

Towards collective ways of knowing in the Anthropocene: Walking-with multiple others

Tarja Salmela, University of Lapland, Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI)
Anu Valtonen, University of Lapland, Faculty of Social Sciences

Introduction



(Photo: Authors)

“I sat down one spring day to write about walking and stood up again, because a desk is no place to think on the large scale.” Rebecca Solnit in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2000, chapter 1)

In this research note*, we leave our desks to take part in the creation of new imaginaries of our ways of knowing in the era of the Anthropocene – an era during which humans have profoundly influenced the wellbeing of the Earth. Being faithful to the special issue’s question, *“How can we, in the era of the Anthropocene, aim to know-with objects, things, animals, elements and theories both in our pedagogical efforts and through our research activities?”*, we present insights from an ongoing field research with the earthly creatures inhabiting the Pyhä-Luosto National Park in Finnish Lapland. We read our empirical materials through Karen Barad’s framework of agential realist ontology (Barad, 2003, 2007), which is structured upon the notion of *intra-action*, a “neologism [that] signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies” (Barad, 2007, p. 33). Moreover, we set Baradian heritage in close dialogue with the practice of *walking*, as a way of engaging in and with a more-than-human world (Springgay & Truman, 2018). Walking has an extensive history as a research methodology in the social sciences and humanities. It has been a form

of ethnography (Ingold & Vergunst, 2008/2016; Vergunst, 2011), a walking interview method (Stals, Smyth, & Ijsselsteijn, 2014), a “talking whilst walking” bodily research practice (Anderson, 2004) and a strategy for decolonising research (Sundberg, 2014). The walking methodology can be considered particularly suitable for relational, material and situated research (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 14). It brings our attention also to place and place-making, place representing a crucial concept in walking research (p. 4). In addition to Pyhä-Luosto being a popular tourist attraction, it is a place meaningful to our research, both for us as authors and for the more-than-human collective who inhabits the forests and hills in and around the national park. We acknowledge our walking in this meaningful place as “a way of becoming responsive to place” (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 4). This drives us to envision embodied ways of knowing-with in the “age of humans” and to re-evaluate our own place within this collective.

With our ongoing research, we take part in the further theorising of “tourism knowledge collectives” (Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018), which refers to a dynamic group of actors and practices “shaped for and together with those living off and with tourism” (p. 24). We strive to show how the more-than-human collectives (cf. Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018, p. 25) inhabiting the forests and hills of national parks and attracting tourists near and far are inherent actors in forming tourism knowledge. In so doing, we take on the challenge of finding ways to know-with earthly creatures other than those of our own species in order to move forward from anthropocentric epistemologies towards more collaborative ones (Ren, Jóhannesson, & van der Duim, 2018), thus encouraging ethically sound tourism development (Huijbens & Jóhannesson, 2019). We also point to the importance of the “mattering of matter” in our understanding of tourism research during the current era in which, according to Barad (2003), “Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter” (p. 801). Barad (2003, p. 801) poses an important question, asking “How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter?”. With our research, we feel the necessity of engaging our own bodies in our effort to find ways to know-with in the era of the Anthropocene instead of theorising from a distance (see also van Dooren, Kirksey, & Münster, 2016, p. 15; Haraway, 1997, p. 36).

In this research note, we are focusing “care-fully” on the question of knowing-with. We commit to an ethico-onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) reading of our ongoing research in Pyhä-Luosto National Park and its surroundings, where we set out to explore ways of being and knowing in and with the world in a situated place and time, paying close attention to the ethics manifesting in these processes. In more practical terms, we explore the ways we can actually know-with, posing a question: how can we become attentive to (van Dooren et al., 2016) and “response-able-with” (cf. Barad, 2003, 2007; Haraway, 2016) more-than-human collectives through our research practices? With “response-able-with”, we refer to simultaneously acknowledging our place as only one species in the complexity of our earthly collectives and acknowledge the “accountability and responsibility for all relationalities that we (not only we – humans) engage in and are part of” (Radomska, 2010, p. 109). Our earlier contribution to the topic of walking focused on walking-with rocks with care (Rantala, Valtonen, & Salmela, forthcoming). Now it is time for other earthly creatures to become part of our research. To accomplish these aims,

we develop an extended notion of walking-with multiple others to demonstrate how “sensitive reading and care-fullness”, “singing-with the forest” and “walking-with the trail” can become potential ways to answer to the question, “How can we aim to know-with?”.

