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7. Sea and me: creative writing as a research method in the co-creation of environmental heritage

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INTRODUCTION

In the project Living with the Baltic Sea in a Changing Climate – Environmental Heritage and the Circulation of Knowledge (project of the Academy of Finland in 2018–2022: ‘SeaHer’), the research focus was on the *environmental heritage* and experiences of people living in marine and coastal environments in Finland. Environmental heritage is a process of knowledge production, which begins in meaning-making situations. The process is co-composed by human and non-human actors in a particular environment and contextualized by the changes that people experience in their surroundings. In the process, local, tacit, and experience-based knowledge is communicated, all forms of which are intertwined as elements of the same whole. We understand experience-based knowledge as lived experiences, memories, and observations, which all together describe the relationship between humans and their environment (Jetoo & Kouri, 2021; Tynkkynen et al., Chapter 4 in this volume). *Tacit knowledge* is a concept launched by Michael Polanyi (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975) and is integrated in practical knowledge in different ways – for example, as intentional imagination. The methodological objective of SeaHer was to identify meaningful knowledge and skills needed for living sustainably with the environment through analysing and producing environmental heritage with stakeholders. By extension, the project aimed to facilitate the circulation of various kinds of meaningful knowledge within local and scientific communities. One focus of SeaHer was the sea and its coastal areas as lived and experienced environments; a related objective was to make visible the environmental heritage of everyday life. Part of the material for this theme was generated through creative writing.

This chapter describes three different cases of creative writing organized during 2019–2020. The first is the subproject that used environmental ethno-

graphic methodology (see Kouri & Sonck-Rautio, 2022) in creative writing workshops, organized with different stakeholders; the second is the photo/writing competition; and the third is a creative writing corner in a museum, which included a questionnaire on the internet. Through the comparison of these three cases, we examine the possibilities of creative writing to document and analyse elements and content of environmental knowledge of the sea to understand the meaning-making process between people and their environment. Our research uses and examines creative writing as a means to (1) encourage participants to make observations about/in the environment; reflect on sea experiences and memories; and write, save and document (and publish) their own observations and memories; (2) collect material for researching environmental heritage; and (3) channel environmental anxiety into the process of participating and ultimately also decision-making. The third target is not entirely within the scope of this chapter, but it is the target which motivated this work.

In ethnography the research usually takes place in the field, where the researcher makes observations and conducts interviews. In this research, creative writing is also a participation action research (PAR) method, where the role of the researcher to observe, analyse and interpret is dealt with by the participant, the writer, in the workshop. PAR is an applied social sciences research approach that invites stakeholders to participate in the research as active co-researchers. It blurs the boundaries between the researcher and the researched by allowing researchers and community participants to work to generate knowledge together through ongoing communicative processes. It is an active means of ‘learning while doing’ (Kara, 2020; MacDonald, 2012).

The questions of this study changed over different case studies, but they each addressed the question of *how* creative writing could serve as a research method to collect research material about environmental heritage and encourage writers to observe and write about the environment and changes in it. The research questions guiding this work include:

RQ 1: What kind of tasks and themes in creative writing are good at facilitating and inspiring participants to verbalize their own environmental knowledge as part of environmental heritage?

RQ 2: What kinds of environmental knowledge of the sea are generated through creative writing?

RQ 3: What factors should be considered when making material generated in creative writing accessible to researchers?

Research questions 1 and 3 aimed more at the methods of the creative writing while question 2 focused on the content of the participants' writings in the research.

Our overall aim is to develop a transdisciplinary tool to circulate meaningful knowledge about the Baltic Sea environment among different stakeholders. Practically, it also raised questions about how multidisciplinary co-working researchers, stakeholders and grassroots writers can jointly contribute to human adaptation to climate change, especially its impact on the Baltic Sea and its interspecies communication. In planning the workshops, Kouri consulted researchers from different disciplines, aiming to make the themes and writings of the workshops more useful in multidisciplinary research. Building the research context, conducting the analysis, and interpreting the material were done in a multidisciplinary environment: Kouri is an ethnographer, researcher of cultural studies, and a literary art instructor, and Jetoo has a background in both the natural and social sciences.

