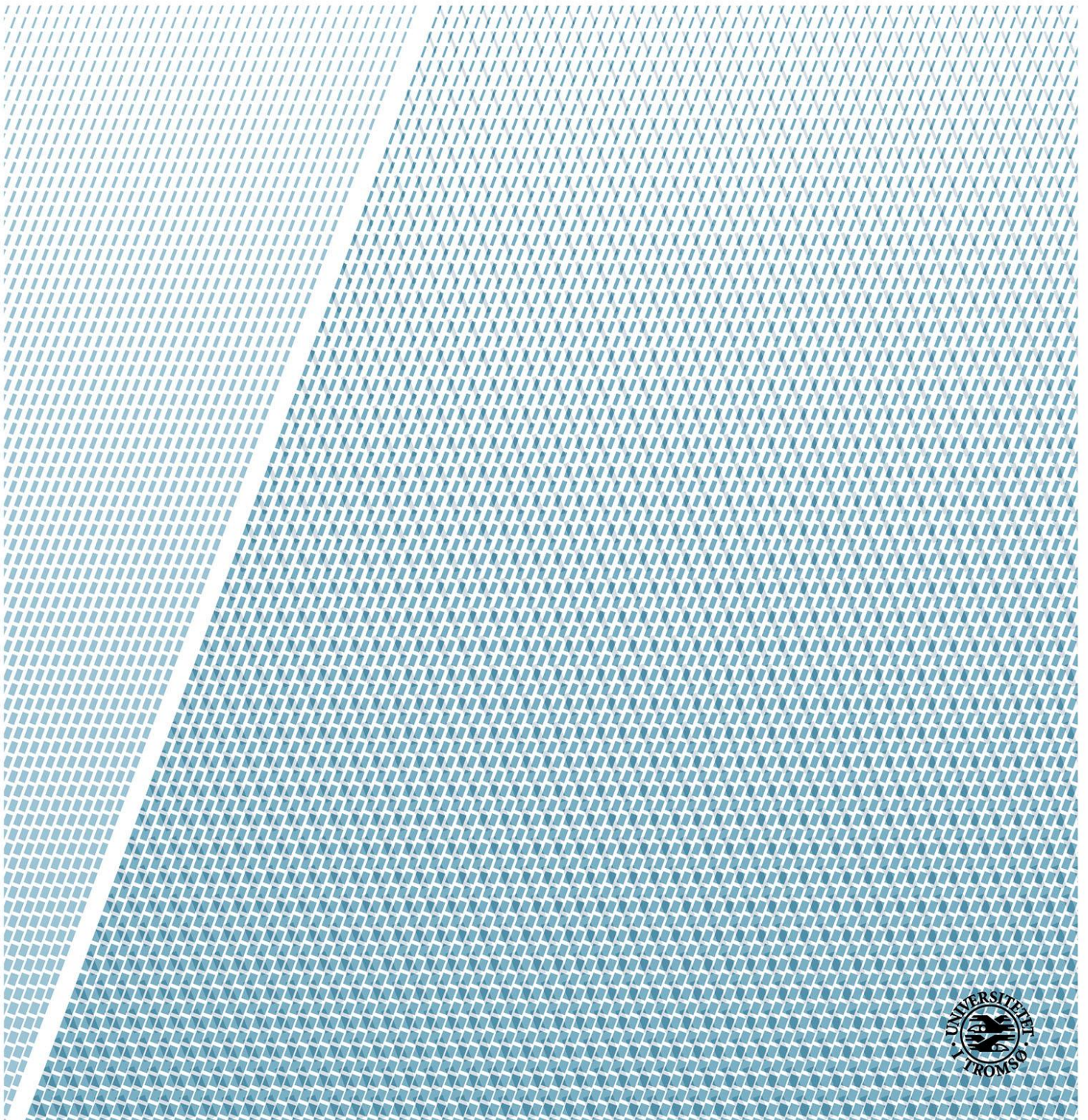
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List of Abbreviations:

OOE: One Ocean Expedition

SDGs: Sustainable Tourism Goals

UN: United Nations

USP: The University of the South Pacific

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Abstract

This master's thesis explores more-than-human agencies on the Pacific Ocean. Currently, tourism research is insufficient to address complex sustainability and environmental challenges and needs new narratives to do its part in tackling these issues. The aim of this master's thesis project was to gain new tourism narratives and to create tourism knowledge through an approach where humans are de-centered and the more-than-human agency is recognized. The focus was on the entangled and complex relationship between humans and the ocean during a four-month-long Pacific Ocean crossing from Chile to Palau on a Norwegian tall ship, *Statsraad Lehmkuhl*, in 2022. During the voyage, 86 international students from interdisciplinary backgrounds participated in a sustainability course *(SDG200)* organized by the University of Bergen. This research project was conducted through an ethnographic approach with additional qualitative interviews and document study. The variety of ways in which the ocean and human co-existence can produce different tourism realities and narratives regarding sustainability and climate change in the era of the Anthropocene was explored. The additional focus was on learning from a Pacific worldview and the connection Pacific Islanders have for nature. The research discovered how spending extensive time surrounding nothing but the vast Pacific while actively co-creating the journey with non-human actors influenced the way the students comprehend their connection with the ocean.

Keywords: More-than-human agency, Pacific Ocean, Tourism, Anthropocene, Sustainable development, Talanoa

1   Introduction

1.1   Setting sail

I have always felt deep affection for the sea, even though it was not a prominent part of my early life. My childhood summers were filled with bike rides to nearby lakes and mid sun dives into their crystal-clear lake waters, instead of spending them on a seaside. See, I grew up surrounded by lakes in southern Finland, the country of thousand lakes. Consequently, my connectedness to the sea is rather peculiar. The sea and the ocean always had air of mystery and adventure in them. Being far in distance, and rarely encountered, the idea of such a vast and unknown seemed exotic and even a tad thrilling. Experiencing the ocean, seeing it, being close to it, and feeling its presence always entailed travel. To this day, for me the ocean remains intertwined with the idea of travel and exploration. Later in life, my appreciation for the ocean grew even deeper through my love for diving, surfing, and sailing. Over the past decade, as I have immersed myself in the tourism industry, I learned that the ocean is a valuable resource as a key selling point for many destinations and tourism activities. It serves, not only as a of transportation; but also provides variety of activities, an escape from everyday life, adventure, and encounters with the underwater realm. There is no denying the vital role that the ocean plays in making tourism realities (Hall, 2001).

Diving, surfing, and sailing have taken me to many wonderful destinations over the years and deepened my love for the life near and under the sea. During my time as a travel agent in Australia, I got a crash course on how the tourism industry depends on various ocean-related-activities. I enthusiastically recommended surf camps for backpackers dreaming of the surf lifestyle and sailing excursions as the ultimate means to explore the exquisite tropical islands. Furthermore, I contributed my part to the overflow of tourists at the Great Barrier Reef by selling countless excursions to snorkel at the stunning coral reef. Of course, everyone should snorkel at the Greta Barrier Reef, I thought! It was important for me to ensure that each customer would experience the dying reef before it was too late. It brought me joy to know that my customers would be able to see the underwater world. It brought me even more joy to sell the product with the best commission; always the same reef, the same sailboat, the same experience for everyone. From a travel agent's perspective, that is how the industry worked at

the time. In the current time, after Covid-19, the industry is still internalizing an unsustainable growth-driven mindset (Holden et al., 2022).

Prior, I also had the opportunity to experience tourism from a different perspective, by living and volunteering on one of the very charter boats I would later promote excursions for. It was a true privilege to call the ocean my home, to awaken each morning to the soothing sound of waves caressing the boat and to the scent of the salt in the air. I would snorkel alongside the guest, sharing their wonder of the reef, which, for that brief time, became my office in a sense. These experiences profoundly shaped my perception of affection for and sense of responsibility towards the ocean. These experiences from my past motivated me to pursue a master's degree in Tourism in Northern Norway, which, furthermore, opened an opportunity to participate on an undergraduate summer sustainability course (*SDG200 - Ocean-Climate-Society*) organized by the University of Bergen.

The SDG200 course (May-August 2022) took place on board of a traditional tall ship Statsraad Lehmkuhl sailing across the Pacific Ocean from Valparaiso, Chile to Palau as part of One Ocean Expedition (*OOE*). The OOE, a twenty-month long circumnavigation of the globe with the aim to share knowledge and create awareness about the important role the ocean plays in sustainable development on a global sphere. The OOE is recognized as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for sustainable development. The expedition was completed in April 2023, when Statsraad Lehmkuhl returned safely to home to Bergen, Norway. The homecoming was celebrated with a welcoming and cheering crowd of locals and visitors around the world as well as with a visit from His Majesty King Harald of Norway, and speeches from Mayor of Bergen Linn Kristin and UN special Envoy for the Sea Peter Thomson. The end of the twenty-month-long expedition marked a start for an international event called One Ocean Week, a conference on sustainability and the ocean. The high attention from politicians, nation leaders, and international diplomats throughout the expedition helped in raising much needed awareness about the importance of the ocean for our common, sustainable future. The fundamental message OOE aspired to share was that the world is united with one ocean. Even though regional seas and the environmental threats, as well as human actions in those regional areas vary, the global ocean still unites the world. It enables the world to share a common future (One Ocean Expedition, n.d.).

Statsraad Lehmkuhl, the three-masted steel barque was built in 1914 as a training ship for the German merchant fleet. At the age of 108, with the length of 98 meters and with a mast reaching 48 meters above waterline the ship is one of the oldest and largest operational sailing ships in the world. As a typical German fashioned way, the ship was built with the best technology and expertise of the time. Already from the start it was equipped with electric light, wireless telegraph and with a diesel engine, making her the first training ship in the world to have one (Statsraad Lehmkuhl, n.d.). Today, the ship is equipped with state-of-the-art research equipment and instrument to collect data such as CO_2, eDNA, micro-plastic, ocean acidification, water temperature, wave heights, and ocean sounds. Furthermore, the goal for the ship is in the long run to become completely self-sufficient with electricity. In 2019 a battery was installed on board and due to this pioneering innovation Lehmkuhl is the world's most environmentally friendly sailing vessel (One Ocean Expedition, n.d.). The circumnavigation took Lehmkuhl to 36 different ports around the world, building up to 55 000 nautical miles. The purpose behind One Ocean Expedition was to showcase the global ocean as a uniting matter. While regional seas all display some distinct traits, the scale of environmental challenges and human activities in those regions can differ. Nevertheless, the one, global ocean unites all beings (One Ocean Expedition, n.d.); both human and non-human. Moreover, universally shared challenges such as climate change and ocean acidification impact each corner of the ocean, which is precisely why traversing across the "One Ocean" with environmentally sustained sailing ship designed to demand active collaboration from all participants (human and nonhuman), was apt way to emphasize the sustainability challenges and the pivotal role the ocean plays in global sustainability. Through one ocean the world (human and nonhuman) can work toward common sustainable future (One Ocean Expedition, n.d.).

The Anthropocene is characterized as an era, or a geological epoch, in which humans are pursuing to master nature by recklessly exploiting and toying with their superiority (Haraway et al., 2016, p. 535; Steffen et al. 2011, p. 850). The human action has negatively impacted planet Earth and planetary boundaries by harmfully contributing to a change in the Earth system (Salmela & Valtonen, 2019, p. 18; Haraway, 2015, p159).

The tourism industry plays a significant part in impacting the environmental challenges, such as climate change (Hall, 2018; Holden et al., 2022). During the Anthropocene, there has been a noticeable shift in the relationship between humans and their environment (Steffen et al., 2011, p. 843). This highlights the complexity and interconnectedness of the human-nature relationship (Hall, 2018; Holden et al., 2022). Furthermore, Holden et al. (2022), emphasize how human actions, including tourism have had damaging impact on nature. The primary considerations among tourism scholars have revolved around core challenges, such as limitations of technology in compensating and reducing emissions, the slow progress in decarbonizing the tourism sector and the challenges in mobilizing larger tourist populations to respond to climate change, and the lack of consensus among tourism leaders and management (Holden et al., 2022).

The growth in the tourism industry during the past decade has made it one of the foremost geophysical forces shaping Earth for human ambition (Holden et al., 2022, p.424). While deeply contributing to the effects of climate change and the changes in biodiversity, the tourism sector is also heavily affected by the climate crises the world is facing (Höckert et al., 2022; Holden et al., 2022). Assessing the impacts of tourism on climate change can be challenging because it stresses the moments of the collision between nature and humans, establishing a clear division between the human and the non-human, the nature and culture, and addressing them as two different entities. This type of thinking separates humans from nature. Tourism is made through collaboration between various actors and materiality and is a co-creational process (Ren et al., 2018). Thus, nature, landscapes, or the ocean are not just a matter that impacts tourism and vice versa, but rather an entangled, more-than-human relation that co-produces tourism (Nadegger, 2023, p. 3). Moreover, tourism is essential in helping people understand themselves, others, and the complex and layered relationships between humankind and non-humankind (Jamal & Robinson, 2009). Hence, the Anthropocene indeed underlines the way realities are produced by nature and humans' co-existence and collaboration (Höckert et al., 2022). With the interdependent relationship between tourism and nature in "the horrors of the Anthropocene" (Haraway, 2016, p. 3), I wonder what kind of future can tourism have?

Despite tourism's fundamentally prominent relationship with the natural environment, non-human voices still lack popularity in tourism research, where more Western and anthropocentric

qualitative methods are domineering (Chakraborty, 2021; Ren, 2021). The philosophical grounds in tourism have remained underdeveloped, and by moving away from dominant anthropocentric thinking, new ways to view the world open. Thus, to further develop tourism, new perspectives and paradigms are needed (Pritchard et al., 2011, p. 943). Hence, there is a need for recognition of the complex relationship between humans and non-humans. Thus, new tools to acknowledge and support the numerous ways in which non-human actors communicate and engage in the creation and distribution of knowledge are crucial for tourism discipline (Höckert et al., 2022; Rantala et al., 2020). Currently, tourism research is insufficient to address complex sustainability challenges. It lacks a more fluid and theoretical approach that could challenge dominating anthropocentric views, where the human experience remains central (Chakraborty, 2021, p. 2). Primarily, tourism studies regarding the Anthropocene have focused on climate change and carbon-neutral tourism through mitigation and adaptation strategies (Holden et al., 2022, p.432; Gössling et al., 2010). However, in recent years, there has been growing interest in a shift in the way tourism studies view anthropocentric issues and to acknowledge collaborative production of tourism knowledge that goes beyond viewing humans solely as knowledge creators (Rantala et al., 2020; Ren, 2021; Ren et al., 2018; Jóhannesson, 2015).

By de-centering human experience, new ways to understand and imagine tourism through human-nature interdependence becomes accessible. This shift requires a theoretical framework to re-articulate the interconnectedness of tourism and the Anthropocene, emphasizing the relationship between tourism and the Earth. It allows for a deeper connection between tourism and the natural world, providing a more holistic understanding of tourism and its impact (Ren, 2021, p.135). Recently, there has been an expanding interest in highlighting the significance of collaborative production of tourism knowledge that goes beyond viewing humans solely as knowledge creators. Rather than viewing humans and nonhumans as two separate entities, all matter has agency in an ongoing wording process. The making of tourism realities is viewed from a position where the human is decentred. Examples of such studies include proximity tourism (Rantala et al., 2020), human and dog encounters through Arctic dog sledding (Nyman, 2021), and Tourism through living with mosquitos (Valtonen et al., 2020).

My interest lays in the sea. Since, the ocean is an ever-flowing reality (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 55), a is a flow of connections and becomings, it fits well into the discussion about co-creational

knowledge creation. It is a matter that holds interconnectedness, fluidity, and transformative qualities (Steinberg & Peters, 2015, p. 248). In this thesis, I will treat the ocean as a companion (Haraway, 2008) through a journey across the Pacific. Afterall, it had active role in our journey. By thinking of a nonhuman as a companion, allows humans to become intertwined with the ocean (Haraway, 2016, Valtonen & Pullen, 2020, p. 509). But why is it important to acknowledge human - ocean connection? What is meant with this connection and how is it relevant for tourism studies?

In this thesis I narrate my experience on the voyage, how spending four months on the Pacific Ocean influenced my understanding of human - ocean connection and what kind of agency the ship Statsraad Lehmkuhl and the ocean had in the journey across the Pacific Ocean. I approach the human ocean relationship through a posthumanism and feminist new materialist thinking. My narrative is coloured with stories from 18 other students on board, who graciously shared their experiences and their connection with the ocean through their cultural narrative beliefs and values. I explore how encounters with the more-than-human and the movement of the sea embodied our experience.

1.2 Research question

This research emanates from the need to build tourism knowledge by understanding the complex and intertwined relationships between humans and more-than-humans.

The fundamental questions explored in this research are as follows:

1. How did spending prolonged time out on the ocean influence us students understanding of our connection with the ocean, and in which ways the relationality and embodiment of the more-than-human came apparent during the voyage?
2. What kind of agency did the ocean and the ship have in students' understanding and creation of knowledge of global sustainable development and climate challenges?
3. In which ways Pacific world view helped the students to understand sustainability concept in relation to the ocean human connectivity?

1.3   *Structure of the thesis*

In the next chapter I share more how life on board of the ship was, to give a better understanding of the findings and discussion chapter. Furthermore, SDG200 course will be discussed in more detail.

In the third chapter a theoretical framework is presented. In this chapter I will also touch upon ontological, epistemological, and philosophical consideration. Following in chapter four, my Methodological choices and methods are discussed.

Chapter five is dived in to three parts. First part presents how the embodiment of the sea became apparent during the voyage. This part is larger and therefore divided into smaller sections. Second part of the findings and discussion section explores sustainability on board and what student learned from it. Lastly participant shared their reflections of ocean and human connection and how this shaped their understanding of sustainability.