Towards collective ways of knowing in the era of the Anthropocene

Recent contributions in the field of tourism studies have pointed to the importance of a co-creation of tourism knowledge that goes further than merely a consideration of humans as knowledge producers (e.g. Cloke & Perkins, 2005; Gren & Hujbens, 2016; Jóhannesson, 2015; Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018; Ren, Jóhannesson, & van der Duim, 2018). Ren and Jóhannesson (2018) use Donna Haraway’s (2008, 2016) notion of “becoming-with many” to help them “think beyond the ‘usual suspects’ in tourism research and to explore other possible human and non-human actors as potential contributors to the collaborative shaping of tourism knowledge” (Ren and Jóhannesson, 2018, p. 25). Both located in the scholarly field of Science and Technology Studies, Haraway’s notions of “becoming-with each other or not at all” (Haraway, 2016, p. 4) and “making kin” (Haraway, 2015) connect with Karen Barad’s (2003, 2007) framework of agential realist ontology, which we use as our main inspiration for post-anthropocentric theorising in this paper. In agential realist ontology, the notion of intra-action, according to Barad, forms the key element:

“The neologism ‘intra-action’ signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to the usual ‘interaction,’ which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. It is important to note that the ‘distinct’ agencies are only distinct in a relational, not an absolute, sense, that is, *agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don’t exist as individual elements.*” (Barad, 2007, p. 33, original emphasis).

Also crucial to Barad’s agential realist account is that “agency is cut loose from its traditional humanist orbit” (Barad, 2003, p. 826). This means that agency “[i]s not aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity. Nor does it merely entail resignification or other specific kinds of moves within a social geometry of antihumanism” (p. 826). According to our reading of Barad, this means that it is the relations between humans, nonhumans and matter that *matter* – not the existence of individual and separate subjects and objects. This line of thinking necessitates the de-centralisation of the human and the moving away from, or integral refusal of (Radomska, 2010, p. 102), anthropocentrism. It contains a passage towards posthumanist accounts of life and mattering (Barad, 2007), towards “posthuman collective(s)” (Radomska, 2010, p. 94). Banishing the illusion of human exceptionalism is also characteristic to scholarly work utilising the concept of the more-than-human (Springgay & Truman, 2017). For our research, the most crucial point provided by the notion of the more-than-human is the relational existence of all matter. This consideration calls us to move towards post-anthropocentric accounts of tourism, and, on a wider scale, epistemologies guiding our research practices¹.

1 See also van Dooren et al., 2016, pp. 12–13, for the aim of multispecies studies to “refigure the human”.

Springgay and Truman's (2018) book project, *Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world*, connects the account of the more-than-human with the embodied, sensuous and affective practice of walking. Walking as a scholarly method and embodied practice enables visioning a processual and embodied form of knowing-together that happens through an attentive, sensorial way of being-in the world (cf. van Dooren et al., 2016). Springgay and Truman note how walking scholars acknowledge "the ways that walking connects bodies, environment, and the sensory surrounds of place" (2018, p. 4). Walking, however, is plural. Springgay and Truman note that their project on walking methodologies "provoke[s] a *critical* mode of walking-with that engenders solidarity, accountability, and response-ability 'in the presence of others'" (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 15, emphasis added). We consider this mode of walking as walking-with that goes beyond a consideration of walking as an individual act. There, walking becomes much more than a mechanical process of taking one step after another, and instead requires an awareness of our unavoidable co-existence with multiple others. We suggest that it is only by giving up on the practice of marching – a "footwork of colonial occupation" (Ingold & Vergunst, 2016/2008, p. 13) – that we are able to approach the possibility of knowing-with others. This type of approach to walking is ethically charged, as pointed out by Springgay and Truman:

"Walking-with demands that we forgo universal claims about how humans and nonhumans experience walking and consider more-than-human ethics and politics of the material intra-actions of walking research." (2018, p. 11)

In Baradian thinking, ethics is fundamentally embedded in this relationality, making ethics "about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part" (Barad, 2007, p. 384). This involves a shift from "being responsible for" to having "a response-ability-with" (Barad, 2003, 2007; Haraway, 2016; see also Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 7). Ethics and the practice of response-ability-with requires, we argue, slowness. To be slow is, according to Springgay and Truman, to "ask critical questions" and to "create openings where different kinds of awareness and practices can unfold" (p. 15). In a natural setting, the unfolding of different kinds of awareness does not happen via efficiency-oriented running on the paths of national parks. If "slowness is a process of unlearning and unsettling what has come before", we must slow our speed to a walk, and of walking too, to be able to know-with "in the presence of others" (Springgay & Truman, 2018 p. 15).