In the next section we present our thoughts about creative writing as a method for circulating and generating knowledge. This is followed by a description of the three case studies by which we developed the method and analysed the content of the material generated in them, and in conclusion we discuss what we learned in the research process.

CREATIVE WRITING AS A METHOD FOR CIRCULATING AND GENERATING KNOWLEDGE

What is *creative* writing? The idea of 'creativity' or being 'creative' is in becoming directly familiar with that which is not directly accessible (Harper, 2012). This is closely aligned to the idea of tacit knowledge. Scholars of creative writing lean toward psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's thoughts; Lacan presents creativity as an *event*, that is, as a *process* as much as an *effect* and, thereby, a *product* as well. It is really a question of know-how or *savoir faire* (Lacan, 1975–1976/2005, p. 133 in Hecq, 2012a). Likewise, this chapter sticks to looking at creative writing as a practice, a method of inquiry, and a way of knowing. In addition, creativity is still most often defined as a mental capacity of the human mind to produce something new and valuable (Dawson, 2005; Hecq, 2012b), and the creative writing produced contains individualized and situational knowledge – it is generated by and applied to the situation or circumstances that ensue (Harper 2013b).

According to Hecq (2012a; 2012b), creative writing is a perspective on the world, but also epistemology and ontology: seeing, knowing the world, and being in the world. In the ecological writing approach, writing practices and language itself are seen in their relationships with others – other authors, texts, cultures, and histories (Luce-Kapler, 2004). Writing takes place in the world

we share with non-human actors. Here, creative writing is used as a communal activity of knowledge generation. This communal generation of knowledge is one of the key ways in which it differs from other knowledge-production processes. We prefer, as creative writing researcher Creame Harper (2013c, p. 137) does, the concepts of ‘to generate’ and ‘generativity’, which also consider the notion of sharing knowledge, between contemporaries and between generations. As Harper (2013c) writes, if generativity can be enhanced by research engagement with creative writing, then this is something directly related to sustainability.

Ecological creative writing can focus attention on places and environments that surround and influence writers (Engelhardt & Schraffenberger, 2015). Harper (2013c, p. 137) calls the place where the *event* of creative writing happens the *creative writing habitat*. Creative writing is a form of human *habitation*, which involves both place and time; the writer and others; and the taking up of somewhere and of some element of time, being present (Harper, 2013a). As Harper writes, ‘the habitation itself occurs while creative writing takes place or in the memory of the creative writer after it has taken place’ (p. 58). In our research we organized four different spaces for creative writing habitats, where our attention was on eliciting creative writing as habitation of maritime environments. The target was to integrate by given themes the tacit knowledge of the participants intentionally into the knowledge of living with the sea. One creative writing habitat was the creative writing workshops (as in Cases Ia and Ib), the second was the creative writing habitat chosen by the writers themselves (as in Case II), the third was a creative writing corner in a museum (Case IIIa), and the fourth was a questionnaire on the internet (Case IIIb). These habitats are perceived as spaces for circulating environmental knowledge, in which the researcher – with or without being present – creates the space of verbalizing by planned tasks and themes and the participants verbalize their environmental heritage. They are creative writing habitations, spaces of intra-action, where non-human actors also participate through writings and words. Also, words as such can be perceived as co-actors – with them you can call out a piece of the world, or as in our study, of the marine environment. When the target was to write about and with the sea, the organized habitats were spaces to which the sea and all associated actors were also invited to participate.

THE CREATIVE WRITING CASES

The Structure, Tasks, and Methods of the Creative Writing Workshops

The workshops lasted three hours each. In the announcements of these open-to-all workshops, the maritime nature and the role of the sea were

repeated in the name of the workshops. They differed from the usual creative writing workshops in having a common objective to write about the sea. All the workshops and the questionnaire were advertised as events on Facebook pages and email lists of those interested in or researching maritime affairs or creative writing. The second workshop organized in 2019 was also advertised in the programme pages of Volter Kilpi literature weeks in Kustavi, and the workshops in 2020 were announced on the website of the John Nurminen Foundation (JNF).