2   Life on board and SDG200

This chapter presents the daily routines and structure of Statsraad Lehmkuhl to provide a better understanding of how life on board was. Additionally, a brief overview of some critical sailing terminology and extra knowledge of the ship is introduced to help the reader have a better idea regarding specific topics discussed in the findings and discussion. Furthermore, the curriculum and learning goals of SDG200 will be briefly touched upon to give a general idea of what the course entails.

During the Valparaiso – Palau leg, the ship had been turned into a floating university and hosted 86 international interdisciplinary students, 24 males and 68 females from 12 countries. In addition to the students, teachers, and professors, scientists, crew, and volunteers were on board. Overall, the ship has a capacity of up to 150 people. The goal was to sail across the Pacific Ocean while gaining a comprehensive understanding of planetary boundaries and how life in the Pacific is connected to the ocean and climate. The plan was to visit Tahiti, Cook Island, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Salomon Islands and Palau. The planned route was divided into six legs:

- Valparaiso – Tahiti,
- Tahiti – Cook Islands,

- Cook Islands – Fiji,
- Fiji -Fiji (Fiji – Tonga/Samoa – Fiji triangle)
- Fiji -Salomon Islands
- Salomon Islands -Palau

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, in the end, the visited ports were Papeete in Tahiti and Suva in Fiji. In addition to this, we stayed on an anchorage in front of the Cook Islands for two nights. Lehmkuhl embarked from Valparaiso at the start of May 2022 and arrived safely in Palau at the end of August of the same year.

All students became sail trainees as soon as we climbed aboard, meaning we were part of the crew, treated as such, and actively participated in sailing watches. This meant to do sail maneuvers and climbing up to the rigging. We helped with all the work on board, such as maintenance, cleaning, and preserving the ship. The sail trainees were divided into three watch groups that dictated the time one was on sailing duty. During the four month voyage us students rotated between all watches.

The sailing watches and times were:

- Blue watch 8-12 & 20-24,
- Red watch 12-4 & 24-04
- White watch 04-08 & 16-20

Each watch was led by a watch leader, who guided us trainees and taught us sail theory, nautical terms, knowledge of riggings, sails, lines, and how to make knots. We also got lessons about sailing history, sailor traditions, tattoos, and navigation and were introduced to the shanty singing traditions. During the sailing watches, we rotate between four physical posts: Buoy watch, lookout, fire watch, and helms watch. At all times, there must be someone positioned at these critical jobs. Buoy watch means to man the aft of the ship, ensuring no one falls overboard. Look out must keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary in front of the ship. If, for example, another ship, island, or light was sighted, it was to be reported to the helms watch by ringing a bell. Firewatch walks around all parts of the ship, checks for fire, and rings a bell every thirty minutes to notify the time. A specific number of rings indicated a specific time.

Firewatch also checks up on buoy, look out, and helms watch to see if they need anything. Helms watch steers the ship and ensure we stay on the correct course. Like real sailors, we slept in hammocks below the deck in a shared space. Lehmkuhl was equipped with a small classroom and even a gym in the sail storage, where the crew had organized some training equipment.

The goal of the Ocean-Climate-Society sustainability summer course (*SDG200*) was to highlight the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation, which is why the student body, and the course curriculum were highly interdisciplinary. The SDG200 engaged United Nation (UN) sustainability development goals (SDGs) as a podium to gain an extensive understanding of global sustainability. Additionally, the aim was to research how climate change affects local communities in the Pacific region and how their life is connected to the ocean and affected by climate change (University of Bergen, 2022). This was achieved by welcoming thirty exchange students from University of South Pacific (USP) on board Statsraad Lehmkuhl for the duration of three weeks to exchange knowledge regarding the ocean, climate, society, and sustainability. For many students, me included, these three weeks were the most memorable and meaningful of the entire journey due to the cultural exchange and knowledge and wisdom gained from students from different Pacific Islands.

The course curriculum included various topics, such as biology, psychology, ocean science, including the earth's climate systems and ocean circulations, social anthropology, and international law. Overall, during the lectures, assigned readings, and discussions, I learned how psychological knowledge could encourage nations, communities, and individuals to act on climate change challenges. The course on international law opened my eyes to the complexity of it and the challenges of getting all nations to work towards a common goal. One of the learning aspects was to learn how to navigate the IPCC report, which was challenging and new for many of us students on board. All the curriculum was tied together around United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) with the main focus on SDG 14 – Life below water, SDG 13 – Climate action, and SDG 17 – Partnership.

Addition to the often-used essay writing, us students on board were introduced to filmmaking, storytelling, creative performance, poetry, artwork, to communicate sustainability and climate change issues in the course. The aim with these alternative learning methods was to try different ways to express our connection with the ocean and to reflect our understanding and learning of

sustainability concept. An example of this would be a "Photovoice" and "talanoa" assignments. Photovoice assignments was carried with us students throughout the whole voyage. At the start of the course, we were instructed to reflect what sustainability means to us and capture this into images. At the end, of the voyage the photos along with our reflections of how they helped us to understand sustainability were discussed. This way, words produced by humans got entwined into actual entities, objects, such as a photo, actions, such as of thinking, capturing, and learning. The assignment was inspiring and opened my eyes to grasp the sometimes very abstract and theoretical concept of sustainability in a more tangible way.

Furthermore, to express our connection with the ocean and to share our own "ocean narratives" – our "ocean story", *a* long-standing pedagogical practise from Oceania called *talanoa* was integrated to the course for a duration of three weeks. Talanoa is a traditional knowledge-sharing concept used in the Pacific. It is a translucent and open dialogue that creates an inclusive circle of trust where people can come together, share knowledge, and better understand different topics through powerful storytelling. Central to talanoa is collaboration, communality, listening and sharing. Talanoa was adopted at the UN climate conference hosted by Fiji, organized in Bonn, Germany, in 2017 to bring people and nature together to understand climate change better (European Commission, 2018). On the SDG200 in addition to the talanoa conversations we also were assigned to write a reflective talanoa essay, where we reflect oceans connectivity and our ocean story. The diverse learning methods use on the course motivated me to further explore the entangled network of more-than-human actors and became part of my methods, where I include both Photovoice assignments and Talanoa essays in a form of document study. This will be further explained in the Methdos chapter.

During SDG200, we carefully studied the ocean's connection with the Western and Pacific societies. A meaningful part of the course was exploring the ocean's meaning for different cultures, which was done through talanoa. I gained insight into the ocean's meaning for students from different backgrounds. For example, students from the Pacific Islands expressed a more collective connection with the ocean, formed through common beliefs, traditions, and history and collectively shared with families, villages, tribes, and even some of the Pacific nations. However, many of the students from Western countries generally felt connected with the ocean on a more individual level. The ocean brought particular meaning and joy through hobbies or

memories experienced with family and friends rather than through stories, legends, and traditional beliefs.

The four month long adventure gave each of the students ample time to disconnect from modern society and reality and to connect with our environment on a whole different level. The adventure was a time capsule where histories around the world came together. Time and space found new meaning through the newly explored, re-gained connection with the environment and especially with the Ocean. The study environment on the ship, surrounded by a vast ocean, was unique. There was no internet to distract, strengthening the connection between and among us students, the ship - which functioned as our home, and the Ocean around us. The Ocean was a central part of the experience. By continuously being all around, it naturally was the main topic in daily conversations. It was the subject of the research conducted on the ship, and it was one of the connecting elements that enabled the OOE, the course, and this entire experience. The Ocean was not just a matter around us; it was the force that enabled us to be mobile and to create the expedition, the journey. It was also uncontrollable, an element with its essence. It was not about us students taking advantage of the Ocean or its currents nor trying to tame it with our sailing skills. It was rather about co-creation. Multiple actors influence one another and co-creating the experience. Sailing is a physical activity strongly connected to the natural environment. Sailing requires wind, water, currents, and, of course, a vessel, sails, and human performance.

Furthermore, it requires knowledge of how to work all these elements or actors together to do the act of sailing. The necessary entanglement between the different actors quickly became apparent during the crossing. The way the Ocean, the winds, and the weather behaved each day affected the amount of work we sail trainees had to do. The influence touched everything from our physical fitness to our emotional strength. The tiredness of our bodies and minds to the clarity and knowledge we gained.

3   Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will introduce theoretical framework that are relevant for my topic and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that I use when analyzing the empirical data of the

research. I approach my research questions within the more-than-human world, where the human and non-human co-create the world together in an entangled relationality.

The Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest ocean on Earth. The name strives from the word pacify – peaceful (Gibbens, 2019). The Merriam-webster dictionary defines pacify as a transitive verb – meaning to *"allay the anger or agitation of soothe"* (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) whereas Cambridge dictionary defines it as *"to cause someone who is angry to be calm and satisfied" – " to bring peace"* (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, n.d.). Even the name of the Pacific describes an action. Therefore, it makes sense that the Pacific was an active player in the journey and in our experience. The active role that the ocean played in creating the whole experience was so apparent and immensely important that it furthered my interest in investigating the connectivity between all the elements that shaped our journey and the meaning what that co-creation generated. Especially in the sense of global sustainable development and how understanding the active role the ocean and our connection with it, helped us student to form deeper understanding of the crucial part that ocean plays in our common, sustainable future.

Viewing tourism from a posthuman approach, means stepping away from a dualistic view of the material world and highlights that objects are continually relational. This guides tourism research to move away from an anthropocentric way of understanding tourism and rethink human-environmental relationships (Guia & Jamal, 2020). Posthuman perspective challenges the notion of humankind as superior and recognizes the complexity of human and non-human entwined relationality (Cohn & Lynch, 2017, p. 285-286). This perspective suggests that tourism is influenced by interactions with non-human entities and thinking human and the environment as two separate entities may limit tourism scholars understanding of how tourism realities are produced and what does the sustainable future of tourism look like.

Compared to ancient earthly matters, humans are newcomers in the world, and therefore human-central knowledge creation is inadequate and immature (Chakraborty, 2021, p. 123). In the area of Anthropocene, tourism researchers must expand their understanding of what tourism is about by expanding knowledge collectives in tourism studies (Ren et al., 2018, p. 24). The concept of knowledge collectives, or in other words, tourism knowledge systems, aims to understand and showcase the fundamental parts of the existing tourism research. It furthermore

aims to analyze the dynamics and interrelationships between the existing tourism knowledge and to consider new agendas for tourism knowledge in the future (Tribe & Liburd, 2016, p. 45).

Gren and Huijbens, (2014) introduced Anthropocene to tourism studies and conceptualized tourism as a geophysical force which is part of the relationship between Earth and humanity in the Anthropocene (Gren & Huijbens, 2014, p. 7). They furthermore suggest that tourist needs to be viewed as a geophysical connector of matter between Earth and humankind (Gren & Huijbens, 2014, p. 18). Although tourist do have agency in the relations between Earth and humanity, it is important to note that the tourist is not the only weaver of the threads as Gren Huijbens suggest. Rantala et al., (2020) presents a potential new narrative for tourism in the post-Anthropocene by conceptualizes proximity tourism from a point of view that recognizes the agency of all entities in the worlding of tourism, without viewing humans and non-humans as separate entities (Rantala et al., 2020, p. 1). Overall, tourism research needs new narratives to do its part in tackling the environmental crises the Earth is facing (Höckert et al., 2022) and a shift in imagining and conceptualizing tourism beyond the Anthropocene (Rantala et al., 2020, p. 1-3).

Guia and Jamal (2020) offer Deleuzian posthumanism paradigm to tourism studies to provide constructive ways to contemplate and approach anthropocentric understanding of tourism, meaning the morals and values in tourism, such as responsibility and care (Guia & Jamal, 2020, p. 2). Both notions essential when thinking, or rather, re-thinking and understanding sustainable tourism. Therefore, the posthumanism approach to research may broaden a moral understanding of responsibility in tourism practices and the comprehensive understanding of sustainability and what a sustainable future in tourism entails.

Ergene and Calás (2023) claims that ontology shift is needed and they engages with Deluze and Guattari's (1986) ontology of becoming, and the notion of asseblages as well as with new feminist materialism in proposing a becoming naturecultural, a thinking tool that can be used as a reminder of human superiority when thinking about sustainability practices (Ergene & Calás, 2023, p. 1-3). When the human exceptionalism is questioned, then becoming is always becoming with (Haraway, 2008, p. 244)

Instead of thinking of tourism as a well-defined and established industry, Chimirri and Ren (2022) explain how the tourism industry is instead a collaborative achievement than an individual creation (Chimirri & Ren, 2022). Tourism actors are not only forming a network of individual actors, structures, and objects connected with an abstract line but continually exuviating some parts of themselves and simultaneously attaching other parts to other actors; thus, the actors are becoming ´emergent` (Franklin, 2004, p.284). Chimirri and Ren (2022) explain that tourism is entangled with a place, the environment, more-than-tourism concerns, and more-than-human actors (Chimirri & Ren, 2022, p.1). These assemblages are ordered. Typically, human actors try to order, manage, and control their world, which naturally includes both human and non-human actors (Franklin, 2004, p. 284). Van der Duim presents the ordering as *"tourismscapes"* (van der Duim, 2007, p.962). In ordering, the human and non-human becomes entangled into ´tourismscapes´, through a complex translation process. (van der Duim, 2007, p. 964). In other words, people, and things, such as the environment, are stitched together through an active set of relations that require performance. In these relations, human – and non-human contingently exchanges parts. (van der Dium, 2007, p. 964).

Furthermore, orderings are processes, and sometimes unforeseen agencies may cause unintended consequences. This may derail the course of the ordering and stop the forming of the initial intention behind it (Franklin, 2004, p. 284). Hence, tourism is not just a network of individual human and non-human actors, but a co-creational process formed by different actors and materialities (Ren et al., 2018, p. 4). Even in ´tourismscapes´ the actors continue to perform. Moreover, the structure of different actors in the actor-network is formed through te consequence of the relations they are situated in (van der Duim, 2007, p. 965). Many different actors, such as natural forces, material objects, and human emotions, affect the process of creating tourism. It is these co-creational processes that make tourism exceptionally unstable. Natural elements, such as water, wind, and currents, are recognized as actors ordering a tourism place, which forms through an entanglement of continuingly moving elements (Lund & Jóhannesson, 2016, p. 653).

Tourism arises through relationships between nature, culture, and the past and present. In turn, cultural landscapes and their materiality create tourist places (Lund & Jóhannesson, 2016, p. 654). These ever-forming relations create a tourism reality, which humans perform instead of

observing. Therefore, the embodiment of tourism moves passed the "tourist gaze" (Urry, 2002) and is formed through an active set of human and non-human relations (van der Duim, 2007, p. 963-964). In other words, co-creating reality means enacting and participating in the process with other actors (Lund & Jóhannesson, 2016, p. 655). Thus, tourism is a complex and diverse phenomenon performed by human and non-human actors.

Donna Haraway (2016) introduces the concept of "staying with trouble" (Haraway, 2016, p. 1), which aims to resist the temptation of making imagined futures either safe or doomed – even in disturbing or mixed-up time. It is necessity to learn to be truly present in the moment. Instead of looking ahead, or in the past, rather look around. Haraway composes that "*the task is to make kin in lines of inventive connections as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present*" (Haraway, 2016, p. 1). In other words, it is necessary to establish meaningful connections with other beings, human and non-humans, and traverse through the complexities of life in the present moment. Hence, staying with the trouble. Haraway emphasizes the importance of actively responding to challenging events, while also obtaining to restore peace and stability (Haraway, 2016, p.1).

To imagine a sustainable future in tourism, researchers must expand their understanding of what tourism is about by developing knowledge collectives in tourism studies and by opening to new ways of understanding knowledge (Ren et al., 2018, p. 24). The ongoing destruction of our planet has compelled western researchers to - or in other, better words - give us the gift of opening our ontologies and worldviews to consider and respect indigenous knowledge systems (Pritchard et al., 2011) For a long time, qualitative research was considered inferior to quantitative methods. It was viewed as ´soft´ and ´non-scientific´ research approach (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 3-4). This type of thinking originates from colonialism. Still in contemporary academia, the Pacific methodologies have faced challenges in social science (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017, p.199-200)

Traditionally the core of indigenous knowledge systems in the Pacific region is about sustainable life and living in balance with the nature (Vakaʻuta, et al., 2018 p. 1). Therefore, nature and culture are inseparable (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p.56). *"Living in harmony with the rhythms and cycles of the planet – our known cosmos"* (Vakaʻuta, et al., 2018 p. 1) describes the indigenous epistemology from Oceania and the role of the human within the ´know cosmos´.

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Climate challenges highlights the meaningfulness of indigenous knowledge systems, which are fundamentally about balance and living life in a sustainable harmony (Vaka´uta et. al. 2018, p. 1).

Tim Ingold (2010) explains philosophers Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's argument where they propose that the fundamental relationships in a living world is not between matter (hyle) and form (morphe), but rather between materials and forces (Ingold, 2010, p. 2). In their argument they emphasized how different materials interact and combine with one another, while being influenced by the forces of the Cosmos to generate things. Their aimed to challenge the long-standing Western way of thinking about the constitution of things – Aristotle's hylomorphic model, which is ever more unbalanced. The rehylomorphic model suggests that form is imposed by an agent with a specific purpose, while matter is the recipient of the imposition and viewed as passive and immobile being (Ingold, 2010, p. 2). In other words, all things in nature have an essence or form that makes them what they are. Matter does not exist on its own but is the basis of potentiality. Only when merging with form, does matter becomes what it is. Ingold (2010) replaces the hylomorphic model with an ontology where emphasis is on process of formation, instead of the final product. The process of formation is interaction between materials and forces.