To ask critical questions also involves, crucially, an understanding of the limits of our capability of knowing and, inevitably and consequently, the de-centralisation of the human (Springgay & Truman, 2017). The realisation of our limits creates, in turn, space for imagination and wonder, which ought to flourish also in academic research. To envision, to create new stories, demands imagination. The cherishing of imagining is in line with the idea of intra-action: we, and our complex Earth in its entirety, come into existence through processes we are not always able to actually see or grasp.² When walking-with, a process characterised by responsiveness, we are able to dwell in the complexity and richness of the more-than-human collectives that are there, walking-with us. This dwelling needs more silent efforts than loud ones (cf. Veijola,

2 For example, our very own bodies are constitutive of particles that have indeed existed before our own corporeal existence (Barad, 2003).

Höckert, Carlin, Light, & Säynäjäkangas, 2019), together with care-full movements – perhaps of a very tiny scale (Höckert, 2019).

We will next move on to present our research diary notes from our study and discuss them through the theoretical framework presented. This year in early May 2019, we – four members of our research group (ILA) – spent a week at our university cottage, Keropirtti, located close to the Pyhä-Luosto National Park. We were to try out some of the research methods inspired by the posthumanist and more-than-human methodological literature that we had engaged ourselves with for approximately two years' time in different contexts and projects. That week was a long-awaited period of time for us to make space for new ideas concerning how we could learn to know-with, walk-with and learn from our earthly colleagues. We agreed on first reading some pieces of inspirational methodological work, touching upon new materialism, queer theories and more-than-human methods to back up our work (Irni, 2013; Leppänen & Tiainen, 2016). Based on our readings, we were inspired first by the ways in which new materialisms, with their consideration of active matter, work as a force, putting concepts and “objects” of inquiry into motion and emphasising the process of the becoming of matter (Leppänen & Tiainen, 2016). Second, we were inspired by the potential of using sensitive reading in our empirical work – to take Irni's (2013) concept of sensitive reading to the actual, tangible encounters with non-human subjects – by reading with care and without an effort or aim to create gaps and differences within the Earth we inhabit with multiple others. After the week at Pyhä-Luosto, we started to analyse our experiences in light of our wider theoretical framework, resulting in the creation of three different themes through which to approach the question of “how to know-with”. These themes, which are to be elaborated upon next with short excerpts from our field diaries, are: “sensitive reading and care-fullness”, “singing-with the forest” and “walking-with the trail”.

Sensitive reading and care-fullness

“Thinking with care is a vital requisite of collective thinking in interdependent worlds.”
(Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018, p. 28)

We started our empirical exploration by heading on a short hiking trip with our group, and the family of two kids (aged 6 and 8) of one of our group members. We chose to head towards Soutaja (Rower) – a fell 370 meters of height situated close to the natural park. The partner of one of our group members led our way through the forest without a readily made path. Even when walking together, we all took the freedom to choose our own pace, one catching up with the other, and one lagging a bit behind. In late wintertime, the forest already greeted the spring. Seeing the kids play while walking, picking up stones, climbing the trees, making sounds, we let our minds wonder and be open to what we were seeing and experiencing. When being and walking there, it appeared too selective to just focus on what we had decided beforehand. Experimenting with a sensitive reading in a more-than-human sphere helped and invited us to open up to the particularities of a wide variety of earthly creatures. We took photographs of different locations, paused at the encounters with different creatures that crossed our way (or in whose way we were crossing), read signs in the snow where somebody had walked before us, and listened to what went on around us. We just could not be selective. That which was there and wanted our attention, got our attention.