In the workshops the instructor(s) gave the participants writing tasks, which were followed by free silent writing (3–10 min.). After writing, the texts, or chosen parts of them, were read aloud and then discussed by the instructor and all the participants. Next, the instructor gave another task, and so on. Usually, the first warm-up task was given with the help of selected pictures. The participants were asked to describe something they see in a picture with all their senses and then to choose a human or non-human in the picture and write what it senses or does there. Pictures also functioned as inspirational tools for writing about places other than the one in the picture. All the tasks were designed to make it easier for the writer to remember and record their sensory observations, responses to them, and memories in the written moment. The goal was to lead the participant to the creative writing habitation, where the marine mind landscape was as authentic as possible.

The tasks varied in each workshop. They were mixtures of the methods of evocative journey, dialogical writing, and ‘splicing’. In the evocative journey task, participants were instructed to close their eyes and imagine going to the seashore, then open their eyes and write while the instructions continued. In the task, in which the dialogical writing method was used, the writers were guided to write questions and answers like, ‘If you could ask the sea one question, what would it be?’ or ‘Someone who knows all about the water comes to the shore. What would you ask if you had three questions?’ The task continued as a written dialogue between the one-who-knows and the writer. In the splicing method, the participants were asked to choose and underline five words, observations, or phrases from their own writing. With the help of these underlined keywords, the participants wrote another story from a different viewpoint or, for example, a poem about the sea.

Cases Ia and Ib: Creative Writing Workshops Offline and Online

Case Ia included three in-person creative writing workshops during 2019 (by Kouri and Silja Laine, cultural historian); one in Kustavi during the Volter Kilpi literature week and the other two workshops in Turku, on the south-western coast of Finland. Kouri also organized three creative writing workshops online (on Zoom) in May 2020 (Case Ib).

In 2019, workshop participants were asked to send their workshop essays to the Loki web pages, (<https://lokistories.fi/?lang=en>). This is JNF's open, free-of-charge maritime web service and community, which collects and shares stories, museum content and the best destination tips from citizens and organizations alike. Besides acquiring the material, on Loki it is possible for anyone to publish their own stories and observations, linking and geolocating them on the map. Unfortunately, none of the participants sent their writings to Loki. Although we did not get any material for the research, we received very positive feedback on the tasks in discussions with participants during the summarizing portion of the workshops. In addition, in the workshops we tested ways of writing through writing tasks that proved to be good for facilitating and inspiring participants to verbalize their own environmental knowledge (RQ 1) by using appropriate themes; we invented, experimented with, and applied the various above-described methods and tasks of creative writing workshops to fit the marine theme.

In 2020, Kouri made a more directed material acquisition, organized in co-operation with JNF as the Sea of Memories campaign. JNF wanted to collect people's memories about the Baltic Sea to publish them during Baltic Sea Day in August 2020. Collaboration with JNF achieved greater visibility for announcing the creative writing workshops and the possibility of publishing submitted writings. In the workshops (Case Ib), organized online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were asked to upload their writings about the Baltic Sea to the website. Approximately 50 written pieces and photos were published for Baltic Sea Day in August 2020 in an installation as a movable exhibition wall² (compiled of memories in Finnish and Swedish) and an integrated video display – which can be lent out to museums and exhibitions. The writings were archived at the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki.

A total of 192 writers participated in the Sea of Memories collection, including 136 women, 55 men and one gender neutral person. Most authors were between the ages of 40 and 59. Along with the writings, 45 participants posted images or pictures, two links to their own blog page, and one a previously published article. Seven had no text at all, only an image. Most texts were one to eight lines in length, 14 were nine to 20 lines, and 12 texts were longer. One of the writings was a five-page short story. Only two authors submitted a text based on workshop texts led by Kouri. The texts based on Kouri's workshops were three pages long (51)³ and two pages long (185).