Chimirri and Ren (2022) take the worlding concept into tourism and discard efforts of trying to fix tourism or to come up with solutions. Instead of seeing tourism as a developing business, they make a point of tending to it as worldling. Tourism worlding focuses on telling tourism stories from around the moment, not imagining the unforeseen future, which has yet to have an ending. Viewing tourism research through worlding shows that the way we tell and think tourism agencies has a worldmaking effects through co-creation (Chimirri & Ren, 2022, p. 2). In other words, by staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016), tourism researcher can render and commit themself to the trouble we are in on. Thus, they can tend to the present and to the situated (Chimirri & Ren, 2022, p. 2).

The indigenous Pacific worldviews are rooted in the understanding that knowledge and practices are shaped by interconnected relationships and interpretive dimensions of meaningful life. Relationships are central to Pacific worldviews. Addition to being in balance and living in harmony with nature, deep connectedness is the core of what it means to be human (Vaka'uta et al., 2018 p. 1). This stresses the importance of considering the relational aspects and allegorical frameworks in indigenous knowledge systems and practices. The significance of

interconnectedness and lived experiences in shaping the worldview are central aspects of the Pacific epistemologies. Moreover, core values such as love, trust, compassion, and respect are strongly present in the Pacific view of a ´good life´. These values and ways Pacific Islanders see and are in the world, has shaped the Oceanic people profoundly, including Indo Fijians (Teaiwa, 2014 p.76). The ´good life´ is furthermore grounded with beliefs about service, duty, responsibility (Vaka'uta et al., 2018, p. 1), as well as reciprocity. One of the most important element in the Pacific epistemology is the custodianship of the land (fonua/vanua/fenua), sky and sea (Vaka'uta et al., 2018 p. 1). *"These can never be truly owned´ but are inherited from the ancestors and borrowed from the next generation."* (Vaka'uta et al., 2018 p. 1). Each generation are temporary custodians of land, sky and sea (Vaka'uta et al., 2018 p. 1). The most suitable custodians for the oceans are those for whom the sea is home. The Pacific people has their roots embedded in the sea, making them suited (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 57). However, can someone whom the sea is not a home be a custodian? Can a tourist, a traveler, or passing by visitor be a temporary custodian? Would that be taking something important away from the Pacific Islanders? The responsibility of the custodian is to preserve and nurture the human relationship with the ´known cosmos´ (Vaka'uta et al., 2018 p. 1). In this known universe, everything are inter-connected, including the notions of place and space (Vaka'uta et al., 2018 p. 1-2).

Hau´Ofa (2008) explains that the essence of the global system is interdependence. Many Oceanic people have relocated abroad, to break free from the unnatural confinement of colonialism and because mobility is in their blood (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 35), and perhaps in the search of freedom, what is to be defined by each traditionalist (Tsing, 2015, p. 106). They are expanding their world and networks for circulation. The human nature demands space for free movement – the larger the space the better (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 35). Pacific islanders has mobile and dynamic identities and networks that extend across time and space (Jolly, 2007; Hau´Ofa, 2008; Clifford, 2009; Teaiwa, 2014, p. 70).

Vaioleti (2006) reminds of the possibility that Western and Pacific knowledge systems do not necessarily share the same origins and ways of constructing knowledge. Thus, it is risky to assume that the same tools and methods of collecting data and generating new knowledge across these diverse epistemological traditions can be used in the same matter (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 22). In other words, researcher, who is embedded in the Western way of knowing and has

primarily been influenced by different Western perspectives, can often lack the lived experience and the values required to comprehend the Pacific epistemologies (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 22). This being said, I would like to take the space to acknowledge the unique epistemologies and cultural settings of the Pacific, which are beyond my understanding as a master's student with a Western perspective to knowledge. Besides my brief, personally meaningful experiences and meetings with people and the ocean in the Pacific, I do not carry the lived experiences and the values to us Pacific onto -and epistemologies as the sole methodological approach in my thesis. Therefore, I used a mixed method, and the aim is to gain deeper understanding by expanding my methodological toolbox from West to Pacific. Furthermore, I felt that it was important to include the Pacific knowledge creation and world views in my thesis for two reasons. First, listening and learning Pacific stories was one of the biggest learning outcomes for me personally, not just from the SDG200, but from the whole voyage. Meeting and making friends with the Pacific Islanders had a huge impact on not just on a personal level but as a researcher. It broadens my perspectives, and understanding of human, land, ocean connectivity and the holistic way humans becoming one with nature. "We are the ocean" and "the ocean is in us" as Epeli Hau'Ofa (2008) writes. Furthermore, hearing the stories of the Pacific islanders, about their everyday reality generated a level of urgency in my questions of how future of tourism looks like in the Anthropocene? What can be my role and contribution in tourism and its complex connection to climate change? The Pacific stories I heard from my fellow students on board of Lehmkuhl, in the setting of Pacific Ocean, formed in a sense tangibility to concept of climate change. To hear how sea level rise affects my fellow students and how the fear is reality at the same time there is hope and trust. The blame is not on the ocean, but the ocean is a provider. Second, the Oceanic epistemologies and ontologies as well as the peoples of Pacific relation to nature, and to ocean fits well with my research approach of more-than-human agency and the topic of human - ocean connectivity. In recent years in the academic field of tourism there has been need for engagement with more reflexive and philosophical approaches in a hope of balancing out the mostly market and growth driven   approach (Pritchard et al., 2011, p.957). While traditionally tourism scholars have been hesitant to develop their understanding of philosophical perspectives that supports different ways of knowledge creation and practices (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, p. 4). Development of the tourism ontologies is necessary to address the urgent challenges that the tourism industry faces in the era of Anthropocene and beyond (Pritchard et al., 2011, p.957). In recent years, tourism research has been slowly

maturing and shifting away from the mainstream profit and growth-driven, anthropocentric approach (Pritchard et al., 2011, p. 941). The rising social science network in tourism research, as opposed to a business science network, can be more conducive to embracing different, co-existing knowledge traditions, which can be prone to new schools of thought (Tribe, 2010, p.30.) Pritchard et al. (2011) provide a new conceptualizes a combination of co-transformative learning and action to provide a distinct reflective methodology to view tourism knowledge production – *hopeful tourism*, which pursues to create a more just way to do tourism by having fundamental values of reciprocity and partnership (Pritchard et al., 2011, p. 942). I approach hopeful tourism through a more-than-human perspective. Partnership, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility are the values traveling across the Pacific in my methodological toolbox.

4 Methodology

Methodology describes the way a researcher chooses to study this world (Bailey, 2007, p. 63, Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p. 1), and what approach was taken to conduct the research (Tayler et al., 2015, p.14). Therefore, under the methodological choices, research design and chosen methods lies underlying and often implicit understanding the researcher has of the nature of the world (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p. 1). This research emanates from the need to build tourism knowledge by understanding the complex and intertwined relationships between humans and more-than-humans. Specifically exploring how those knotted relationships can influence understandings of the role tourism has in the Anthropocene. My presumption, interest and intentions has guided my methodological choices, as Taylor et al. (2015) suggest (Tayler et al., 2015, p.14). By viewing tourism realities through more-than-human thinking as a continually collaborative entwined process between human and non-human entities, new possibilities and perspectives can be created. Therefore, more-than-human thinking gave me freedom to be curious about the relationality of human and non-human during the voyage as well as afterwards when analyzing the findings. What were those entangled relationships and knots that made the journey possible and more so how did acknowledging them impact mine, and other students understanding of the sustainability challenges the world is facing?

Guia and Jamal (2020) argue that posthumanist methodologies are important in tourism research to challenge the commonly used human-centered perspective (Guia & Jamal, 2020, p. 2). Centering my thesis around a more-than-human approach allowed me to move away from

the human/nature and nature/culture dichotomy and let me to view tourism research from a broader perspective, where humans and non-humans are entwined, not two separate entities. This provides my methodology nondualist and relational perspective (Guia & Jamal, 2020).

During the SDG200 course, the significance of having an interdisciplinary approach was given a strong emphasis. Furthermore, Pacific ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies were strongly present during the voyage. Therefore, it was important to me to shed light on the Pacific methodology. However, I recognize my position as a novice researcher with a Western view of the world. The importance of being open and understanding different types of knowledge to comprehend better planetary boundaries and the cruciality of the oceans' role in sustaining our planet was evident throughout the course. This further guided my methodological position and gave direction to the chosen qualitative research methods, which where three folded: autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and document study.

The goal of using this collective approach, was to compound my thesis with variety of voices and to further broaden my understanding of the chosen topic. Approaching my research project through autoethnographic methodological position was a natural choice since I was fully immersed in the experience as a student and sail trainee. More-than-human thinking requires recognizing the relationality in the collaborative knowledge creation. Therefore, by living the experiences, I was entangled with the knowledge production together with other students and the more-than-human. During the voyage I wrote daily reflections to my travel journal, which later on was used as field notes.

As a part of my autoethnographic approach I conducted semi-structured interviews, which is often part of ethnographic methodology (Bryman, 2016, p. 378). The aim was to comprehend on a deeper level, how the agency of the ship and the ocean impacted students understanding of their connection with the ocean and furthermore the way they created knowledge about sustainability. My original focus was to understand what kind of role our cultural narratives play in our connection to the ocean and furthermore the knowledge gained from that connection regarding sustainability concept. However, exploring the cultural narratives approach developed naturally into deeper interest regarding how the Pacific world view and perspectives influenced our understanding about sustainability. Afterall, the Pacific was the setting of the SDG200 course and making friends with the Pacific Islanders, was influential for us Western students.

Addition to qualitative interviews, it is also common to analyze texts and documents in order to create variability among the data collection (Bryman, 2016, p.378). Since talanoa and photovoice assignments explored the oceans connectivity, and our understanding of sustainability I wanted to add them in to my methods as a document study. The main purpose behind this was to gain an understanding of the students' reflections during the voyage when we were physically there. Interviews were conducted exactly one year after we departed from Valparaiso. I felt as it was important to go back in time and read what where the thoughts, emotions and feelings of connectivity while we were in the Pacific and the voyage was still on going. From the interviews I gained valuable and deep reflections, which may have been grown sweeter with time. The participants who stayed on Fiji for three weeks, did not participate on the talanoa assignment.

4.1 Methods

Methods are the tools used to collect data and to gain knowledge and understanding (Bailey, 2007, p. 63). This qualitative master's thesis was conducted by using mixture of auto-ethnographic method, semi-structured interviews, and additional document study. When research is conducted with multiple methods or sources of data, it is called triangulation. Even though typically triangulation is associated with quantitative research strategy, it can also be used in qualitative research, such as in (auto)ethnographic approach (Bryman, 2016, p.356.) The use of multiple methods in qualitative research results in higher trustworthiness and confidence in findings (Bryman, 2016, p. 356; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p.22).

The methods used to collect data were auto-ethnography, qualitative semi-structured interviews and document study, which included Talanoa essays and Photovoice assignments. Through the document study I gained valuable information from participants background and their personal connection to the ocean, their thoughts generally as ocean as a connective matter, and their understanding of sustainability. From reading the talanoa essays and the photovoice assignments, I gathered additional questions to ask form each participant. The number of additional questions and the content varied, since they were based on each of the participants assignment.

4.2 Ethnography

"*Congratulation*s!" I could not believe it, when I read it on my acceptance email for the SDG200 course. How propitious to be able to join such a once-in a lifetime voyage. I imagined how exciting it would be to traverse the Pacific and learn about climate change, planetary boundaries and sustainability, all matters which I felt extremely strongly about. Once I had received my acceptance, I knew that my Masters' thesis research project should be about this experience the ocean and sustainable future for tourism. It took some literature reviewing and brainstorming to develop the topic to what it is today More-than-human agency on the Pacific Ocean. Ethnography was a natural choice as a qualitative research method, since I immersed into, the SDG200 course as part of the student body, and more so to the life as a sail trainee on Statsraad Lehmkuhl. Vannini (2005) defines ethnography as a people-focused research approach. Traditional ethnography uses observation, interviews, and self-participation to understand the subject's rendition (Vannini, 2015, p. 318). However, Ortner (2006) argues that ethnography can mean many things, but fundamentally it is "the attempt to understand another life world using the self- as much as possible – as the instrument of knowing" (Ortner, 2006, p. 42). During the voyage the entangled more-than-human relationality between the ship, the ocean, and I, were embodied experiences, thus I was part of the instrument of knowing, together with the more-than-human. Typically, ethnographers would spend months or even years adapting to the ways of a particular social group, uncovering its culture, and engaging with and observing its people (Bryman, 2016, p.423) However, *micro-ethnography*, on the other hand, can be used as a method on a smaller scale study, such as a Master thesis, where less time spent within the group of study-object is acceptable (Bryman, 2016, p.424).

The voyage lasted four months on the ship, sailing out on the ocean, fully and actively immersed in the experience and the community established on the ship. Therefore, I used ethnographic methods as the base of my research. Initially, I was worried about participant observation, which is common in ethnography (Bryman, 2016, p. 423). First, the participant observation highlights the dichotomy of observer and observed (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, p. 248), which goes against the more-than-human thinking, where humans, and non-humans all have an active part to play in the co-creation of the world. And second, I did not submit my research project with Sikt (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research), before Statsraad Lehmkuhl embarked on the crossing, therefore it would have been ethically wrong to

start participant observation, even if I would have asked consent from the student on the voyage. However, Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) argue that all social research can be considered as participant observation, since social world cannot be studied without being part of it. When viewing participant observation from this approach, it becomes a distinctive part of the researcher – "a mode of being-in-the-world (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, p. 249).This perspective on participant observation was more suited for more-than-human approach, where participants were not just us students, but also the environment. Additionally, a non-representational ethnography, which is a more creative and impressionistic approach to making sense of more-than-human entanglements was adapted. Non-representational ethnography does not claim merely to mimic or report reliable and neutral facts. Instead, it aims to find a more creative or poetic way to animate and cultivate affinity of the embodied, material, more-than-human dimensions in temporally and spatially complex lifeworlds (Vannini, 2015, p. 318). A non-representational style enabled me to understand better the entangled relations of the ocean, the ship, and the humans on board. Embracing ethnographic method through non-representational theory, I was able to better fathom the agency and relations of more-than-human actors during the expedition.

Throughout the voyage, I kept daily diary, reflecting and writing on the daily happenings of Statsraad Lehmkuhl – out floating society. Each evening I would sit on my hammock, and write my thought of the day, up until someone would turn off the lights. Some nights interrupting the writing even middle of the sentence. Addition to my nightly routine, another favorite spot to reflect was up on deck, glancing out to the ocean every other sentence, just to take it all in. In my reflections kept on mind on mind my thesis topic and paid attention to what kind of agency the ship and the sea had in our journey. I paid attention to the movement, and how that enabled or constrained my days on board. Chang (2013) advises that ethnographers gather material from memories, photos, documents of themselves, interviews with others, and ongoing self-reflection (Chang, 2013, p. 108). Therefore, when starting to plan my research design, I read and re-read my journal from the voyage and reflected on the experience the emotions, what were those moments where I encountered the non-human, and how was that apparent?

4.3   Document study

As part of my methods, I used participants' course assignments, talanoa, and photovoice assignments. Talanoa was to provide an understanding of how participants reflected on ocean

connectivity or their personal ocean story while situated on the Pacific. During the voyage, 30 students stayed in Fiji for three weeks and were not assigned to do a talanoa essay assignment. However, I did not want to exclude those students from my research automatically. Therefore, I asked to study their photovoice assignment to gain a better understanding of how their understanding of sustainability has changed during the voyage. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that employing documents as part of a qualitative method can be beneficial since participants are attentive to it and written private documents such as journals or letters can save some time from transcribing the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188). I used the documents to familiarize myself with the participants' "ocean story." This provided a good foundation for the interviews by guiding my questions in a more relevant direction. Based on the talanoa and photovoice assignments, I established additional personalized questions for each participant. This gave structure for otherwise fluid and open-ended questions – the participant and I had a common ground to reflect deeper. Utilizing documents in this way gave valuable depth to the answers. However, instead of saving time with transcribing, I believe it was more time-consuming since preparations for each interview took quite a long time.

4.3.1 Talanoa

Talanoa is a practice of oral communication in the Pacific. More specifically it originates from Tokelau, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa (Tunufa'i, 2016, p. 229). It means to have a conversation face to face and exchange ideas (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23), to talk, to discuss, and tell stories about issues, realities and aspirations (Tunufa'í, 2016). More so it is an open dialogue, where everyone is welcome to join. There is no hierarchy in talanoa. Everyone's story is valid and valued. It is used both in formal and informal setting (Vaioleti, 2006).

Talanoa merges from the words *tala* and *noa*. *Tala* means to tale, story, tell and *noa* means old, common, no value, without thought, nothingness and empty. Thys, to talking about nothing specific, or aimless conversation (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23). Vaioleti, (2006) conceptualized talanoa as a research methodology by verbalizing that *tala* interacts with reserachers´ and participants' knowledge, feelings and experiences. *Noa* creates a free, open space. The collaboration of *tala* and *noa* leads to a space of connectivity in a positive and a supportive way. This would further mean that researcher is not just to passive analyzer, but an active participant in the knowledge creation (Vaioleti, 2006, p.24). Furthermore, Vaioleti (2006) argues that "talanoa belongs to the phenomenological research family" (Vaioleti, 2006, p.25).