What does this first-hand experience of walking in the snowy forest of Pyhä-Luosto with our theoretical “luggage” tell us about the possibilities of knowing-with and of becoming attentive to the complexity of a more-than-human collective inhabiting the place? And what can we learn about ethics as being “about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part” (Barad, 2007, p. 384) from this experience? Walking in the snowy forest invited us to experience the place through our own feet in a different vein than the common, touristic way of looking at the landscape. Our engagement with the forest during winter differed from that of summertime, when we would have possibly had a readily made path – even a small one – to lead us. In the wintery forest, with every step we started to give up our usual reliance on a readily-made route that would provide hints and suggestions about where to turn our gaze and what to see. The change of orientation can be considered our first turn towards a post-anthropocentric viewpoint during our journey – an adventure without a structured “goal” or route. We started to pay attention to matters that are usually disregarded. Small – perhaps even tiny – things got our attention. We started to read signs in the snow where somebody had walked before us, seeing marks of the past that connect history to the present, intra-actively making place together (Barad, 2007). We also started to wonder about all the creatures we neither heard nor saw, reminding us of the limits of our own humanity and our general “criterion... of evaluation or verification” (van Dooren et al., 2016, p. 16). This invited us to “[learn] new modes of taking account of and with enigmatic others who cannot be – or perhaps do not want to be – represented or even rendered knowable or sensible within any available mode of understanding” (van Dooren et al., 2016, p. 16) and opened up space for imaginative play (Merewether, 2019). Sounds of the forest, seemingly silent at first, mixed with those of our child and adult travel companions. A mesh of movement took place.

Step by step, we started to engage our own sensing bodies in the more-than-human collective of the forest and to realise our own presence in it. We became more open to the ways care was practiced and expressed in the forest – with the encouragement of our theoretical luggage – and how it was possibly conceived as being disturbed, for example by the children walking with us. The kids were, from time to time, tearing and breaking the branches from trees on our route, and the youngest of them was also playing an imaginative game of shooting by using a tree branch as his weapon. We seemed obliged to rethink our considerations of care, how practicing care is always processual and never strictly defined (cf. Barad, 2007). Our walking was altogether strongly guided by the presence of children and the “messiness” of research. This returns us back to Ingold and Vergunst’s (2016/2008) notion of only by giving up on the practice of marching – a “footwork of colonial occupation” (p. 13) that we are able to approach the possibility of knowing-with others. The two children also reminded us that being in nature does not mean we have to watch every step we take (see also Milne, Rantala, & Grimwood in this issue; Blaise, Hamm, & Iorio, 2017; Merewether, 2019; Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015). Yet, they also reminded us of the ethical struggles we might have when walking in nature with other humans who share different considerations of the “norms” or “principals” of care.

Questions stemming from our shared walking with children became triggers for wondering: “What happened to that tree?” “Wow, look at that rock! We should climb on top of it.” Barad

states that attentiveness is “the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly” (Barad, 2007, p. x). In this type of thinking, every encounter, every crossing of paths, becomes a new beginning with a history. In these moments and encounters, and in their witnessing, lies a possibility to see how “human life is connected to and dependent on other species and the land” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 636). Moreover, they carry an ethical obligation: they are moments of “making kin” (Haraway, 2015), “a mutual requirement of unexpected and caring collaboration” (Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018, p. 27). This collaboration extends from being practiced with children to being practiced (on this occasion) with rocks and trees: what if we actually started to think about what would it mean to think like a rock, or like a tree (see also Rantala, Salmela, Valtonen, & Höckert, 2018)? This type of thinking gently pushes us towards being response-able-with. Radomska (2010, p. 109) quotes Barad:

“Intra-acting responsibly as part of the world means taking account of the entangled phenomena that are intrinsic to the world’s vitality and being responsive to the possibilities that might help us and it flourish. Meeting each moment, being alive to the possibilities of becoming, is an ethical call, an invitation that is written into the very matter of all being and becoming.” (Barad, 2007, p. 369)

Singing-with the forest

The idea of singing in the forest came without notice. When walking in the forest covered by snow, one of us started to talk about the work of a company called SoundByNature. Inspired by the topic, we started chatting about the societal imprints that we carry about where is it appropriate to start singing and why we do not sing that much anymore compared to when we were kids. Then, the first author gathered courage to just to start singing. She loves to sing in general, but singing in the forest with her friends and colleagues present was something different. She remembered an old chant that she had sung all the time when she was part of a folkdance group, and already back then she had found the melody and lyrics sad yet beautiful.

“Yksi, kaksi, kolme, neljä... Anna iloisen olla... Koska suru tulee, anna hänen mennä... Paarmat ne laulaa, neljä hiirtä hyppelee... Kissi lyöpi trummun päälle ja koko maailma pauhaa...” [“One, two, three, four... Let the joyful be... When sadness comes, let her go... Horseflies fly, four mice are jumping... The cat hits the drum and the whole world thunders.”]