To answer what kinds of environmental knowledge can be generated through creative writing (RQ 2), we examined the observations, memories, and experiences included in the submitted text. We used content analysis: we read through the texts seeking similar themes or subjects in the writings and, at the same time, paid attention to specific details or ways of telling (see Jetoo & Kouri, 2021). Some writings had more themes or subjects. Common themes

included childhood memories, places, swimming, fishing, and boating, emotions and experiences, and the eutrophication of water. Emotions and experiences, along with swimming and boating, were clearly the most common.

In writings where place is the dominant theme, the writing describes an event or place specifically. In memories, events are placed in a specific place and time. The importance of the place is expressed by recording, for example, that 'every stone and stump I remember by heart' (183), which also emphasizes the accuracy of memory, even in adulthood. Many places are also geographically located in the text; some specifically mention the marine environment or venue, such as a particular kind of beach. Various huts or trips to them, excursions, especially journeys to the outer archipelago or the village shop, are the subject of memories. The means of travel or favourite places in them, such as the bow of the boat, are mentioned several times.

In childhood memories, which were the subject of one-third of all submissions, a recurring sub-theme is the relationship between the sea and the parents, other adults, or grandparents as an example of one's own relationship to loving, respecting, or protecting the sea. One author describes how the grandfather urged him to come to the 'spirit of the sea' (141). Another writer states that when travelling at sea, 'not age, but years of experience' (150) are counted. The underwater world is also observed. The relationship to the sea is described as having been informed by various childhood experiences, and the Baltic Sea is perceived to be a prerequisite for life 'that should be saved' (166).

Some of the writings bring up emotions associated with the sea, such as longing for its tarry or salty smell, or the voice of the waves, while on land. In many writings there is a feeling of joy and sorrow at the same time, the comfort brought by the sea, the feeling of freedom, or a pleasant forgetfulness. One writer notes that in the vicinity of the sea 'time loses its relevance' (162). Several writings describe fear, or the experience of smallness during a storm or during boating, and happiness in surviving it.

The main memories of being at the sea are mentioned, such as sojourning on the smooth cliffs, bathing in the open sea in calm water, and 'the feeling of water and the power of nature' (183), for example. Also, the importance of certain memories throughout life is a recurring topic, such as in the expression, 'the rhythmic sound of the waves has gone deep into memories' (133). One writer had spent her wedding day at sea, and some planned to have their ashes scattered on the sea.

Memories related to boating are found in almost half of the writings. The journeys are made on different vessels, such as sailing boats, cargo ships, oceanographic research vessels, cruise ships, kayaks, or rowing boats. Journeying on the sea is described as a 'nature experience' (134). The sea space, infinity and awesomeness, the silence enabled by sailing (73), and the beauty of calm water in the middle of the open sea (34) are adored. Many

memories are situated in a storm, and a sense of danger comes into play. Cruise narratives highlight marvelling at the landscape from the deck of a ship. Sailors are described as ‘sirens of the sea opening roads, avenues to other people’ (38).

Other activities besides boating include fishing and swimming. Swimming experiences and places are described in about ten writings. One of the authors says that ‘when I swim, I feel like I’m myself’ (185). One writer describes a childhood memory of becoming acquainted with the local way of fishing for bream with a seine:

It was said that there was a bream in the bay, and that was known by the fact that the water became turbid as the bream milled the clay bed. At other times, the water was always clear. The neighbour’s host observed the colour of the water, and when the bream came, he contacted a group of fishermen who then came to pull the seine out of the bay. (3)

The writing continues with a detailed description of the stages of previous seine fishing. It crystallizes the idea of environmental heritage: perception and acting in a certain environment over time by a method found good. In addition, the observation relates to a time when the waters were still clear. This way of observing the movement of bream is not possible anymore, due to eutrophication. Another writing deals in detail with a local invention: drift-net fishing in the open sea (155). That form of fishing was banned in the Baltic Sea in 2007 by the European Union. These two writings highlight changes that are not due to the unprofitability of fishing itself but rather to political decisions or environmental changes. Even if there is no return to previous fishing methods, some parts of the know-how they evoke may be used to develop sustainable fishing. Katriina Siivonen (2019) designates such elements of sustainable practices as *heritage futures*.