Phenomenology is an approach that seeks to understand human behavior and lived experience (Knaack, 1984, p.108), and how humans think with their whole body (Huijbens, 2023, p.1). According to phenomenology, human creates meaning form being in the world. In other words, human does not exist part from the world and cannot be viewed as "object in nature" (Knaack, 1984, p.108). Therefore, this approach challenges the notion of a human who views themselves detached from their own body, senses and the environment that they are in. By encompassing divergent perspectives and acknowledging the embodied nature of the human existence, tourism scholars are able to expand their understanding of the human experience (Huijbens, 2023, p. 1)

Talanoa was a big part of SDG200 course. Even though, it lasted academically only three weeks from the four months, it had such an impact that we continued to talanoa amongst us students, even once the USP students departed from Lehmkuhl. During my interviews, I asked my participants how they felt about talanoa as a learning method. Some thought it was a good way to learn about each other's, and to have an open space for discussion without needing scientific wordings and specifics. It was an open space to bring our any ideas, stories and beliefs. Some Western students thought that talanoa in an academic setting did not match what we learned about the concept, since talanoa in an academic setting, restricted us with a time and a topic. Overall, for the USP students, it was a natural way to get to know each other.

Part of the SDG200 course was to study, not just one's personal connection with the ocean, but the meaning of that connection within the Western and Pacific societies. Thus, a big part of the course was exploring the ocean's meaning for different cultures. Through the powerful talanoa sessions, I gained valuable insight into human ocean connection the ocean's meaning for students from different backgrounds. For example, students from Fiji and other Pacific Island nations expressed a more collective connection with the ocean, formed through common beliefs, traditions, and history and collectively shared with families, villages, tribes, and even some of the Pacific nations. However, the European students generally felt connected with the ocean on a more individual level. The ocean brought particular meaning and joy through hobbies or memories experienced with family and friends rather than through stories, legends, and traditional beliefs. In this research, I intend to investigate how we, students from different backgrounds, communicated with the ocean to gain a meaningful connection with the environment we were in.

4.3.2   Photovoice

Photovoice was first introduced as a research methodology by Wang and Burris (1997) for community-based collaborative research (Wang & Burris, 1997). It is used to engage with community-based problems, and community values and culture should be considered when implementing the method. In the photovoice methodology, photographs are used to engage with the community and promote critical consciousness and community involvement to achieve social equity (Sutton-Brown, 2014). Photovoice seeks to empower individuals to record and reflect on the strengths and challenges within their community. It encourages meaningful group discussions centered around the photographs regarding critical issues. Furthermore, the goal is to influence policymakers (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369).

This method was first introduced to me on the SDG200 course, where right at the start of the course, we were assigned to take 3-6 photos that tell a story about what sustainability is and what it means to us. Photos could be taken on board Statsraad Lehmkuhl during the four months or from the island we visited during the voyage. The aim was for us students to reflect on our learning about sustainability. Furthermore, the assignment included a reflective essay describing what can be learned about sustainability from the photo. There was a photovoice exhibition on board, and we students went around to view and discuss the photos. This assignment was very memorable, and it was interesting to see how creative students got with their reflections regarding sustainability and how this voyage has affected their thoughts on it.

I decided to include the photovoice assignment as part of my methods to give the thirty students who did not participate in the talanoa assignment the possibility to partake in my thesis. Those thirty students stayed in Fiji for three weeks while students from USP came aboard and, therefore, were not assigned to do the Talanoa assignment. The primary purpose was understanding what they learned about sustainability during the voyage. Since the assignment was done during the voyage, I wanted to understand their reflections while we were still on the ship. The challenge was that I did not know beforehand if the student had photos from the ship or the islands. This was relevant to keep the focus on the ship and what agency the ship had in our learning of sustainability.

Nevertheless, each photovoice assignment provided many insightful reflections regarding students' thoughts on sustainability and how this voyage broadened their understanding. Against the narrative of my thesis, many participants reflected that the significant learning outcomes came from the islands, not the islanders they interacted with, not necessarily from being on the ship. Many of the photovoice assignment topics were too broad to include in the scope of my thesis.

4.4   Interview guide

The interview guide was based on my diary entries. Planning the interview guide took me right back to the Pacific and Lehmkuhl. Reading through the pages of my diary brought back many feelings and emotions, such as the tiredness, the excitement, the fears, the laughs, the amazement, and the challenges. The unique experiences such as witnessing a volcano eruption in the blackness of the Pacific night, the stars, the glowing Milky Way, and the planets reflecting on the ocean's surface; who knew the ocean could be so still? Saltwater showers, swim stops, buoy watch, look out - moments alone with the sea - reflecting. The blue all around, the vastness, the emptiness! Whenever we saw something unusual, such as a ship, a fish, a fly, a bird, or a piece of plastic, I wrote it down. It was rare to encounter anything or anyone, and therefore, it was necessary to memorize it in my diary. The pages were filled with descriptions of the changing shades of the blue around us and the colors of the sunsets, from purple to dark red and everything in between. My diary narration took me flying back to all those moments. The good and the sad moments with the people on board and the bond created with new friends. Oh, did I mention the tiredness! Some pages I could see particularly well when I was too tired to pay attention to my handwriting. On some pages, the ink was mushed because droplets of either rain or saltwater had entered the pages. It was all on the pages. The pages of my diary carried the experience on, and based on those reflections, I formed a good idea of what questions I wanted to ask my fellow students and participants.

The interview questions formulated under five key sections:

1. Background and Introduction
2. The sailing experience.
3. Special moments
4. Talanoa/Photovoice
5. The Aftermath

Under the first theme, I aimed to understand the participant's previous relationship with the ocean. Knowing the starting point, I sought to understand how their relationship with the ocean changed during the voyage. It felt natural to start with a little introduction. Although I knew all the participants before, some I had talked about more than others during the voyage. This was only natural since we were 86 students and 30 additional from USP. Therefore, I want to make sure the participants have the opportunity to introduce themselves as participants. Age or gender was not considered relevant; instead, it was their nationality, where and how they grew up. In which ways was the ocean part of their upbringing, or perhaps it was not? I also wanted to know how familiar the participants were with the UN SDGs because I myself was not very familiar with them before the voyage. This was the case with many other participants as well. Some have heard of them but did not know much specific; some knew them well due to their field of studies, some knew only perhaps one specific goal, and some knew nothing about them. This was interesting since not all nations include them in their university programs. How can the world achieve the sustainable development goals of Agenda 30 if students are not familiar with the goals?

In the second part, participants could describe their experience sailing Statsraad Lehmkuhl; I focused on asking open-ended and broad questions and let the participants reflect as broadly as they wanted. The aim was to understand how the more-than-human agency was apparent during the voyage.

The special moments' theme indicated memorable and meaningful experiences, which I had assembled from my diary entries and categorized as meaningful for myself. These moments were, for example, swim breaks or encounters with non-humans. These moments I anticipated I brought reflections of how it felt to touch and be in the water. I was curious why we were always so excited to encounter anything unusual. I wanted to know if the participants found these moments meaningful as well.

Questions about the talanoa, photovoice and the aftermath were meant for a further discussion of participants' connection to the ocean and if that changed during the voyage. Furthermore, we discussed the most significant learning outcomes regarding participants' understanding of sustainability.

4.4.1 Pilot interview

From the start, I focused on having the correct order for the questions to guarantee a good flow for the interview. Therefore, a pilot interview was conducted as a preparation for the interviews. First, I was reluctant since the questions were related to this specific sailing voyage, and I could only answer or understand if one had sailed a similar ship. I considered doing a pilot interview with someone who was on the ship, but in that case, why would I not use that as part of my data? However, I am glad I followed the recommendation and did a pilot interview since it was beneficial and insightful regarding the interview's time. More importantly, it made me reflect on why I wanted to ask specific questions. What did I aim to learn from the participants by asking this question? Reding the questions out loud to someone and getting a response was a good experience. A valuable learning outcome was reflections regarding my role as an interviewer. I explained myself a lot instead of giving the pilot interviewee time to answer independently. I automatically tended to give examples of what exactly I meant. Since the pilot interviewee was able to understand what I was asking, I knew that the actual participants would, too. I was specifically interested to learn if my pilot interviewee felt I should explain my terminology more in detail, such as what I mean by human-ocean connection, which she told me was clear enough.

4.4.2 Qualitative interview

I conducted 18 qualitative semi-structured interviews with students from the SDG200. Interviews were conducted via Teams on video call over a three moth period. Overall, 22 students showed interested in participating on my research. Due to scheduling issues four of the participants were not interviewed or included to the research. I tried to be considered of the interview time and gave participant multiple options to choose the time. From the 18 participants, 13 sailed all the way from Valparaiso and stayed until Palau. From the 13 five students stayed on Fiji for three weeks, while Lehmkuhl welcomed aboard 30 USP students. From those 30 students, five participated on my research. The students who stayed on Fiji for three weeks, participated with their photovoice assignment, since they had not conducted a talanoa essay. One participant did not consent on the use of talanoa essay, but nevertheless wanted to take part in the form of an interview.

When deciding on who to include as my participant I reflected upon multiple options. I thought to keep it simple and within the scope by interviewing only the once who stayed on the ship the same amount of time as I did. This would have led to having similar experience regarding time spent on the ship. Another option I considered was not to include the USP students, who were on the ship only three weeks. However, by reflecting on my biggest take aways from the voyage and my research question it was evident that the students from USP would bring valuable addition to my research. I also considered to interview only Norwegians, and the USP students, but my aim was never to compare how these two cultures view ocean human connection, rather bring those thoughts and perspectives together, as assemblages. Therefore, I decided not to limit the body of participants of which nationality or for how big portion of the entire voyage they spent on the ship.

For each participant I shaped, changed and added some questions regarding their ocean talanoa or photovoice assignment. I read participants assignments and wrote down questions if there was anything I wanted to learn more or get clarification or deeper thoughts on. This also helped me to get a preview on the person's connection with the ocean – their ocean story – or their understanding of sustainability. Although, it was time consuming, I felt more individually prepared to meet with each participant.

Already from the start I noticed how challenging following up the order of the interview questions was. I realized how the order was irrelevant and there rather for me to be organized and not to forget any vital questions. Therefore, I stopped worrying about the order of the questions and rather followed up the conversation. I had sectioned my interview guide into five different themes. I quickly realized that only the start and the end of the interview guide sections were relevant to have. All other questions and themes blended into each other differently with each participant. Their answer for the broad first questions of introduce yourself, often took us naturally to talk about where they are from and their connection with the Ocean before our trip. From these words it was often easy to transfer straight to once Talanoa or then continue to sailing experience. Sometimes I asked a few questions regarding *talanoa*, jumped to the sailing experience and then went back to *talanoa*. The theme of "Special moments" naturally blended into the sailing experience questions, always in a different order.

I found it challenging to know when to move on to the next question or to ask follow up question. Sometimes participant paused, and I wanted to be as encouraging as possible and to ask a

follow-up question, however, sometimes giving space and time to reflect a little deeper on their own was needed. This was tricky and even though during the interview, everything went well, transcribing and listening the videos I paid attention to those moments, where I should have asked follow up questions and for those, when I should have stayed silent and give the participant space to continue. I informed the participants that interview would take 45 to 60 minutes. The time frame what the actual interviews lasted between 47 minutes and 2 hours. Average interview was 1,5 hours and all together interviews lasted 23 hours. I transcribed interviews via Teams, and listened and read them over and over again, until certain themes started to from. Since I approach this research through ethnographic methodology, naturally I had an idea of specific themes that surface.

Interview process was very inspiring and provided a lot of motivation to continue the research. Since I knew the participants, the trust had already been formed and atmosphere was joyful. It was nice to see my old sailing trainee friends. Some participants reflected furthermore that it was nice for them as well to reflect on the voyage.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The guidelines of Sikt, The Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research were followed during the period of the thesis research and writing. The project was registered with Sikt and approved after some additional information they requested regarding my research method, "Photovoice." Sikt requested extra clarification if I used photos participants shared on their photovoice. If photos had people, I was to ask for consent from them. I provided Sikt with an extra consent form, which the people in the photos would sign in case I were to use the photos. I was not planning to use the photos, but since I had yet to learn beforehand what photos were in those participants' assignments, I wanted to leave the possibility for it in case the photo would fit nicely on the thesis. Any photos were not used in the thesis.

Furthermore, all participants were given a short description of the thesis project in the first contact with the required participants. Once participants responded, I provided them with additional information in a consent letter. During the interview, I gave them time to ask questions regarding the thesis process or topic.

It must be noted that I, who have merely dipped my toes into the Pacific by spending only a short amount of time in the region and within the company of the Pacific Islanders, cannot claim to be able to understand the extent of Oceanian ontologies, epistemologies or methodologies. I aimed to shed light on various ways of knowledge and viewing the human-nonhuman balance. I intended to highlight how shifting perspectives can be tremendously insightful. Being open to indigenous knowledge – not just from the Pacific, but to all and any kind of traditional knowledge is valuable to how I understand and view the world and in knowledge creation. It is out of the thesis's scope to fully shed the much-deserved light on the oceanic world views. The depth of my understanding is minimal, but more importantly, my limited knowledge has brought critical perspectives for me as a researcher. In the future, I want to learn more about the Pacific way of life.

5 Bracing through the Pacific

To brace a tall ship means to swing the yards horizontally to a better angle to catch a better wind direction. Bracing was a common sail maneuver and happened several times during a sail watch. In this chapter, I will share stories about the voyage and how we students embodied the wind, the ocean, the ship, and other "critters" (Haraway, 2008, p.67) during bracing and also when not bracing.

This chapter presents the findings together with a theoretical discussion. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first, larger part, I will take you, the reader, onboard Statsraad Lehmkuhl on a typical day on a white watch. The narration is based on my diary entries during the sailing voyage. It is colored with the reflections of 18 fellow students, the participants. The rhythm of the white watch was a favorite amongst the majority of the students, me included. I narrated the experience through a typical day as a sail trainee in a white watch. The white watch will give this narration the needed structure. This telling may also include stories during Red Watch and Blue Watch; however, this will not disturb the storyline or matter structurally. The reflections are a mixture of experiences from during the whole voyage. The aim is to give you, the reader, an idea of what life on board a traditional tall ship was like. What type of agency the ship and the sea had in our journey across the Pacific Ocean, and which ways did that embodiment affect the way we understood our connection with the ocean?

In the second, smaller, but essential part of this findings chapter, I will describe how the concept of sustainability gained context through the embodiment and the connection with the ship and the sea. The complex concept of sustainability gained practicality through daily life on board – our floating society. Concepts of care and responsibility will be apparent.

In the last part of the findings chapter, I will give a voice to my participants, who graciously shared their understanding of the connectivity between humans and the ocean. This part will highlight the importance of listening and understanding different perspectives.

With this introduction, I welcome you aboard Statsraad Lehmkuhl – for a typical day on a white watch on the Pacific Ocean.

5.1.1 Sea legs and Sailor hands

A typical day in a White Watch started each morning the same way. Wake up was at 03:30 am; there was no time for snoozing, so immediately we climbed down from our hammocks, found our toiletry bags from our lockers, and, with sleepy eyes, stumbled our way to the bathroom. The bathrooms on board were quite spacious and "normal," as you would imagine showers in the gym locker room. I found myself available sink and did my morning wash up. The way the ship was rocking from the waves was constantly reminding me where I was and demanding to be present in the moment. To stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016). I tried to be in sync with the rocking, which was challenging when washing my face in the morning. Still sleepy, I leaned in to splash water onto my face with both hands. This required excellent balance and reflexes since freeing both hands and reaching for the water; eyes closed, I jeopardized losing my balance, which could have caused me to hit my forehead to the sink after one unknowing push from the waves. Simultaneously, I needed to keep my elbows alert and ready to stop my toiletry bag from falling from the counter. The movement was constant and affecting how my mornings started.

At 03:50 sharp each morning, we heard a whistle as a sign that we must be out on the deck to muster. It was still dark. The stars were still out. Our watch leader expected us to be standing in designated spots in straight rows. Ready and dressed. The whole morning routine and mustering was a very army-like ritual. We stood in our queues, trying to hold on balance and to stay still. I remember observing how our watch leader stood solid and leaned forward and

backward in the rhythm of the ship. His feet were steady; his body was relaxed. He had what sailors call the sea legs. His body had adjusted to the movement of the waves and the ship. I imagined how he must have once struggled, too, although now he was at ease and made standing look effortless. Like he belonged there, he had learned to be attentive to the rocking instead of objecting to it.

"... we'd be trying to stand in formation and the sailors would be very comfortably positioned so that they could rock with the ship, whereas we didn't understand that we just be falling into each other..." (Participant #6)

For us rookie sail trainees, it took an adjustment period to learn how to live with the movement. How to become one with the ship and the sea. However, with time, we also developed sea legs and adjusted to the movement gradually, without even noticing. Therefore, the movement of the ship became part of our daily tasks, part of us. We became one with the movement of the ship and the sea. Participant #2 noticed the toll the movement took on her body only after being on solid land and gaining a new perspective. She described during her interview how she had to tense her whole body while doing mundane tasks, such as eating:

"I remember when I got back to, like, firm ground on, like when we got into the islands.. I'm like, oh, my God, I can sit and eat my breakfast without tensing any muscles in my abs. And without every time holding a hand on my utensils and stuff so they don't fly away, I can just chill....I mean, it was kind of just like in evergoing.." (Participant #2)

Furthermore, participant # 7 described during her interview a similar effect of the movement and how it "unknowingly" influenced her daily experiences through tiredness:

".. the body felt maybe a little tired during the whole day because you needed to balance all the time..So you're using energy for like.. Unknowingly..For just the very easy daily.. daily jobs like.. like walking or sitting. You always need to balance and like catch the sliding forks and plates" (Participant # 7)

These reflections demonstrate how overpowering the movement of the ship was. It was always present, whether we noticed it or not. The movement of the sea was on board when we ate, showered, or slept in our hammocks. Our unbalanced, drunk-like walk on deck, inability to stand, and constant attention to our muscles without noticing embodied the more-than-human active participation on the voyage.