She went on singing, her group members ahead and behind her, walking in a queue with moderate speed. She felt like she was traveling to her childhood again – the forest, the trees, the air around her, surrounding her, started to look different. She felt small. Somehow, time stopped. A timely and affective relation to the forest changed. So did her relation to her friends and colleagues: she felt that she is probably now seen in a different light – but not in ways she would know in advance. It was a moment hard to explain, and still is. Who was she singing to, in the end? And who was listening? We ended up recording a second set of her singing. Then the person who was earlier behind her in the queue went to the front. When she then heard the song again, she started crying. Something happened in the affective flux including the forest, the singing, the melodic vocals, the words of a chant, the singer, and her friends walking with her. A moment of relatedness, piercing bodies that walked-with.

Singing came to play an unexpected, important role while we travelled through the snowy forest. This is perhaps because singing has the power to make us present. Like mantras said out loud when meditating, the vibrating sound stemming from our bodies made us present – including all of us, not only the singer. Singing in the forest while walking made us become more aware of our presence in what we were exploring in our research. Singing-in the forest became singing-with the forest. Perhaps the world-changing power of sound and sound-making in nature lies in its capability to change our perception of agency. Through an embodied production of sound – which, from the viewpoint of physics, is invisible vibration in the air that turns into nerve impulses for our brains to then interpret (<https://tieku.fi/fysiikka/aani-on-ilman-va-rahtelyja>) – we are able to re-consider agency. Sound gets interpreted in the body that is attuned to the sound-making of the other (or to the sound-making of oneself) through the ears, and then the brain. Thus, sound-making is never an individual act, and it does not restrict itself to one subject but instead always entails a practice of receiving, listening and interpreting. Sound-making, and singing as part of it, is intra-action through which agencies emerge (Barad, 2003, pp. 826–827; Barad, 2007, p. 33).

The receiving, listening and interpreting of sound does not require a relation between subjects of the same species or bodily form. When we consider the notion of the more-than-human collective in this setting, we are able to see how sound-making in a place inhabited by multiple others, entangled with the use of language (lyrics), makes agency a dynamic, more-than-human process instead of being “aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity” (Barad, 2003, p. 826). Singing when walking can be considered singing to earthly creatures, as well as a responsive act to *hearing out* these creatures when they sing each in their own way. Most importantly, singing becomes collaborative when our voices connect with multiple others. Birds, little rustles, old trees creaking – all of these are the sounds of bodies living in the shared space. When we sing, we bring ourselves closer to the bodies of others, instead of detaching or furthering ourselves from that which we are part of. If there is an echo, we have only an idea of the response our bodies have to our own voices, but remain unaware of their response to the bodies of others. The breaking of silence with our voices also involves, we suggest, a particular dimension of care. The song that was sung in the forest by the first author, the melody stemming from her body, did not propose a violent act towards the beautiful silence in the forest. Instead, it was an engagement with the forest, with the creatures inhabiting it. It was the sound of respect and gratitude for being able and allowed to walk there.

To become present through singing can also be explored through rhythmicity (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 5). Singing can happen in moments where chronological time meets vertical time (Helin, 2019). This means that while we sing, time can “stop”: there is a pause in our conception of the surrounding world, but this pause happens only within movement. When singing in the forest, we all kept on walking, and the life surrounding us kept moving. In this shared but not synchronised movement, it also matters what rhythms we produce, and what songs we sing. The first author was singing about mice, cats and the Earth, without exact deliberation about which song she should choose. It was a song from her youth. The song travelled in history and chose her, in that current situation, place and time. So too does the song of the forest have its

own story, its own history. Without this history, this moment of singing-with the forest would not have happened. Intra-action must then take into account stories of the past and of the future through its embeddedness in ethics: while ethics is “about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part” (Barad, 2007, p. 384), our songs sang in the past and the songs to be sung in the future become of importance.