Eutrophication or contamination of waters is discussed in approximately 15 writings. Most of these are brief mentions of blue-green algae or longing for clear waters. The situation is written about as causing terror as well as helplessness and powerlessness. One of the authors describes the situation: ‘Last winter was the first when there was no ice at all. The sea was not covered under the deck, peace did not descend, and the sea could not be quiet’ (185). In the same text, the author examines her experiences from the point of view of the place, the pier, and its various users. The author of this text was one of those who attended a creative writing workshop. The other author, of the two who wrote in the workshop, describes her journey on an old wooden mid-engine boat from the perspective of both the sea and the little girl. She addresses the sea in the text, for example, as follows:

You [the sea] had already calmed down and settled into the evening’s rest, bound by the winds to their own corners. Do you remember that late-summer evening when

a small, little-shaken wooden boat with a curling and loudly plumbing mid-engine proceeded slowly a small family on board? – Short time for you. (51)

The aforementioned two writings clearly describe the sea as an actor and perspectives of many actors on one event.

There are only about 30 references to animals and plants in all the writings relating to non-human actors in the environment. The most cited animals are birds as part of the sound world; fishes – especially angled perch and smoked flounder; a seal; and a dog. Other animals mentioned are a weasel on ice, a herd of porpoises, jellyfish, and snakes and moufflons. Porpoises have almost disappeared from the Baltic Sea, and the possibility of obtaining flounder with nets is reduced considerably, at least locally. Plants, such as reeds, pine, berry bushes, heather, and wild chives, are mentioned as part of the marine landscape.

Case II: Photo/Writing Competition

Images that are relatable to daily life are more effective in triggering pro-environmental behaviour than cognition alone (Altinay & Williams, 2019). With this as a point of departure, in this case study participants were asked to submit a 300-word essay to accompany a photograph that captures environmental heritage and their relationship with the Baltic Sea. They were given the task of the researcher in reverse order: to interpret a given concept that relates to environmental heritage by visualizing and writing the words. The themes presented in the competition, besides environmental heritage, were change, agents and actions, or broadly, the relationship with the Baltic Sea (exact wording when presented to the participants: ‘your ideas of all forms of actions and experiences, modes of doing and ways of being, or skills and knowledge related to coastal areas and archipelago of the Baltic Sea’). Using these themes, the authors also analysed and interpreted respondents’ representations. Some of the findings included that environmental heritage was perceived as not only experiences of living and interacting with the sea and other non-human actors, like animals, but also as material objects in the environment. A clear theme emerging from the material was that personal connection is important in the articulation of environmental heritage. Heritage was seen connecting generations, and the environmental heritage was seen also as a legacy for future generations, which helps to answer the question of why it should be protected (Jetoo & Kouri, 2021).

Case III: Towards More Detailed Themes

In the summer of 2020, Kouri organized a ‘From actions to words and from words to actions’ creative writing corner at the Forum Marinum Maritime Centre in Turku for three months (June to August) as a part of the ‘40,000+ – Experience the world’s largest archipelago at touch distance’ exhibition. There was a big screen in the corner where photographer Niclas Rantala’s photographs of the archipelago and themes with questions were presented. On the table was paper on which to write and a mailbox in which to return answers. There was also a QR code on the wall for the questionnaire, which could also be answered after leaving the museum room. The questionnaire had no photographs. The themes were negotiated with Rantala and marine biologist Anna Törnroos-Remes, who also organized another adjacent section in the exhibition. The goal was to increase integration of content in exhibition sections and find common themes for communication between multidisciplinary studies and the public. After the negotiation, Kouri wrote the leading questions related to the themes as starting points to inspire the beginning of writing. The words as themes and concepts were also construed as actors to evoke memories and elicit observation, to bring writers to certain habitations of maritime locations and moments and write about them and other actors in them (see Kouri, 2016). The themes were: (1) Change, (2) Man and biodiversity, (3) Chains and networks and (4) Experience, knowledge, and skills.