During the first two days of the voyage, it was challenging to focus on the beauty of the sailing. The start of the trip was rather full of seasickness than enjoyment. Most of us students, me included, had a rough start. Soon enough, we were being sick all around. There was a specific puke station on deck assigned for the purpose. It reminded me of a trash suspender, a hollow pipe to the sea. Some of us took turns getting good aquatints with the puke tube - *the trumpet.* Other students were lying down and sleeping in their hammocks, ideal for seasickness. When the ship rocks, the hammock rocks with her, making the sleeper in the hammock stable. We were already noticing the movement of the sea. The Pacific was giving us her welcome dance and making us physically ill. Perhaps not just the Pacific, but rather the movement of them together, the dance between the ship and the sea. The sickness took over our bodies, forcing us to acknowledge the presence of the ocean. Already, my relationship with Lehmkuhl and the ocean seemed to have turned around from admiration and aspiration to quite literally throwing up on her and to the ocean. The sea, the ship, and the wind all play a part in creating this experience (Valtonen & Pullen, 2020, p. 512). Participant #3 shared in her interview how she felt the movement as a lack of appetite: *"Especially the first two days I was so sea sick that I couldn't eat because if I eat something, I just puke. And that was not nice.."*(Participant #3).

Interestingly, many Pacific students felt that their ancestor's connection with the sea affected their connection. Seasickness was a sign of how connected the students were with their Oceanian roots. This did not come up with any of the Western students. During his interview, a Fijian student pondered why he did not experience seasickness:

"I would like to think it's because of my ancestors constantly voyaging that it's somehow in my DNA, but I'm sure there's just a little bit of willpower and a couple of seasick tablets that took just in case." (Participant #16)

Participant #8, an ocean resource management student from Papua New Guinea (*PNG*), took the fact that she got seasick as a confirmation that her connection with the ocean is not as deep as other Pacific Islanders:

"I feel like my connection to the ocean is..I mean it's.. I wouldn't say it's that deep like other Pacific islanders that I know..I mean, I got sea sick when I got on, so I wouldn't say I'm that tapped into my Pacific sailing...." (Participant #8)

Participant #14, an Indo-Fijian student laughed and thought that it was obvious that he did not get seasick:

"I would have been a disgrace to my previous...my ancestors would have been disgraced if I had seasickness.. well, because they've all been fishing throughout their lives.. like my dad, my grandparents." (Participonat #14)

Epeli Hau´Ofa (2008) explains that the sea is the single heritage of the Pacific Islanders. Their roots and origins are embedded in the sea, their home. All Pacific ancestors traveled across the sea to and found a home from the sea. The sea defines the people of Oceania as what they are and have always been (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p.54–57). Being connected to the sea is their heritage; the sea is within; therefore, nature and culture are inseparable (Hau ´Ofa, 2008, p. 56); *"the ocean is a fact of life"* (Vaka'uta, 2008, p. 1). Pacific Islanders are so embedded in the sea in a way that it is expected of them not to get seasick. A poet and an award-winning teacher, Teresia Teaiwa is well-known in the Pacific for her words (Teaiwa, 2017):

> *"We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood."*

> (Teresia Teaiwa, as cited in Hau'Ofa 2008, p.41).

Participant #8, from PNG, who is living in Fiji, shared in her ocean talanoa essay about her experiences during cyclone Winston in 2016 (Unesco World Heritage Convention, 2016) We spoke about her ocean story during the interview, and she reflected on her connection to the ocean through the generational trust Pacific Islanders have in the ocean, regardless of the terrifying reality of the dangers that come with living in the coastal area, such as sea level rise or cyclones:

"*the trust that we Pacific Islanders have in the ocean is deep and quite terrifying.*" (Participant #8). She continued that it originates from past generations – the ocean has always provided for the Pacific islanders:

"*I mean this is something that's kept our generations and our families and ancestors alive, and it's just something in the Pacific that we're so.. I mean, we're just so enriched in our culture that..There's no, I mean, I don't see a time or a place where we don't.. We don't trust or we don't depend on the ocean per say.*" (Participant #8)

Back in White Watch, we were all on deck, trying to adjust our eyes to the darkness, our watch leader sent first people off to their individual posts (buoy, look out, helm and fire watch). Depending on the wind, we usually had to do sail maneuvers, which required rope pulling. I could feel the power of the wind - the power of nature - in my palms when we braced the ship as a team. Afterwards my hands would have a strange red color on them, and I could feel the rope in my hand still long after the pulling was finished. The stronger the wind, the harder we pulled. The harder I pulled the stronger I felt the physical connection between the rope and me. Each of the thick threads of the rope pressed hard on my hand, the rope connected me to the sail and to the wind. After, I always found people opening their palms and observing the slowly forming hardenings - *sailor hands*. In one way we tried to avoid them, in other way it is a sign that we belonged. Through the sailor hands, we became part of the crew, entitled to handle the ship and the ropes. We were connected to the ropes that has traveled thousands of nautical miles, experienced wind, seas, and other hands that we had not. Through the touch between hand and rope, all those journeys become -with.

Participant # 5, a German student described during her interview how proud she was of her sailor hands:

"*I had so many of them all the time, and then there came a new one on top of the other one. And it was disgusting sometimes and I had to tape it… but in the end..when I went off the ship, I really had, like, proper sailors hands. They were super thick...So I was really proud for my hands…*" (Participant #5).

When thinking of the notion of contact between the hand and the rope instead of as a touch, the awareness of the transformative impact of connection between the more-than-human entities is enhanced. Touching evokes a sense of intimacy and relationality; it blurs the boundaries

between self and other (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 96). Through the touch between the rope and hand, the boundaries between humans and the wind became blurred. Our hand was transformed into sailor hands – through a co-transformative process. This further affected the feeling of belonging, capability and expanding knowledge. Sailor hands were a sign of an experienced sailor. Once sailor hand had been formed, it indicated that you had been long enough on the ship to know how to handle the ropes. The hardenings in our palms told a story of the nautical miles we had already sailed and the winds we had encountered.

To summarize, the movement of the ship and the sea was continuously present, and it embodied the more-than-human elements affecting every part of our daily life, especially at the beginning before we developed sea legs. Furthermore, the Pacific Islanders generate trust in the ocean through their ancestors and Pacific heritage. History is, therefore, part of their contemporary life. Touch suggests intimacy and relationality. By us students pulling the ropes, Lehmkuhl could traverse the surf with better wind sail corporation; however, through the ropes, we could feel the power of nature embodied in our palms as blisters and hardening. This more-than-human entanglement blurred the boundaries between human and non-human. Furthermore, through the sailor's hands, the life out on the sea and how hard we had pulled the ropes became a visible part of us.

5.1.2 The breaths of the ship

In White Watch, often during the sunrise, we had to take down or set up sails. This required us to climb up on the rigging and to fold the sail or manually release it. Climbing aloft was always a voluntary activity. I had never feared heights, and climbing the mast sounded exciting. Therefore, I was surprised to find myself nervous and scared when first climbing up the rigging. We wore a harness, which was not attached to anything during the climb. We were secured only when going over the platform and up in the yard. The climbing happens on the shrouds (strong wires holding the mast). When one climbs, one holds on to the shrouds and steps on the ratlines – horizontal rope treads, which form the ladder rungs. Although the crew gave good instructions and support, ultimately, I had to rely on my strength to stay safe. If my hands were to slip, I would fall in the ocean or on deck, depending on the ship's angle—the risk of falling felt real.

"I was so scared of the rigging, actually... I remember every time I was up there, I was like, OK, I'm gonna think about this sail. I'm gonna think about this knot. I'm not gonna think about where I am. I'm not gonna be like 50 meters up in the air. I'm just gonna think about this..And like super focused, trying not to think about how high up I was, kinda…" (Participant #2)

Above, participant #2, a Norwegian bioscience student, explained during the interview how she managed to deal with her fears by focusing on the task in front of her rather than how high up she was. It helped her to forget about the danger. This shows how sometimes, when dealing with scary tasks, it is best to focus on the task, be present in the moment, *and "stay with the trouble"* (Haraway, 2016, p. 1). Below, participant #5, an environmental science student from Germany, described that the risk of falling made you stay alert and aware of your surroundings, especially when climbing in the dark. In the end, however, she got familiar with the risk of falling and got used to being attentive to her surroundings and the movement.

"...when you climbed up, you always knew like, OK, if I let go, I'm dead..So that's quite a crazy feeling. And then at some point you get like super used to it and then it's OK to like do in the middle of the night go climbing in the rigging... Yeah. I mean, you were super aware of what was, what could happen and what was going on around you.." (Participant #5)

Both participant #2 and #5 explained how important it was to be present in the moment and not to fixate too much on what could happen. This is precisely what Haraway's (2016) staying with trouble (Haraway, 2016) concept is about. Instead of being preoccupied with what might happen, it is essential to be fully present and engaged in the complexities of the situation (Haraway, 2016, p. 1). Being up on the rigging was scary, but it was a job to be done. The wind and the movement affected our attention on the rigging. As Participant #5 explained, the situation made you aware of what was going on around you. The risk was real; if you were not paying attention to the rigging and being fully present in the moment, you might fall. This stresses our mortality and interconnectedness with the more-than-human. As Haraway (2016) writes: *"...as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings."* (Haraway, 2016, p. 1)

In challenging times, such as the Anthropocene, it is natural to be tempted to imagine the future and address hypothetical problems by securing a safe future. However, this type of thinking will disregard the present (Haraway, 2016, p. 1). A Fijian student, who studies her Master's in climate change, science, and policy, tells me how scared she was, *"I was damn scared."* She

further explained that it is not part of her culture to climb and reflected on how climbing up highlighted her disconnect to the ocean and the ground.

"...most of us, we are not used to that height.. It's not something that we do. We are more like a grounded people. I think that's also talks about how connected with.. we are to the actual physical ocean and the environment because we.. we don't...of course we appreciate the sky. It's also part of our holistic um, yeah, but that. That disconnect.." (Participant # 18)

During the climb, it was not only myself I needed to trust. The non-human agency was an active participant. The wind rocked the ship, making Lehmkuhl heel. Each time she heeled, my back tilted towards the ocean, and I had to hold on extra tight. The crew instructed us to always climb on the windward shrouds. Hence, we had to remember always to check the wind direction and pay attention to the agency of the wind. Climbing on the windward side meant I was on the ship side closest to the wind. This way, the wind was blowing on my back and blowing me onto the rigging and sometimes, the ship rocked back and forth, bouncing through the surf, making the task challenging. Participant #6 described during the interview how the movement caused unconscious adjustment:

"..it's almost like timing with like your breaths.. or the breaths of the ship. Just quickly scramble up and then wait for it to come back. So I think there was the adjustment that became unconscious at a certain point of just listening and responding to the ship..itself, and then the waves that were moving it." (Participant # 6)

"...with the movement of the ship I was like, will I be able to do it? Will I be able to time it? Do I know myself and the ship well enough to manage that?" (Participant #9)

This shows the importance of paying attention to the movement and rhythm of the ship. It was critical to listen and respect the timing, the rhythm, the breaths of the ship. Lehmkuhl, wind set the timing, and the ocean - the agency of the non-human was apparent. But what about the unpredictability of the ocean - the non-human? "The rhythms of geological forces are different from humans; still, they entangle" (Rantala et al., 2020, p. 7). The rhythm of the natural forces of the wind and the ocean, the more fluid forces entangled with the ship's materiality, the sturdiness, and the human was entangled too. We students had to learn to slow down our climb and listen to the breaths of the ship. It is essential to recognize this rhythmic interaction to attain

situated knowing, that acknowledge relationalities of the more-than-human realm (Rantala et al., 2020).

When we slowed down during the climb to wait for the rhythm of the ship, the agency that the ship and the sea held affected us with emotions of fear and wanting to control. The non-human can have such a strong effect and agency on the human and can ultimately even stop us from doing something (Valtonen & Pullen, 2020, p. 512). How could such a strong agency affect us to a level where we understand our responsibility to the non-human? Our responsibility for stopping global warming? We always had to be present, attentive, and aware of what was happening around us. The rain, the wind, and the waves reminded us of where we were and the risks. I asked my participants how they experienced climbing the rigging during bad weather or in the dark.

"And sometimes it was very windy and slippery because of the rain. And I mean the boat really just..didn't cooperate, so it was a swinging everywhere and I really felt like, OK, now I am connected to the ship in this job I'm doing. I have to focus. I have to have like the.. like.. The crew always said one hand on the ship always. Always stay connected. Always have control.. so. That really made me trust myself more because I have to trust myself as well in that kind of progress and process." (Participant #10)

Participant #10, studying for her master's in design, told me she loved climbing the rigging, even during bad weather or nighttime. She viewed it as a job that needed to be done and learned to trust her gut. It made me further wonder about the students' trust in the non-human – the unpredictable force of the ocean. Pacific Islanders have much trust in the ocean. The Western participant wants to feel in control. Always one hand on the ship.

To sum up, Climbing the rigging made us understand the risk that could happen if we ignore the movement of the non-human. This showed that viewing scary and challenging times, such as climbing the rigging or, for example, climate change, from staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) perspective can be helpful and ensure awareness of the situation and surroundings. Listening to the non-humans and slowing down to match their rhythm achieved situated knowing (Rantala et al., 2016). It enabled us to climb to the top without falling. Furthermore, the non-humans showed a substantial effect on us students through fear, which led to wanting to control. This further highlighted the more-than-human relationality.

5.1.3 Alone time with the sea

Bouy and look out were alone time with the sea, time to calm down, and stare at the ocean and seek for reflections. One hour at a time, we had the opportunity to practice the art of staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016), being still, truly present, and alert. Sometimes, thoughts would wander, and imagination could play tricks. Those hours standing on the buoy and lookout gave me time to notice the changes in the shades of the blue and the movement in the water. During the daytime, the visibility was clear, and the atmosphere was light and relaxed. In the nighttime, however, the sea was black, and the sky was black. Sometimes, a full moon would light up the night; other times, the Milky Way kept us amazed. Each night, the Southern Cross, always in the same spot, was guiding us from Chile to Palau. Staring at the sea for one hour was meditating for me. It became an escape in a way. I felt at peace. Everything was calm. Just the ocean and I. Other students also noticed how relaxing, calming, and comforting the presence of the ocean can be, especially during the day. Some felt bored to be staring into nothingness. Some felt the view was constantly changing and yet being the same. Below, students reflect on their "alone time" with the ocean. Participant #9 explained in her interview how the ocean was never the same, but how she became familiar with the scenery:

"Like the ocean.. Changed mood and it changed the way it moves and it changed color.. And the sky changed color and the stars moved when we turned.. (…) ..Uhm became intimately familiar with the horizon." (Participant #9)

Participant #12 described the view of something that was different every day. Always changing, forming, and fluctuating:

"It's the same sort of feeling of looking into a fireplace kind of.. cause.. because the.. the.. the flames are moving and nothing is really changing, but it's always changing. It's the same with the waves, like it's.. it's still the ocean, but.. but the waves are different then the clouds are different.(…) Yeah, it it's the same view, but it's not the same view at all." (Participant #12)

Steinberg and Peters (2015) explains that the fluctuating waves, shaped by the wind, provide the ocean character, showing as either calm and peaceful or gloomy and dark. Consequently, the ocean emerges as a dynamic space due to a co-creation of matter and force. Such observation can reshape our perception of the role of motion and matter in our understanding of the world (Steinberg & Peters, 2015, p. 250). During our voyage from time to time the

scenery seemed as it was the same every day, but when observed carefully the changes in the waves, the colours of the sky and the sea, the clouds, all created everchanging atmosphere and understanding of our environment. Some participants also reflected how the similarity in the scenery gave them sense of stability. This could mean that staying with the trouble, created a notion of calmness and stability.

Furthermore, Fijian student, participant #16 explained during his interview what makes staring at the ocean so peaceful:

"..you look towards the ocean and you.. it's so vast..It's.. it's this huge thing in front of you and you.. you realize how small issues can be or how.. how big the world is and how there's so much more to learn, to do, to see. So I guess in that sense it's kind of.. you turn to the ocean for a sense of calm." (Participant #16).

This signifies how the motion and matter, the fluctuating, everflowing movement that characterizes the ocean affected our (us students) sense of calmness and through that the way we view the world. The sense of calmness that arise from the ocean was a pivotal part of my findings. With many of the participants I had beautiful, reflective and insightful conversations about the calmness the ocean brought. Some participants also brought up the fact that it might be due to the sense of disconnect from the everyday reality and internet connection. However, for participant #16 the sense of calmness resulted from understanding how small his worries are compared to the vast the ocean - there is still so much to learn.

At nighttime, it was a different experience; the blackness got our imagination to run, and many of us imagined things, such as natural disasters, ghost ships, or sharks. Any life besides us, not to feel so alone. At night, there were no lights allowed on deck. Only a tiny red light on our head torch was allowed. In the blackness of the night, my thoughts often ominously wondered. Below Participant #18, a Fijian student, expressed during the interview how she felt in the darkness – the blackness of the Pacific:

"When it was dark. It was beautiful too, but. The blackness of it. Um, it's just that looking into.. into nothingness, ay…..I had this sense of not knowing because it's so dark, you know, like you not knowing what's gonna happen next. But it wasn't bit terrified. It was just like acceptance,

you know..And I was just like in ohh odd. Like I was like in odd at the whole..Ohh how we are so small and insignificant up there." (Participant #18)

The blackness caused us to lose visibility, and Participant #18 realized that not knowing was not scary for her, but she accepted the situation. This shows how humans must adapt to nature and accept that sometimes it is better to learn how to stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) by focusing on being present at the moment instead of looking to the invisible, hypothetical horizon. This makes us aware of our surroundings on a more profound level, and by keeping our focus near, we can notice things that are within our reach at the moment. Below, a Norwegian student reflects how, in the darkness, her imagination was more vivid, and she started imagining realities, fictional stories, and speculations about what was happening around us or what could happen around us?