Walking-with the trail

The next day, three of us went for a short hike. We took the trail heading to a lean-to where we were supposed to make fire, grill some food and enjoy coffee. We walked slowly through the age-old forests, the pines, candle spruces and deadwoods surrounded the trail. While walking, we paused to admire the beauty of deadwoods. “How different they are after all”, we thought. One, majestic, strong, reaching its branches towards the blue sunny sky; another, humbler, leaning towards the grounds; two deadwoods searching for support from each other. We came close to the deadwoods, hugged them with our arms, pet their trunks smoothly with our hands and fingers, and admired the beautiful small patterns on their surfaces. We also noticed how these seemingly dead creatures were full of life – hundreds of tiny insects, names of which we do not know, scuttled rapidly up and down the trunks, which were full of holes supposedly made by woodpeckers. We put our ears on the trunks and listened to the small voices coming from inside.

An attentiveness to the particularities of the earthly companions we came across on our way was not only built via consciously spreading our awareness away our awareness away from the activity and actions of our own bodies and minds to something simply external to our own existence. In contrast, we became attentive through corporeal methods of knowing (see Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 39), our bodies mediating our capability to know-with. This means our bodies became a crucial part of the recognition of other bodies in their various forms. There is an inevitability and inescapability of our humanness and human embodiedness when dwelling in more-than-human worlds. Anna Tsing encourages us to think of our humanness as “an opening for getting involved in multi species worlds” (2013, p. 34). This opening involves participation and recreation (p. 34), taking us further, from “identifying” passive objects (cf. Barad, 2007) towards common world making. This happens through, according to Tsing (2013), learning about the non-human and “ourselves in action, through common activities” (p. 34). To this we may add: through both learning and living with them. Consequently, this means, in Tsing’s words, “Our own human involvement in multispecies worlds is thus a place to begin” (2013, p. 34).

In the time spent walking the trail, we had no-one to guide us on our way; instead, we followed a familiar trail to the lean-to, at that time marked by traces of others that had walked there before us. In the national park of Pyhä-Luosto, one should not leave a track, and the signs of the trail reserved for walking are clearly communicated (and require a high level of ignorance to not be noticed). During winter, these communicative elements illustrating where humans are allowed to walk – and where they are not – become more blurred, as there are winter trails that are not always clearly available to be seen. Yet, some particular areas in the Pyhä-Luosto nature park, like the Isokuru gorge, are restricted areas year round, and visitors are advised to stay on the marked summer trail at all times to guarantee their safety from the avalanche danger during

winter and to protect the “unique nature in the gorge” (<https://luosto.fi/en/business/pyha-luoston-kansallispuisto>). In general, a national park is not a place to *flâneur*, to wander, in Henry Thoreau’s sense. Walking in a national park is tied as such to dominant sustainability discourses (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 17). Springgay and Truman note how “[n]ature hikes, long walks, and ecotourism rely on human impact, control, and subsequent care” (2018, p. 17).

In this type of walking, we are perhaps stuck in an understanding of ethics and care as something that requires being responsible for instead of being response-able-with (Barad, 2007, p. 384; Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 7). While this type of notion of care leads to the maintenance of the separation between nature and culture – we “enjoy” and “consume” landscapes – partly through the fostering of trail systems (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 17), we must acknowledge the drivers of national park management upon which the idea of being responsible for is built. For example, Siikamäki, Kangas, Paasivaara and Schoderus (2015) emphasise in their research the importance of careful planning and national park management to protect biodiversity in the area, which means, for example, the avoidance of “locations of threatened species and species vulnerable to disturbance” when planning hiking trails (p. 2532). Here, care for biodiversity exceeds, we argue, the “dominant sustainability discourses and practices where landscape is enjoyed and consumed” (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 17). We should perhaps pause to think whether national park management actually practices one way of being response-able-with: paying close attention to changes in the nature, listening to the inhabitants of many species living in the national park and managing the national park together with multiple others.

Moreover, the moments spent walking on the winter trail did enable us to become sensitised to the detailed particularities of multiple others. While our route and steps were guided by human-mediated instructions, our walking bodies came close to the bodies of others. Walking the trail became walking-with, enabling us to draw attention to how different creatures live their lives with particular rhythms. Entangled agencies were mutually constituted (Barad, 2007, p. 33): pausing the rhythms of the more-than-human collectives affected our rhythms as well, and we began to attune our bodies to the (rhythmic) bodies of others. We did not interact as and with “separate” agencies, but our rhythmic and embodied relation expressed a phenomenon, which Barad describes as “the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting ‘agencies’” and “the primary ontological unit” (Barad, 2007, p. 139). We slowed our pace, paused – then continued our walk, never again the same as we were before.