Only six papers were returned, including four responses to the survey. The content of three writings was strongly critical, as if the authors had used the paper as a feedback form about the whole exhibition. One writer asked, ‘[Is] it ironic having a corner of a shipping museum dedicated to eco issues?’ With the word ‘corner’ the writer referred to the whole exhibition. As such it can’t be analysed as critical toward the habitat of creative writing itself.

The electronic survey was visited 170 times, and there were 61 writing respondents. Most of them (46 responses) were high school students, born in 2002–2004. They had done their writing at school using the QR code in December 2021. In total, 11 responses had been sent during the summer of 2020, when the corner for creative writing was in the museum, and four responses in November 2021. Whether these were written in the museum, by link, or by QR code later cannot be said. Of those reporting their gender (50%), there were 33 women/girls, 15 men/boys and two others. Most of the responses dealt with the Turku archipelago region, with only a few mentioning the Baltic or the coastline.

The introduction to the tasks on the museum's big screen and electronic questionnaire read as follows:

Observations and memories of the archipelago, the Baltic Sea and its shores

Look back and write, let your thought take off. What do you see, hear, smell? What happens next, or what no longer exists? How does that make you feel?

You can write freely or use the four topics we give you on the following pages.

Twelve writers responded to this. Five answers deal with emotions and sensations inspired by the introduction questions, reminiscing about such things as strong wind, warm sand, or salty seawater. One of the authors writes: 'It's calm and it would feel like the world has come to a standstill. Concerns fade in' (28). Another of the writers says: 'The sea. It produces a strong feeling through the senses – water makes deep thoughts pass, like imagining the entire lifespan when you have been in contact with water for a whole life' (3). Two other writings also bind their writing to their own life in relation to living near the sea. One of them describes 'the presence of the sea as a bringer of freedom – In the archipelago I am in another reality, the rushes do not reach the ferry, nor the connection ships, time behaves in deviation from its habits' (61). Observations of blue-green algae evoke sadness, horror, and powerlessness in the authors.

The first theme was Change. Its leading questions were:

The environment of the archipelago is constantly changing. What changes have you seen? When have they happened? Have they happened in the natural environment, in the manners of humans, or in the seasons? What do you think should be preserved? What customs, traditions, or beliefs are fading?

In total, 49 authors responded to the theme. Almost all the writings deal with changes in the seasons, especially the warming and the lack of ice. Several responses address the disappearance of the archipelago and its natural 'originality'; they advocate for it to be protected and so remain 'intact' (6). Writers cite littering, summer cottages, and tourism. Many had observed the increase of blue-green algae, and of certain animal species such as ticks, cormorants, and sea eagles, and especially of fish species. Although writers commonly hoped things would change, only a few express a wish for humanity to change. There are some interpretations of the nature of the change, of which most are pessimistic or reflect a feeling of uncertainty, such as 'Evolution is always in action. We humans change it only. Accelerate and ruin' (1); 'Seasons are unreliable, cannot be foreseen as before' (55) or 'Sometimes we can't even think of ways in which we destroy nature' (30).

The second theme was Man and biodiversity. Its leading questions were:

Which birds, fish and plants belong to the archipelago? Where does the archipelago begin and where does it end? What invisible and what visible things belong to the landscape of the archipelago? How is coexistence possible? What and who has the right to belong to the archipelago and why? What is the human share in the archipelago? What could we do differently? What does the archipelago give us? What are we giving to the archipelago?