"It became more unpredictable when you couldn't really see anything logically and.. And yeah, that changed everything a lot because in the day you could see so incredibly far and you could see everything. And then at night it's.. It's just this big mystery. So I guess it.. quite a lot of the time my thoughts would wonder more at night. And especially if, like if it was one of those nights where you had just enough light from the sky that you could kind of see the ocean moves, but not really much more than that..It's so easy to start… Imagining things and to start like building little stories around that. Around all the movement in the ocean or you start to like wonder if you maybe saw an animal or.. Or is there something far out there that I'm like, am I seeing other…things?" (Participant # 9)

Haraway (2016) narrates that it is easy to start imagining troubled future, but by learning to stay with the trouble, truly present in the moment, challenges the anthropocentric worldview, where human exceptionalism and aim to control is celebrated. Furthermore, staying with the trouble creates space and time to recognize and accept the unpredictability of the future and to learn to be okay with the messy, entwined relationality of the world (Ren, 2021, p. 136; Haraway, 2016). The blackness of the night shifts on Lehmkuhl compelled participant # 18 to accept the insignificance of humankind next to the vast Pacific. Whereas participant # 9 recognized how the darkness made everything feel like mystery (or perhaps a messy mystery), and it was challenging not to imagine things.

To sum up, spending alone time with the ocean either on buoy or lookout gave us students sense of calmness. The ocean was the same, yet different depending on the sun, clouds, and ever forming waves which are shaped by the wind. The ocean is a dynamic space, and each wave gave the ocean a different form and mood, such as calm, or turbulent. When looking at the sea for one hour each day, some of us students formed an intimate relationship with the horizon. It initiated realizations of how small one's issues can be compared to the vast ocean and that provided sense of calmness. Furthermore, this impacted the way we view the world by understanding the insignificance of our personal issues compared to the large ocean.

In the blackness of the night, when the horizon was invisible, our imagination started to run free, forming speculation of hypothetical things that could happen. This is why Haraway's (2016) concept staying with the trouble can be useful. Instead of focusing on speculating the unknown, rather be present, and accept the unpredictability of the world, which is a messy, co-creational process of "becoming-with, of a common wording" (Ren, 2021, p. 136). Furthermore, by understanding motion and matter as configurational processes shapes the world as we know it (Steinberg & Peters, 2015, p. 250).

5.1.4 *Ocean is a good companion*

During the interviews words such as empty, nothingness, desert surfaced multiple times. Reflections from that for many was realizing how alone we were out in the middle of the Pacific – the blue desert. We encountered very little of any fish or whales or other ships during the crossing. Due to the vastness of the ocean many experienced it as emptiness, nothingness, even loneliness. Participant # 7 described during her interview of how she experienced the loneliness:

"I remember in the beginning the lookout was very, very boring. You are looking into nothing. There are no fish, no anything except some flying fish… But otherwise, yeah, nothing was there. So it felt very..Uh…felt very lonely.." (Participant #7)

Haraway (2016) writes about "sympoiesis" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58), which means "making-with" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58). Sympoiesis supports the idea that "earthlings are never alone" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58). Thinking with sympoiesis emphasizes the notion of collaboration and interconnectedness within the world and suggests that nothing exist or function in isolation (Haraway, 2016, p.58). Even though we did not visibly encounter many living things, it does

not mean we were alone. Steinberg and Peters (2015) argue that the ocean is not a static background but rather a dynamic space that is continually reforming and reshaping (Steinberg & Peters, 2015, p. 257-258). Thus, it can be seen as collaborative sympoiesis, where "earthlings are never alone" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58); even though visibly us students got the impression of a blue desert of nothingness, the ocean is voluminous space with depth and movement (Steinberg & Peters, 2015) with symboiesis.

Participant # 9, a Norwegian student shared in her interview that she did not feel alone at any point. *"Like I feel like the oceans are very good companion"* she explained. She further reflected the reasons why ocean would be a good companion and shares that she has always gone to the ocean with her emotions. *"I'm not..necessarily big on talking to people about my feelings. So I've always had that relationship with nature"* (Participant #9).

In this sense, the ocean can be a good companion. One can cry and take out your sorrows, bringing a sense of calmness, as discussed previously. Haraway (2008) writes that the origin of word *companion* comes from the Latin word *cum panis*, which means "with bread" (Haraway, 2008, p.17). Through the Latin meaning of *cum panis*, Haraway (2008) explains how the "Messmates at the table are companions" (Haraway, 2008, p.17). In other words, by thinking and breaking down the word companion, she concludes that "such companions help readers to consume well" (Haraway, 2008, p. 17). To consume well in the context of the ocean is an important notion. Ocean is widely viewed as a resource to exploit, necessarily and unnecessarily. It provides essential matters, such as food, culture, and energy. Ocean is a provider. How can people personally comprehend the ocean as a provider? How to control the consumption of the ocean? How do you consume well? These were the questions on my mind after interviewing Participant # 9. Now, let us get back to White Watch on board Lehmkuhl and continue to explore how the notion of companion plays in this narration.

Back on Lehmkuhl, I had just sat down with some morning porridge when I heard Fish! Fish! Now, within the 26 days out on the sea we had heard that scream before, but each time the fish escaped from the line. There had been no other encounters with the non-human or humans. Everyone rushed up to the deck to see what all the excitement was about. And there it was. The first fish. People gathered around one of the scientists who opened up the fish, carefully examining the guts and gills. Inside of this Barracuda was two smaller fish, freshly eaten and a large brown parasite eating the fish slowly from inside. It is important that the scientist

examined the fish to get valuable data, regarding the health of the fish and furthermore the condition of the ocean. It is rare to have the opportunity to collect data from this far in the open sea, due to it being expensive and difficult to access. This is what the scientist on board told us. The strong smell of the fresh fish and the bloody intestines on deck did not go well with my bowl of porridge I was still holding on to, so I left the others to be amused by finally seeing a fish. It was exciting to be able to touch, smell and connect with the sea in this type of tangible way. However, catching a fish brought up different feelings for Participant # 6. During her interview she recalled one specific time that went uneasy with her:

"... I remember there was a particular time that there was yellowfin tuna caught….And everyone was kind of…Like laughing about it and like kind of wanting to take photos with it… And for me..I've always kind of through my own experience with the ocean.. I really try to treat…especially the animals with a lot of respect. And if I'm fishing, I try to kill the fish right away (…) And I feel directly responsible for it."(Participant #6)

She expresses how strange she found the situation and how it made her realize the separation between us humans on the ship and the fish in the ocean. Even though it was unintentional, we failed to view the situation from the fish perspective. In her photovoice assignment she writes that *"Nature has no voice unless we speak on her behalf."* This is what she means whit it. The fish could not advocate on its behalf. This highlights the importance of learning to view the world through the more-than-human lens. In other words, learning respect and response-ablity (Haraway, 2016). Robin W. Kimmerer, writes about indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teaching of plants in her book Braiding Sweetgrass (Kimmerer, 2013) narrates the importance of being grateful and to give thanks to the non-human, to the fish that feeds us (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 109), and to the ocean that supports our journey.

Participant #11, Oceanography and marine management student from Greece wanted to express her thanks to the ocean:

"First of all, I'm grateful because.. The sea was very good at us. And. Of course. .. jokes aside, I believe that without.. The ocean and the sea we wouldn't be there.. we wouldn't be on planet Earth starting, but it would go through our this initial steps of creation. It's what gave us the opportunity to be there. It it's what provided us with all the experiences we had. So how could we not thank the ocean?(…) I feel grateful to the sea for letting me be a part of it."(Participant #11)

She continued to reflect deeper regarding her connection with the sea.

"..personally I view the sea.. I.. I could say.. Ahm.. A family member some.. somewhere I turn to when I have problems, like when I dive or when I swim. I feel like I'm a part of something so nice and. Relaxing that my whole troubles go away. So yes, I I think I am pretty close to the sea. I love the sea very much. " (Participant #11)

By saying our thanks to the Earth, to the ocean, all the beings, we show reciprocity (Kimmerer, 2013, p.105-117). With reciprocity us students can thank the ocean for being good to us and providing us with a safe journey, we can thank the trade winds for doing its part in our journey and being gentle with us, "now our minds are one" (Kimmerer, 2013, p.108). Kimmerer (2013) reflected beautifully when thinking about reciprocity and reminds that it is not just bodily becoming-with, it is also important to expand the embodiment of non-human to the mind and the soul.

Participant #3, a Peruvian student shared during her interview how thankful she felt whenever she was on buoy watch or look out having that alone time with the ocean. She explained that even though she is not religious she sometimes prayed, said thanks or just had a conversation with the ocean:

"..Sometimes I just pray and say like yeah, thank God that I'm here, like I feel really lucky (…) or to say thank you and... this is weird but I also sometimes kind of talk to the ocean (…) That was a really special moment." (Participant #3)

She clarified further:

"it's also kind of part of my culture, I think not to the ocean, but for example there are many rituals here in Peru that you talk to non-human things. So I think maybe it's related to that..I have never done something like that, but I kind of consider talking to mountains or to things that are not human quite normal." (Participant #3)

She furthermore explained that sometimes on buoy and look out she would do a cross sign over her chest and say thanks to the ocean. She explains that it is important to her to be thankful in general. The cross sign she has learned from her mother who does it to have a safe experience. If no one else was around she could talk to the ocean out loud, otherwise she would do it quietly

on her mind. I was curious to learn more and asked if she would share what made her talk to the ocean and what kind of conversations she had:

..Sometimes I say like ohh I really miss, for example, I really miss my family, I really miss my mom and please take care of them. (…) Sometimes it was to be with the ocean, like sometimes I went on deck and I just, like, stayed there just watching, just watching the ocean. Sometimes I did like the talking part and sometimes I cried..” (Participant #3)

I asked if she felt as the ocean was like a substance that connected her to her family on the other side of the world. This made her pause and to reflect deeper:

“Yeah, yeah, something like that. Yeah..Like sometimes it felt like, OK, like we are part of this.. we are part of this planet. So it's like, ok, if I talk to the ocean somehow, it will make at least it makes sense for me, like somehow it will connect me with my family because.. Uh, yeah, it's. I don't know how to explain it, but it kind of connect us.” (Participant #3)

Epeli Hau´Ofa (2008) has worded oceans connectivity through the notion of ever-flowing sea; “Because the ocean is ever-flowing, the sea that laps the coastline of Fiji, for example, is the same water that washes the shores of all the other countries of our region” (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 54). This reflects the feelings Participant #3 described. The ocean connects us in many ways, a Fijian student, participant #17 describe the ocean connectivity in a similar sense. He wrote in his Ocean talanoa essay “We all are divided by land but connected through the ocean.” (Participant # 17, ocean talanoa) Later on when we met through Teams for his interview, I asked what he meant with this. He clarified that Oceanians are divided into small islands but connected through the same ocean. For example, some family members might live in a different island, so in that sense they are divided, but also still connected because the ocean is a stream that connects them:

“So that's the medium of transportation for us to visit their place and then come back to us. So yeah, in some way we're divided, but connected. The ocean connects us and in one more way is looking back to our background, our historical background. Ocean is the medium that has brought us here to Fiji is for us from India..(Participant #17)

“It was a very, very, like, an eye opener of how the ocean can be.. It's just one huge Road. It it doesn't divide, it doesn't stop you from.. from...Going from one place to another.. it's quite the

opposite. It really enables you to be able to traverse all these great, great distances in a.. in a much easier way than you would if.. if it was on land because on land you have like mountains and forests and.. and lakes and buildings and.. and everything but. But the ocean is just.. just flat and.. and obviously weather and stuff but.. But yeah, the perspective change from.. from the ocean being. Like a nuisance..To.. or.. or like it.. a problem to overcome to it being an amazing opportunity." (Participant #12)

Participant #2 reflections of oceans connectivity:

"..everybody needs to protect the ocean because the ocean is connected everywhere and everybody is connected through it.....It's like a really dependent relationship. Between everybody in the whole world. Yeah, that is so scary and so important... everybody has to take care of it. But at the same time it's like...It's something that everybody owns, so it could be a way to, like unite us.." (Participant #2)

Valtonen and Pullen (2020) writes that even though geologically situated in differently sides of the world, a matter such as rocks, can be a medium that connects, affects and inspires in a similar ways (Valtonen & Pullen, 2020, p. 508). Taking an example from Valtonen and Pullen, also an ocean can be a matter that connects affects and inspires. Both Peruvian and Fijian students felt as ocean connects them to their family, although they are geologically detached. Furthermore Participant #3 found inspiration through her connection with the ocean. She also felt responsibility. Valtonen and Pullen (2020) suggests that responsibility is not intentional but rather embodied relation. Thus, responsibility is not a choice a person can make but rather a fundamental connection. Furthermore, it is ongoing process, evolving and responsive relationship with the world, which enables for a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of the human and non-human (Valtonen and Pullen, 2020, p. 514).

"The Indo-Fijians, who are the second largest ethnic group to reside in Fiji are deeply connected to the ocean as so am I." (Participant #14)

Participant # 14 furthermore explains how ocean is a provider, not just for food and income, but also for knowledge.

"You.. you gain a lot of knowledge from the ocean in the long run.. But the longer you get to see the value of the ocean, how it supports you even just for travelling migrations that take place, thing, how peoples cultures move with them from one place to another and how everyone is connected. For example, Fiji is a multicultural country and the ocean is the major reason for it, that's how we Indians got to be here. We were brought on a ship on a sailing ship we were bought from India." (Participant #14)

He refers to the colonial time, when Indians were promised a good life by the British empire. The Indians however became slaves to work on barren lands to make them into farms. Movement and settlement are expressed variety of ways in Austronesian languages – that connects people and places by employing "spatiotemporal language of kinship". This means that the histories of the movements and settlements are narrated through not only the origins and destinations, but more so the connections and disconnections of the spiritual beings and past ancestors to the living generation (Jolly, 2007, p. 514). In the Pacific creation stories it is common that land is an active agent, and the relationship between people and place is not an ownership, but rather a mutual custodianship (Jolly, 2007, 515). Thus, the relationship between land and people or in our case, the sea and people is intertwined.

I wanted to know how being alone with the ocean, affected the students connection to the ocean. Did the alone time with the ocean strengthen her connection to the ocean?

"I felt more connected…I felt a special connection with the ocean, I felt also more inspired to do something because I thought like, OK now I had this opportunity. This is not something common…I remember that I felt really like a big responsibility of doing something. I remember of being really, really like inspired and connected." (Participant #3)

Also, a Fijian student, participant #14 reflect similar thoughts how the voyage gave him a sense of responsibility and will to do more.

"Even though I respect the environment, it gave me a more sense of like responsibility, like how much more I could do." (Participant #14)

Participant #17 reflected on the importance of being connected to the ocean:

".. when you connected to the ocean you.. you know the importance of it and when the ocean doesn't make.. make a lot of difference in your life at the end of the day, you do not consider its protection. You don't consider how beneficial it is to you….then you end up destroying it in indirect ways." Participant #17

For others, the ocean reminded how alone we were. For others, they found a good companion from the ocean. Someone to talk to, cry, and pray. The ever-flowing ocean connected, somehow to loved ones on the other side of the world. To be thankful to the ocean, shows the understanding that the ocean is important part of the more-than-human agencies that co-creates and enables us to have this journey. For many it was a matter that brought feeling of calmness and took their troubles away. It was also important to physically touch and to be connected with the ocean. When the conditions were right, we sometimes stopped so the scientist could collect samples from the ocean. Swim stops were seldom, because if there was too much current or waves it was not safe. Stopping a ship like Lehmkul, required effort, and anchorage was never an option, since the depth below us was approximately 4000 meters. Below I will narratate the first swim stop and through that seek to understand why it was important to the human ocean connection, to be physically in the water.

5.1.5   4000 meters of nothing?

The water felt warm, once I jumped into the deep blue. Sinking in, I felt weightless. I felt free. Soon enough however, I had to kick myself back to the surface, where I could feel the strength of the current. I had to keep swimming constantly to stay still. I am a strong swimmer, having to had swim competitively in my youth and therefore it took me by surprise to had to fight against the current. When looking down to the water from the deck, the ocean looked so calm and flat, which is why I did not expect the current to be so arduous. All I wanted to do was to float on my stomach and just stare into the deepness. I was so intrigued of how 4000 meters of depth would look and feel like. However, I was disturbed, continually reminded not to stop moving. As soon as I relaxed just for few seconds, I was already drifting far at the end of Lehmkuhl and had to use all my strength to swim back to be near the rope ladder. I could feel the strength of the ocean. The water was extremely clear. All I could see around was blue. The color of the blue was clear, yet rich. Royal blue. It was blue all around. No fish, or other beings. Just us, the blue and then nothing. Even though the emptiness looked calm and serene, the Pacific did not allow me to relax. I felt the continuing tuck from the current, reminding myself

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not to relax. I asked my participants how they felt when finally we were able to swim and be in the ocean.