Walking-with the trail opened our senses to different forms of caring than the one present in nature park management practices. We saw the deadwood – possibly “dead” for 100 years – providing shelter, home and nutrition for a number of different living creatures. Its seemingly still presence attracts today’s visitors who often live in hectic surroundings – but how much do they know? What happened in these moments was us being drawn “into worlds of many interacting species” – our senses, little by little, noticed different forms of ongoing, more-than-human sociality (Tsing, 2013, p. 39). Walking, pausing, continuing, kneeling down, touching, hugging... our bodily practices were not independent of the world our bodies were located in. They were fundamentally something-with. Attentiveness equipped with curiosity also fed empathy. Through empathetic and care-full walking-with, we are forming the grounds for an ethical re-

lation to creatures with which we share our habitat, and the paths and places, full of stories, in and on which we dwell. A commitment to “knowledge and curiosity about the other” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 98) is linked with care (Michael, 2016, p. 132; Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018, p. 28). Through walking-with, we became able to notice those care-full practices that take place ongoingly in nature without our human impact. Tsing (2013) reminds us that humans are not necessarily part of the social lives of non-human creatures, such as plants and fungi. Thus, in line with Barad’s theoretical heritage of agential realist ontology, we must remain open to both those processes of world making that we are indirectly, or more directly, part of – and those that exist without the presence and part-taking of humans. In both cases, walking would never be walking without the presence of significant others. We never dwell in the world alone.

Concluding remarks

In this research note, we have taken part in the creation of new imaginaries of our ways of knowing in the era of the Anthropocene. We have reflected on one particular question in this special issue: “*How can we, in the era of the Anthropocene, aim to know with objects, things, animals, elements and theories both in our pedagogical efforts and through our research activities?*” Writing our paper from the framework of agential realist ontology (Barad, 2003, 2007), we have considered entanglement with multiple others as a prerequisite for our existence and used this starting point as grounds for our theorising. This has led us to (aim to) de-centralise the human in our research practices, while simultaneously being part of the motivation behind more-than-human inquiries (Springgay & Truman, 2017).

With our research, we demonstrate the value of Baradian heritage – her framework of agential realist ontology – to post-anthropocentric tourism research motivated to imagine, and make into reality, more collaborative ways of knowing in the “era of the man” (cf. Ren & Jóhannesson, 2018; Ren, Jóhannesson, & van der Duim, 2018). Furthermore, we suggest that the complex question of how to know-with ought to be approached from a standpoint that is not afraid of trouble (Haraway, 2016). We can relate to Anna Tsing (2013) in her question, “How can we study social worlds of beings that can’t talk to us?” (p. 31), and work towards exploring how. The question of *how* to communicate, learn from and know-with crosses disciplinary boundaries and – as this special issue addresses – has implications also for the future of tourism research.

We propose “walking-with multiple others” as one potential way to know-with, and find our place within, more-than-human collectives. Walking-with invites attentiveness (van Dooren et al., 2016), which we consider crucial in the fostering and discovery of our embodied relationalities with multiple others. We suggest that walking-with can emerge through different methods of practicing attentiveness in nature. Through our ongoing empirical fieldwork in Pyhä-Luosto’s nature park, we suggest “sensitive reading and care-fullness”, “singing-with the forest” and “walking-with the trail” as such methods. These dimensions of walking can be read as meaningful and situated ways to approach the question of “how to know-with”.

Instead of taking big leaps, we propose the value of taking tiny and slow steps (Höckert, 2019; Springgay & Truman, 2018) to “care-fully” move forward and further away from the al-

lure of human exceptionalism – and, moreover, to take these lessons into our research practice. We must also strive to make these ethico-onto-epistemologies (Barad, 2007) of life based on relationalities and collective ways of knowing *realisable* and *theorisable*. Only by confronting this far-from-easy task are we able to move towards a world where we acknowledge, and practice, a collective knowing-with. In this paper, we have tried not to let our own humanness hold us back in envisioning collective epistemologies through research. We end our research note with a poem written by the first author when walking-with the trails of Pyhä-Luosto and coming across a valley of dead trees:

A valley of dead trees
Death, living, life, care, finiteness, infiniteness
Co-constituting one another
In this valley of dead trees
Where my sight cuts short
Where my eyes lack the capacity
Where my hands do not reach
But where my soul is present
Valley of dead trees
Valley with gentle forms of life.

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