In the writings there are many lists of animals and plants. Many writings emphasize co-living with human and non-human actors, or the idea that the archipelago belongs to everyone, but also ‘only to those who can treat it right’ (19). An islander is defined to be one who perceives the archipelago as their home. The idea of the archipelago is understood as an area or defined by the amount or the size of islands, the amount of water, or geographically, for example, the shore of mainland Finland. There are only a few examples of invisibility, like air and wind, fish and plants under water, or bacteria and small insects. Then again, the entire area of the archipelago is said to be invisible: ‘It is difficult to determine [the archipelago] precisely because there is so much water, which is also almost invisible and mobile. In turn, life appears well.’ Generally, from the answers, you could say that the archipelago was perceived to give experiences, or the freedom to move and rest, but humans did not give it anything or enough, just harm or garbage. Still, the relationship between man and the sea was directly described by one author who said, ‘The archipelago is one of the few places where nature continues to reach beyond man as a clear authority’ (18).

The third theme was Chains and networks. Its leading questions were:

There are many actors and networks in the archipelago. Some belong to the food chain, some to the production chain, one to the chain of the genus. What fish do you like? Where does the smallest get its nourishment? Who do we favour in the competition? Do you fish yourself? How did grandma’s fried herring taste? Who is an islander?

Almost all the writings describe the food chain or offer a list of what fish they eat. Two writers do not want to eat fish, which they consider ‘friends’ (34 and 60). One of them writes, ‘Nature’s cycle and action is creepy and predatory, but necessary’ (34). Islanders are said to be those who live in an archipelago, on an island or in a cottage. One says that cottagers are only visitors. A few authors mention that all who live in the archipelago are islanders, including animals and plants. Humans are said to have an ‘advantage’ in competition (9). The idea of competition was not understood by everyone, and one author thinks that there is no need for competition, because ‘here can be wind and

seasons in motion together' (60). Another writes that competition is not won by the strongest or wisest individuals but 'by those individuals who adapt' (15).

The fourth theme was Experience, knowledge and skills. Its leading questions were:

You only learn some of the skills by doing. Some are professional skills; some come from childhood. What skills are needed in the archipelago? What do you know? Who teaches these and how have you learned? What information does it take to live in the archipelago? What should everyone know about the archipelago? How would scientific knowledge be made accessible to everyone? What could be the science of archipelago? What's up with ice knowledge? Can you navigate in the fog?

Most of these responses cover navigation and boat-handling skills, 'nutrient supply skills' (30), and first-aid skills. The skills of walking on ice and navigating in a fog are mentioned, probably raised by leading questions. A few also mention the importance of identifying the impact of climate change or blue-green algae. The skills are said to have been learned usually from parents or grandparents, from being a Scout, or from other courses.⁴ One respondent's grandfather had taught him to fish and understand 'that peace which must be kept so that the fish are not scared' (46). Experiences are otherwise little addressed. One person wrote that skills in the archipelago are learned 'only by experience'.

CONCLUSION

In this research the collaborators, research questionnaire, method of analysis and progression were determined throughout the process in different situations and modes. The process began before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, adapting to it by changing plans and moving the workshops online. During these changes, the method of creative writing proved to be fluid and flexible. During the pandemic, people seemed to have time to reminisce and felt also that writing down observations and memories was meaningful. The Sea of Memories campaign was successful from this point of view. The time period 2019–2020 was also a suitable time for developing tasks in the workshops.

To answer what kind of tasks and themes in creative writing are useful in facilitating and inspiring participants to verbalize their own environmental knowledge as part of environmental heritage (RQ 1), the concepts of habitat and habitation proved to be useful. The purpose of the tasks and methods of creative writing was to inspire and lead the author to the habitation of writing about environmental heritage.

The use of photos or pictures as writing is a typical function of creative writing workshops. In our workshops we used pictures, as well as in the crea-

tive writing corner and in the competition, in which they were an integral part. Participants also submitted images with short captions to JNF's campaign in response to the request to share their memories. The use of images – especially the author's own images – to stimulate the habitation of creative writing was beneficial, especially when writing was targeted to examine a specific environment, here a maritime environment. The same target was reached by using the evocative journey method. These tasks also brought up the multisensory experiences of the sea.