"..when, when you're standing on the ship and watching the currents and watching the ocean, you're like, haha, I could easily swim with that. But immediately when you are in it, suddenly you could feel the power of the ocean, the currents and the waves. And everything was in flow all the time. I was like, wow, this is strange. (...) Then you have to swim like crazy to get back on the ship. I was.. I was swimming against the ocean. The ocean was like, OK, I'm gonna push you a little bit more and then you're like, thinking, OK, Now I'm gonna make it. Then the ocean is like no, pushing you behind again.." (Participanr #10)

"Sometimes it felt like I really have to swim to just stay on.. one place…that's just on those days where the current is slow enough that we are allowed to go bathing. Imagine, imagine what it's like when it's.. like when the.. yeah.." (Participant #12)

"..when you're in the middle of the ocean, the tides and the current is really strong. And I did not expect that at all. Like I.. thought I would. Sort of let myself free for a while, but then I notice that I would just be pulled back, pulled back continuously.."(Participant #15)

"I had never swum in like the open ocean and the waves are so much bigger. It's so much harder to to stay afloat. You're kind of fighting both the.. the horizontal movement of the ocean as well as like the vertical movement of the waves. Ohh, it was intense but very very nice." (Participant #16)

This reflection shows the volume of the ocean as a space. On the ship we could not feel it, and the overall impression was emptiness around us. Then again, in the water you feel both vertical and horizontal power, volume. The feeling of vastness was overwhelming. When looking down my eyes could only see blue and emptiness, yet my body felt the reminders from the ocean, if I were to relax, the powerful flow could take me. The vastness and the volume were bodily clear. While I was busy fighting the current, a fellow student noticed how the ship looked in the water and how much space we took in the Pacific:

"It was really cool, you know, to…..know that you've never swam anywhere so deep or so far away from anything.. ..And I.. I don't think I've ever gonna forget, like going under the water and seeing the boat from underneath the water. Like I thought that was really cool, because it

looks so much bigger underwater.. It looked really, really big and..you sort of saw the space that it took in the water." (Participant # 1)

"... I remember the first time looking at the ship from outside…Was like, whoa, is this, the ship that I've been living on. It's so big and it's so weird. …So it was like a really drastical…Umm, like.. difference in how you looked at the ship.." (Participant #2)

"I think it was so weird getting that change of perspective. Like wow, now I can touch the ocean, which I see every day, but it's not allowed to touch. And now I can see how the boat is looking from the outside. Yeah, it was super weird." (Participant # 2)

Fijian student felt that it was important for her connection with the ocean to physically be in the ocean. That is why swimming was an important experience during the voyage.

"..having the chance to swim and actually connect with the ocean in a physical sense, I think rounded the trip for.. for a lot of us because we were able to have that physical connection and not just OK being out of the ocean, but actually being in the ocean, yeah." (Participant #18)

"..for us.. it's about, you know, physically touching it, touching the waves, moving your hands as the.. as..like whatever boat or canoe or you're on... you can basically sift your hands as the ship is moving on the waves." (Participant #18)

"..it was strange being so close to the ocean and being unable to interact with it directly because we were like interacting with the elements through the ship, but we couldn't really directly have anything to do with the water." (Participant #9)

5.2   Sustainability in a floating society

During the interviews many participants reflected on their understanding of sustainability by using the ship as a metaphor. This helped us to conceptualize the complexity of sustainability in a more practical sense. The ship became a small society for us; we stored our trash on board until the next port. It was sobering to understand how much trash we produced. Furthermore, taking care of the ship was vital to perceive it well. This made many to realize the importance of care. Another important realization came from the way the crew reused everything on board. We could not throw anything away, nor buy new if something broke. We had to use what we

had on board. Our resources were limited, and this led to creative reuse of things. Fijian student felt as every aspect of the ship could be related to the importance of collective interest.

"I feel like every aspect of the ship became a metaphor for the things that we want to do. So you know Firewatch, making sure we don't burn up in flames. Making sure that you know we don't run into something and no one goes over board. That everyone's survival is insured, you know, like so it.. it kind of reminds you that it's not a selfish thing that you have to do.. It's a collective interest that you're protecting." (Participant #16)

Below, participant # 5 explains how during the mornings in white watch we had to scrub the deck and she learned to know the ship very well while scrubbing each deck board. She learned which parts can have salt water and which part cannot. This matters for the sake of preserving and taking good care of the ship in a long-lasting approach.

"..you get to know the ship much more if you care for it I mean…That's the case with, I think all kinds of stuff, like if you care for it, if you clean it, if you keep it going, then you somehow get to know more and build some more of a connection." (Participant #5)

She furthermore expressed how the crew and their knowledge impacted her understanding of sustainability and the importance of sustaining the ship:

"When thing..gets broken you just buy new stuff, but on the ship like we couldn't like throw things away (…) you learn to…Um, take care of…Uh. eah, where you live in..and some way you can look at the whole ship as a miniature, as society like, like the Earth itself. Like, this is what we got. And it's so.. it's more easy to say when it's so small that you see that everything has an impact.."(Participant #5)

Furthermore participant #14, a Fijian student confirmed that it was important realization.

"The importance of taking care of things..ayh.. because the ship wouldn't have survived if it wasn't taken care of.." (Participant #14)

The importance of teamwork came apparent in many ways during the voyage. It was required when we pulled the ropes or scrubbed the deck in synergy. Imagining the ship as the world, highlighted how important it was for everyone to do their part - cliche or not.

"It was so nice to work together, I think as well in teams or like watches.. Because it's very.. it's kind of maybe a cliche, but like, you can't steer the ship without a crew, right? So if.. it's same as sustainability for the earth, like you need to work together, we need to work together. Which is very complicated, but uh, that's.. that's the only way so.." (Participant #13)

Participant # 12 explained how we as a team were the force to make the ship move:
"..We, as a team, as a group, are responsible for getting the ship to move forward (…) Then we need a lot of people to pull these ropes and.. and we're just using…we're using exactly what is there, meaning the wind and the currents (…) it was nice to be able to use the nature, use the powers in nature to. To get ahead and. Moved towards the goal." (Participant # 12)

One of the most significant learning outcomes for many was water conservation. However, to learn this, we had to go through an unexpected challenge caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Below is a collection of examples of how the complexity of sustainability became evident by thinking of the ship as a small society or an ecosystem that we had to care for. It was easier to grasp the complexity of sustainability through something concrete, such as a ship or the ocean. In this chapter, Haraway's concept of staying with trouble is explored in the context of sustainability. These topics were raised organically during a variety of conversations in the interviews.

 Part of the SDG200 was to have exchange students from USP on board for three weeks, while 30 students, who had been on board since Chile, stayed in Fiji. I stayed on board of Lehmkul. After a few wonderful free days exploring the islands of Fiji, we returned home to Lehmkuhl only to find out we had Covid-19 on board. Covid had challenged us prior to this but in a manageable way. However, we were no longer free to handle it as we saw fit as before while sailing in the high seas. We were situated in Suva, the capital of Fiji, and a home for USP. Governance of Fiji ordered us to stay in quarantine for seven days in a designated anchorage in the industrial Suva harbor. We could not go on land or set sail and, therefore, were forced to stay still or stuck, if you will. We were staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016). This situation brought much uncertainty regarding the near future. What happens if someone tests positive after seven days? Will the quarantine be extended? Will we make it to our following destinations, Tonga and Samoa? How can we keep social distance on a ship where our hammocks are side by side? Furthermore, the most troubling worry was whether we had enough

fresh water to last throughout the quarantine. The freshwater tank on board holds up to 120 tons of water (Njølstad Skandsen, 2023). That is, on average, 100-120 liters of fresh water per person, and with typical consumption, it will last around one to two days. A water filter system called reverse osmosis converts seawater to fresh water when Lehmkuhl is sailing. However, in an industrial marina, the water quality is not clean enough to convert it to fresh water (OOE, n.d.). The captain informed us that the water tanks had around 60 liters of fresh water per person daily. It sounds like a lot, but in comparison, the average household consumption in Norway in 2022 was 171 liters/person/day (Statistisks Sentralbyrå, 2023). In Fiji, even a bit more on average 220 liters/person/day in 2017 (Singh, 2018). Therefore, we were about to face serious water shortage. We were stuck, and all we could do is to learn to embrace the challenge as a learning opportunity by learning to stay with the trouble.

However, some were relieved to stay on anchorage. This meant ease on the intense schedule and proper sleep since there was no sailing duty. Staying still also gave us ample opportunity to get to know the students from the Pacific islands and to hear their stories about their culture, values, and way of life. Suddenly, the ship felt like one of the islands of Fiji. Full of music, dance, life, and storytelling. The joy of the music and new people, conversely, was overshadowed by the constant worry of Covid. By the second day of anchorage, the ship had been divided into two parts with a thick curtain. The positive Covid cases kept rising, and around 30 were close contacts who were to stay behind the curtain. The infected were isolated in separate cabins. We wore masks and kept our distance while still trying to make the most of it and seek connection with the USP students. Laundry was closed, and showers were shut down. Everyone was trying to do their part to conserve water. The number of Covid positives kept rising. The garbage on the galley (kitchen) roof started to smell under the hot sun. I started to miss the breeze I felt when we were sailing. In addition to covid, there was gastroenteritis spreading on board. This was even more worrisome than Covid since the number of toilets on board was limited. Washing hands and keeping up good hygiene was essential. So was conserving water. This was a balance we had to learn.

"Mixed-up times are overflowing with both pain and joy—with vastly unjust patterns of pain and joy, with unnecessary killing of ongoingness but also with necessary resurgence." (Haraway, 2016, p.1). As Haraway (2016) writes, in challenging times, such as the Anthropocene, it is natural to be tempted to imagine the future and address the hypothetical

problems by securing a safe future. However, this way of thinking will disregard the present (Haraway, 2016, p. 1).

The captain informed us that water was not going to last throughout the whole quarantine. Therefore, buckets were taken out for rainwater to be collected. This was the time to learn and to reflect. It was time to understand that, for some, this is an everyday reality. Although our situation was somewhat serious, we had enough drinking water, and soon enough, we could set sail again. Thus, this was only temporary. I wanted to understand how my participants felt during the quarantine. What reflections and realizations did they have when we unexpectedly learned how to stay with the trouble, especially regarding sustainability? How was it for my fellow students to be surrounded by the ocean but unable to sail? Seeing land, not being able to go on land.

A Fijian student understood the human impact on the water quality when looking at the polluted water in Suva Harbor. The effect and relationality became apparent.

"I remember when we were short of water and then the captains like, we can't really get water out of here..Yeah, because it's really polluted. And yeah, it really shows how much we impact the ocean, like how serious it is and how it comes back to bite us in the end." (Participant #14)

The connection between human and non-human was visible. Harming one member of the relationality also harms the other (Haraway, 2016; Valtonen & Pullen, 2020, p. 514). By staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016), the students on board were not busy with sailing duties, and we were forced to stay present in the challenging situation. This experience made me reflect on my privilege and fortune always to have access to fresh water. I thought I already knew how to be mindful of water consumption, but this made me aware of it on a more practical level.

5.3 *"Wansolwara – One ocean, one people"*

One of the most meaningful learning outcomes of the voyage for many Western students came from the Pacific Islanders. Through talanoa, they generously shared their thoughts about the ocean and their connection to nature. Being connected to nature and the sea is a big part of the Oceanian identity (Vaka'uta et al., 2018; Hau´Ofa, 2008)

To hear, observe, and experience how naturally the ocean was part of their stories and everyday life, for example, through dance and music, made me want to learn more about the student's

relationship with the sea. During the interviews, I asked the participants about their connection with the ocean. For the Pacific Islanders, the answers were clear. They did not have to ponder too long on responding to my question. Their identity was connected to their relationship with the ocean.

Participant #16, a student from Fiji, reflected on his relationship with the ocean.

"So, I mean, being Fijian is such a huge part of our identity because we're small, or we say, small island nation, but we're a large ocean state. So you know the ocean really does add way to the amount of land we have and the impact of that kind of comes into every aspect of our lives from the food we eat to the..the weather…We experience the way we build our houses, the travels we make. That's all so.. so impacted by the ocean. Although we don't maybe like think about it all the time. We.. we are identified by the ocean we call ourselves Oceanians. We derive from the ocean to bring this identity, to bring us peace, to bring us connection to the rest of the world. So, it's it's kind of intrinsically linked to who we are." (Participant # 16)

During the voyage, I had heard the saying small island nation – large ocean state before this conversation. It was clear that he genuinely identified with it. The saying refers to how the small island states and territories of the Pacific are often globally viewed as too small, too isolated, and with too few resources to rise above their dependence on the charity from wealthier nations. This perspective diminishes the power of Oceania as a whole. The land mass of one island might be small, but once all the Oceania states and the sea in between are put together, they are significant. Adding up the oral traditions, the myths, legends, and the Oceanic cosmologies, it becomes apparent that the world of the people of Oceania is anything but small. Oceania is not just small island nations or the surface of the land; it consists of the underwater world, the ocean surface, and the star constellations that people of Oceania can count on to guide them across the seas. (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 29-31)

Many of us felt small when looking at the vast, blue Pacific during our voyage. The words desert, empty, vast, and nothingness surfaced repeatedly in the interviews with the students who sailed from Chile. Spending time with the ocean calmed and relaxed us and made our issues feel tiny in comparison. It made us feel small. The notion of smallness is relative and depends on what is included and excluded in the size calculation (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p.31). Participant #16 identified with the thought that the ocean makes Oceania prominent. Ocean is part of his

identity and, in a way, connects him to the rest of the world. It does not make him feel small. It makes him feel connected.

Participant #8 from PNG shared in her ocean story about her connection with the ocean through a pidgin word of *"wansolwara"* that means one ocean, one people (Hau' Ofa, 2008, p. 52) or "one salt water" (Johansson-Fua, 2022, p.473). More so wansolwara refers to crating harmony and togetherness from a common shared ocean and to be connected to present, the future and to the ancestors from the past (Johansson-Fua, 2022, p.474).

I asked her what *wansolwara* meant for her?

"I mean, what the Pacific Island region are trying to call us now is to Large Ocean States and rather than Small Island States. So because we have a large ocean, I think by "wansolwara" it means to me that..I mean..You may be very small and don't have that much finances to be able to help us..but we all still come together and we all still support each other because we are still in one ocean." (Participant #8)

The cultures in Oceania have been shaped by the interactions between people and the sea. The smaller the island, the more intense the interaction with the sea (Hau´Ofa, 2008, p. 52)

Participant # 16 shared her connection to the *vai* – water, ocean.

"..when we talk about vai we, we tend to associate the idea of motherliness to it. So the ocean as… This resource but also this entity that gives and sustains and protects. So yeah, so Vai is usually coupled with vanua, which is the word for land.." (Participant #16)

Above Participant #16 opened up to me about the concept of vai and vanua. Words for water and land pretty consistently throughout different Pacific Island nations and languages. He explained that they go hand in hand and are usually talked about together.

Participant #18 explained this further:

"When we talk about the ocean… We also include the land, so they sort of exist together. So.. it's not like a holy ocean focused relationship. It's more of like a holistic environmental connection, yes so when we say that we have a connection with the ocean, that does not nullify or diminish our connection with the land because they co-exist together." (Participant #18)

She grew up in a rural ocean community where the connection with the land and sea is established as soon as a child is born. *"My umbilical cord was tucked under the coral in the ocean".* She explained further that the male baby's placenta is planted to create connection with the land and the female baby's umbilical cord is buried in the sea, under a coral. By planting the placenta on the ground, it creates a connection with the land so the baby will grow up to take care of their family and the land. When the umbilical cord is tucked under the coral, the connection with the ocean will lead to nurturing, taking care and feeding the family, since women will go out on the reef and look for food. Through the placenta and umbilical cord a baby is connected to their mother, so once they are born; *"the land and the ocean are mother to us, when we come out of the womb".*

"It's to create that..connection with the ocean and... whether it's planted on land or put in the ocean, the connection, it represents both entities, both the land and the ocean." (Participant #18)

I asked her if the connection is for that specific place, but she explained that it is to the whole ocean and land, not to a specific place. We moved on to talk about her sailing experience. I was curious to learn if she felt similar connection with the ocean out on the high seas as she does at home in her rural ocean community.

"Ohh, I felt free. Like.. I just felt so free and so calm and I was not afraid...It just was so calming and so freeing it just felt like I was home. But, you know, without all the added stress it, it was just the calming.. Even though like I couldn't really touch the.. the.. the sea because like on the ship there's sort of like a disconnect, because of the height of the ship. Because for us when we are on a boat like maybe a fibreglass boat or a canoe, we can.. we still have that connection with the ocean, we can still touch it. So even though.. on the ship it would had a freeing effect.. ...it's tranquillyty, you know.." (Participant #18)

Participant #16 shared his ocean story on his talanoa essay:

"We often speak of the connections we have to the ocean, what Vai means to us, but these are told in a light very different to what we experience. My ocean is hidden in the murky waters of the Suva harbour, and when possible, I avoid visiting it. There is a sense of shame and

*resentment that surrounds this body of water; helplessness. We know the need for change is dire, yet we have little to no say on how our futures evolve in this regard. Despite our minimal impact, we are acutely aware of the encroaching water, the intensifying weather, the lost flora, and the dying fauna. "(*Participant #16, Ocean talanoa)

When he uses the word Vai from a water, in the mix of English words, for a foreign ear it sound personal. As the ocean would have an identity. Participant 18 shared that her connection with the ocean is not within a specific place. The connection is rather to all ocean, ocean as an entity, as a matter. Anna Tsing writes that "Familiar places are the beginning of appreciation for multi-species interactions." (Tsing, 2012 p. 142). Tsing talks about mushrooms and foragers describing the familiarity of a tree that becomes the seasonal mushroom spot. Ocean on the other hand can be familiar as an element It can be familiar if you are across the world, you can feel the same connection and familiarity as you are used to.

Student who's originally from the Northern Norway (Participant #9) thought that the ocean in the Pacific felt quite different than the ocean back home. In northern Norway there is a lot of "weather", enunciating that the ocean has a lot of feelings. *"The ocean gets angry, the ocean gets large"*. Whereas in the Pacific the ocean did not behave as such. The calm Pacific made her also feel calm throughout the journey.

Tsing questions human autonomy and exceptionalism that has rooted in science as the base assumption and encourages to join her in imagining how human nature can be altered through histories together with various webs of interspecies dependence. By traveling through these various webs opens possibilities to comprehend the complex human - nonhuman entanglement and interactions (Tsing, 2012, p. 144)

"Familiar places engender forms of identification and companionship that contrast to hyper-domestication and private property as we know it." (Tsing, 2012, p. 142). Participant #18 described how her connection to the ocean is not based on specific spot. Afterall, she learned where her umbilical cord was buried only at the age of ten. The idea of being connected to a specific place, implies to being still. As the findings shows, the ocean is not still mater but rather an active participant in the creation of tourism narrative. It has volume and it is in continues flux. Ocean has many faces, and therefore, connection to naturally can vary. On the other hand, Pacific was very calm, Northern Norway as participant 9 describe, the ocean gets angry and

large, it has a lot of feelings, personality. Therefore, naturally the way we learn to know the ocean creates your ocean story.

6   Conclusion

This master's thesis research project explores more-than-human agencies on the Pacific Ocean. The aim was to gain new tourism narratives through an approach where humans are decentered, and more-than-human agency is recognized and furthermore to add on the existing research about more-than-human relationality. Additionally the interest was how understanding human ocean relationality impacted us students understanding of sustainability and what insight Pacific world view provided for us students. The topic started to develop when I got accepted on a summer sustainability course (SDG200 - Ocean-Climate-Society), which was held on board of a Norwegian tall ship Statsraad Lehmkuhl while sailing cross the Pacific Ocean from Valparaiso, Chile to Palau. On the course 86 international students, me included, from interdisciplinary background participated as sail trainees learning how to sail a traditional tall ship addition to the SDG200, where us students were thought about global sustainable development, planetary boundaries, and the about the crucial role the ocean plays in global sustainable development. SDG200 was part of One Ocen Expedition, a circumnavigation around the world, with the goal to share awareness about the ocean's role in global sustainable development. The main message of One Ocean Expedition was to show how one ocean connects the world so all nations can work toward common sustainable future.

Tourism has adverse effects on the global environmental challenges the world is currently confronting in the Anthropocentric era (Holden et al., 2022). However, tourism research currently falls short in addressing the complex sustainability challenges, necessitating new perspectives and narratives to do its part in tackling the environmental crises the world is facing. This calls for a shift towards more theoretical and fluid approach challenging dominating anthropocentric views and to move away from the human cantered approach. This results in a need to acknowledge the more-than-human agency and how the world is continually forming and shaping through entangled co-creational processes. Furthermore, it is essential to support the different ways in which non-humans engage in the creation and distribution of knowledge (Chakraborty, 2021; Ren, 2021; Pritchard et al., 2011; Höckert et al., 2022; Rantala et al., 2020).

I conducted the research with mixed qualitative methods, which were ethnography, semi-structured interviews and document study, that implemented talanoa and photovoice methodologies.

First research question explored how did spending prolonged time out on the ocean influence us students understanding of our connection with the ocean, and in which ways the relationality and embodiment of the more-than-human came apparent during the voyage? The movement of the ship and the sea was continuously present, first it was evident through seasickness and difficulty finding a balance. After some time, us student developed sea legs, meaning we naturally adapted to the movement of the ship, and therefore the more-than-human agency became embodied within. Furthermore, the Pacific Islanders generate trust in the ocean through their ancestors and Pacific heritage. This highlights how interconnected they are with the coean, their history and their identity. Sail maneuvers required pulling roped, and through the connection and the touch between the rope and a student, the entangled knot of more-than-human agency became apparent. Touch suggests intimacy and relationality. Us student, we were able to feel the power of nature embodied in our palms as visible hardening, which became part of our new sailor identity. This more-than-human entanglement blurred the boundaries between human and non-human. Furthermore, through the sailor's hands, the life out on the sea and how hard we had pulled the ropes became a visible part of us.

It became apparent that it was important to listen to the rhythm of the ship and the sea when climbing up to the mast. This showed that viewing scary and challenging times, such as climbing the rigging or, for example, climate change, from staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) perspective can be helpful and ensure awareness of the situation and surroundings. Listening to the non-humans and slowing down to match their rhythm achieved situated knowing (Rantala et al., 2016). It enabled us to climb to the top without falling. Furthermore, the non-humans showed a substantial effect on us students through fear, which led to wanting to control. This further highlighted the more-than-human relationality.

The ocean is a dynamic space, and each wave gave the ocean a different form and mood. Fir us students the ocean created a calm feeling. When looking at the sea for one hour each day, some of us students formed an intimate relationship with the horizon. It initiated realizations of how

small one's issues can be compared to the vast ocean and that provided sense of calmness. Furthermore, this impacted the way we view the world by understanding the insignificance of our personal issues compared to the large ocean. During nighttime our imagination started to form speculations of hypothetical things that could happen. Haraway's (2016) concept of staying with the trouble highlights how it is essential to stay present in the moment. This makes it possible to be aware of our environment and develop connection and care for it.

The ocean can be viewed as a good companion, to whom one can shared sorrow, say thanks, or pray to. It is vital that we consider what kind of companion the ocean is to us. By being thankful to our environment, shows a reciprocity. The ocean provides, food, income, culture, a connection to nations far away, such as Pacific Islands. Since ocean provides so much, it is only right for us to show reciprocity by saying thanks to the ocean and by treating it with respect.

One of the significant learning outcomes from the voyage was hearing stories from the USP students. Their connection with the environment is holistic, and includes, not just the ocean, but land as well in a unity. It was a big realisation for me to start researching the ocean human connection from a more-than-human approach and not to think about including the land. However, it is part of the entangled world we form and shape through a collaborative world making process.

Second question explored was the agency the ocean and the ship had in students' understanding and creation of knowledge of global sustainable development and climate challenges. Being in quarantine in Suva and facing water shortage though many of us valuable lessons. It helped us to understand that this is the reality for many every day. By adapting Haraway's (2016) concept of staying with the trouble, we can learn to stay still, be present and listen to the non-human. It is important to note that staying with in the trouble, does not dimmish the crucial need for future goals, such as sustainable development goals. It simply means to learn to pay attention to our environment, by being present, which allows us to notice what can we do now, instead of worrying about hypothetical future scenarios. This further highlighted the importance of fighting for a sustainable future. Furthermore, viewing the ship as a small society, an ecosystem made us students realized that our resources are not infinite. Taking care of the ship, was vital. Many students connected this to sustainability and how we must care for our planet.

One of the biggest learning outcomes for the Western students was getting to know the people from the Pacific. Their connection to the sea comes through their Oceanian heritage. It is

embodied within. Hearing stories from the Pacific Islanders made us understand the importance of being connected to your environment. By seeing and being near the ocean can lead to understanding of the importance of care, reciprocity, and responsibility.

7   Reflections

Participating in the SDG200 voyage and engaging with the Pacific people, culture and worldviews changed me in many levels. Studying four months intensively about the impact of climate change, planetary boundaries and about the role ocean plays in global sustainability, brought sense of urgency in me. I am grateful that I chose to write my thesis about the Pacific crossing. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on the voyage in a profound level. After coming home, I felt climate anxiety, and re-viewed what kind of changes I can make in an individual level, such as changing my eating habits. Big source of anxiety and a need for a re-evaluation came from my chosen career in tourism industry. It did not feel right to go back to work as travel specialist, where my job is to sell group tours around the world.

As I have mentioned before, one of the most meaningful learning outcomes for me was getting to know the USP students and I am very grateful for all the ocean talanoa we had on board. When researching for my thesis I immersed myself to the Pacific literature and found connections between more-than-human approach and the Pacific world views. What really stood out for me both, when transcribing the interviews with the USP students and reading the scientific literature about Oceanic ontologies was the use of *I* and *We*. Both within all the interviews with USP students, the students used *we* when they talked about their connection with the ocean. Whereas all the other students used *I*. This was consistent throughout the interviews. The same line was consistent with the Pacific literature. When I started my master's, studies, we were thought not to use *We, I , Us*. However, the academic literature I read from the Pacific, it was common to use *we, and us*. This made me further reflect on Western knowledge creation, and western academia.

Mastre's thesis was a challenging task. I immersed myself with a philosophical literature which I had no previous knowledge about. This made me broaden my world view and the way I view knowledge. It took a long time for me to familiarize myself with the literature and to comprehend the more-than-human thinking.

Furthermore, big struggles were to learn time management. A significant learning outcome throughout the writing was that perfection kills progress. I hope in the future to get new opportunities to educate myself more regarding this posthumanism, new feminist materiality and more-than-human approach to knowledge creation. The Pacific Ocean and the people I have met during the voyage stole piece of my heart. And I hope one I can return to the Pacific to learn more about their insightful world view. Therefore, I would like to say thanks, to the Pacific Islanders for all the wisdom I gained and of course to the Ocean for providing.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Participant demographic

Appendix B– Consent form for the participants for Talanoa Assignment

Appendix C – Consent form for the participants for Photovoice assignment.

Appendix A

Table 1: The participants

Participant	Nationality	Field of study	Talanoa/Photovoice	Valparaiso -Palau
# 1	Norway	Community planning and cultural understanding (masters)	Talanoa (2)	YES
# 2	Norway	Bioscience	Talanoa (2)	YES
# 3	Peru	Marine biology	Photovoice	YES
# 4	Norway	Clinical nutrition (masters)	Talanoa (3)	YES
# 5	Germany	Environmental science	Photovoice	YES
# 6	Canada	Marine biology	Photovoice	YES
# 7	Norway	Music/Nanotechnology	Talanoa (Creative)	YES
# 8	Papua New Guinea/PNG	Ocean resource management	Talanoa (3)	YES
# 9	Norway	Human geography (BA)	Photovoice	YES
# 10	Norway	A visual communicator designer /master's in design	Talanoa (Creative)	YES
# 11	Greece	Oceanography and marine management	Talanoa (3)	YES
# 12	Norway	Clinical psychology	Talanoa (Creative)	YES
# 13	Norway	Language, history, Spanish and Latin-America	Photovoice	YES

# 14	Fiji	Environmental management	Talanoa (3)	On board for 3 weeks
# 15	India	Aerospace engineering, nuclear energy	Talanoa (3)	On board for 3 weeks
# 16	Fiji	Law and politics	Talanoa (creative)	On board for 3 weeks
# 17	Fiji	Environmental science	Talanoa (3)	On board for 3 weeks
# 18	Fiji	Masters in climate change, science and policy	Not included	On board for 3 weeks

Appendix B: Consent form for participant with ocean narrative/ocean talanoa essay:

Are you interested in taking part in the research project
"More-Than-Human Agency on the Pacific Ocean"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the primary purpose is to explore more-than-human agency on a sailing experience on Statsraad Lehmkuhl during the SDG200 course. In this letter, I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This qualitative research is my master's thesis project in Tourism studies. The project explores a more-than-human agency during our sailing voyage on Statsraad Lehmkuhl across the Pacific Ocean. More-than-human agency considers human and non-human agencies to be connected into an entangled, complex relationship or a network.

Currently tourism research is insufficient to address complex sustainability challenges and needs new narratives to do its part in tackling the environmental crises the world is facing. Therefore, it is essential to adapt a more theoretical and fluid approach to challenge the currently dominating anthropocentric views. There is a need for recognition of human-non-human relationship and to move away from the human centered approach. It is necessary in tourism research to acknowledge and support the different ways in which non-human actors communicate and engage in the creation and distribution of knowledge.

The aim is to gain new tourism narratives and create tourism knowledge through an approach where humans are decentred, and more-than-human agency is recognized. This research reflects how ocean and human co-existence produces different realities and narratives regarding sustainability and climate change.

I seek to understand the relationship and connection between the ocean and humans (us students). Additionally, what kind of agency the ship (Statsraad Lehmkuhl) had in that relationship. Thus, I seek to understand your connection with the ocean and how that connection influenced your understanding of different sustainability challenges. Particularly, I aim to explore how culturally specific narratives create an understanding and influences the human/ocean relationship. Therefore, I would love to hear about your connection with the ocean through your cultural narrative and if, and, how your connection and relationship with the ocean changed during your time on Statsraad Lehmkuhl.

Who is responsible for the research project?

UiT – The Arctic University of Norway is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

I would like your participation since you were part of the One Ocean Expedition and SDG200 course. I aim to interview 4-6 students from USP and 4-6 students who participated on the whole course (sailed from Chile to Palau). Thus, I hope that USP students can provide perspective from the Pacific Islands and help me to better understand their connection with the ocean through their cultural narrative. I furthermore anticipate that students who sailed from Chile to Palau can provide understanding of how spending as long as four months out on the sea influenced their connection with the ocean.

What does participation involve for you?

I will conduct a semi-structured interview, asking you to reflect on your experience on board of Statsraad Lehmkuhl, your connection with the ocean, and if the connection changed during our voyage. I am interested to know how your connection with the ocean has helped you to understand climate change and the sustainability issues the world is facing. Furthermore, if you wrote an "Ocean Narrative" essay during the SDG200 course, I ask your permission to use it as additional data. I hope that during the interview, you can further elaborate your essay and your ocean story. Depending on which question you answered, I anticipate that your essay will provide further insight into your relationship with the ocean (pre-expedition or during the voyage) and perhaps your thoughts in general about the ocean, connectivity, and sustainability.

I want to hear about your relationship with the ocean through your cultural narrative and how your connection and relationship with the ocean changed during your time on Statsraad Lehmkuhl.

If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve that I will interview you through Teams meeting, which will be set up by me on a pre-agreed time. With your consent your interview will be recorded electronically. The interview will take approx. 45-60 minutes. Recording will be deleted after the project has ended.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be deleted. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

All participants will remain anonymous. I will not publish your name; however, your nationality, gender, ethnicity, and your field of study may be used to differentiate one informant from another. No other personal data will be asked for or published. I will process your data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

I will record the interview electronically. The recording and transcript are protected with a password that only I have access to. Your name and email are replaced with a code. The list of names and contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end 1st of November 2023. After this all the personal data including digital recordings will be deleted.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability)
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives me the right to process your personal data?

I will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with UiT - The Arctic University of Norway Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- Tiia-Mari Pykälä, Master's student, +47 90809174, tpy001@uit.no
- Tarja Tuulia Salmela, Supervisor, +4741760326, tarja.t.salmela@uit.no
- Bente Heimtun, a program coordinator in Master of tourism studies, +4778450293, bente.heimtun@uit.no
- UiT Data Protection Officer: Sølvi Brendeford Anderssen,+4777646153, personvernombud@uit.no
- Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt), by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Tarja Tuulia Salmela   Tiia-Mari Pykälä
(Researcher/supervisor)   Student

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "More-Than-Human Agency on the Pacific Ocean" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in qualitative interview.
- ☐ to have my *"Ocean Narrative"* essay to be used as part of this research as a document study.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project 1st of November 2023

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix C: Consent form for participant with a Photovoice assignment:

Are you interested in taking part in the research project
"More-Than-Human Agency on the Pacific Ocean"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the primary purpose is to explore more-than-human agency on a sailing experience on Statsraad Lehmkuhl during the SDG200 course. In this letter, I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This qualitative research is my master's thesis project in Tourism studies. The project explores a more-than-human agency during our sailing voyage on Statsraad Lehmkuhl across the Pacific Ocean. More-than-human agency considers human and non-human agencies to be connected into an entangled, complex relationship or a network.

Currently tourism research is insufficient to address complex sustainability challenges and needs new narratives to do its part in tackling the environmental crises the world is facing. Therefore, it is essential to adapt a more theoretical and fluid approach to challenge the currently dominating anthropocentric views. There is a need for recognition of human-non-human relationship and to move away from the human centered approach. Furthermore, it is necessary in tourism research to acknowledge and support the different ways in which non-human actors communicate and engage in the creation and distribution of knowledge.

The aim is to gain new tourism narratives and create tourism knowledge through an approach where humans are decentred, and more-than-human agency is recognized. This research reflects how ocean and human co-existence produces different realities and narratives regarding sustainability and climate change.

I seek to understand the relationship and connection between the ocean and humans (us students). Additionally, what kind of agency the ship (Statsraad Lehmkuhl) had in that relationship. Thus, I want to understand your connection with the ocean and how that connection influenced your understanding of different sustainability challenges. Particularly, I aim to explore how culturally specific narratives create an understanding and influences the human/ocean relationship. Therefore, I would love to hear about your connection with the ocean through your cultural narrative and if, and, how your connection and relationship with the ocean changed during your time on Statsraad Lehmkuhl.

Who is responsible for the research project?

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Why are you being asked to participate?

I would like your participation since you were part of the One Ocean Expedition and SDG200 course. I aim to interview 4-6 students from USP and 4-6 students who participated on the whole course (sailed from Chile to Palau). Thus, I hope that USP students can provide perspective from the Pacific Islands and help me to better understand their connection with the ocean through their cultural narrative. I furthermore anticipate that students who sailed from Chile to Palau can provide understanding of how spending as long as four months out on the sea influenced their connection with the ocean.

What does participation involve for you?

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If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve that I will interview you through Teams meeting, which will be set up by me on a pre-agreed time. With your consent your interview will be recorded electronically. The interview will take approx. 45-60 minutes. Recording will be deleted after the project has ended.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be deleted. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

All participants will remain anonymous. I will not publish your name; however, your nationality, gender, ethnicity, and your field of study may be used to differentiate one informant from another. No other personal data will be asked for or published. I will process your data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

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- Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt), by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Tarja Tuulia Salmela   Tiia-Mari Pykälä
(Researcher/supervisor)   Student

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