In research, where communication between different kinds of knowledge, such as scientific and experience-based knowledge, on a particular subject is the target, the themes and concepts used are essential. In this study of environmental heritage, we experimented with themes in a case-by-case manner, finding concepts essential to all disciplines involved, such as change, agency, and networks. These concepts were also sufficiently general and widely understood, but not too abstract for the writers. At the same time, the themes were headlines for discipline-specific leading questions to the writers. The generated environmental knowledge was detailed. For example, by using the concept 'invisible' (in Case III), our aim was, on the one hand, to get the writers to make observations about micro-organisms and other things invisible to the human eye, which was successful, but on the other hand, the intangible heritage, habits, or the (past) activities in the landscape did not come up at all in the responses to this theme. However, these did emerge when the writers were asked to use the concept of the 'way of life' (Case II).

Admittedly, although the questions in Case II had been edited to be introductory to gain observations from different perspectives, the answers were very scarce. This was possibly influenced by the fact that the museum's creative writing habitat was in an open exhibition space where perhaps it was not peaceful enough to write. With this consideration, you could say that inspiring the participants in the museum without an instructor was not successful. The writings in response to the survey were mostly done during school time, and most were as if repeating knowledge shared in school about issues. The respondents' young age could also affect their reminiscences or evaluation of changes, for example. It is therefore good to draw more attention to whom, how, where, and when the creative writing habitat is organized. They have an effect on what kind of knowledge is generated in the habitations of creative writing.

Our research generated environmental knowledge of the Baltic Sea's environmental heritage (RQ 2) that could be used together with practitioners' knowledge in planning, for example, climate adaptation actions for the region. It is also useful for other regions around the Baltic Sea as demonstrative of the different ways of engaging sea stakeholders in the research and subsequent protection of the environment through engagement and lending their voice and

insight. The material shows how the given tasks, questions and concepts are understood in the writings and what kinds of environmental knowledge they generated. As expected, the writings included memories and observations in the maritime environment. The definitions of the concepts and observations of the younger participants (Case IIIb) reflected content they have learned in school. Some of them were also worried about the human impact on the sea, which comes up as anxiety about losing the ‘original’ environment, even as some of them are conscious of the continuous change of evolution.

The writings, which were done in creative writing workshops or at home, seemed to be more multisensorial and observation was precise. Experience-based knowledge was situated and personalized, as creative writing is. In memories of the lived experience, events were placed in a specific place near or at the sea, described in detail and reflecting the close relationship with the sea as a personal encounter. The relationship has usually begun in certain moments experienced in childhood and continues throughout life, even though the sea is not near the writer anymore. For some of the authors, the sea itself was experienced as an actor, which aroused different emotions, like a sense of freedom; for others, it was a way of life passed on by previous generations. The meanings of the relationship described in writings are good examples of environmental heritage as tacit knowledge. Even though it was generated in local contexts, it may be integrated as an important part of an individual’s adaptation to global changes in other environments and conditions. The writings also included descriptions of environmental heritage already practically disappearing, such as catching bream through a seine and herring drift-net fishing. Observations of some disappearing – and present – species are also important to collect for studies of environmental change.

Although most of the writings in our material were brief and fragmented, analysing the large volume of text provides direction, ideas, and material for future studies. When authors have time to write longer texts, they become more immersed in the time of memories. In that kind of writing habitation, places or actors in the text seem to relate to each other, making nets of actors. The author’s characteristic perspective, or their way of life, becomes visible through writing. This is what creative writing tasks seek to support. When the researcher is present, the interaction is partly based on communication and improvisation between the situation and the participants, both human and non-human. In such habitats, knowledge becomes more co-generated by all involved, even the researcher.

The main difference in our case studies was that Case I had an instructor and co-authors present, online or offline. However, most of the authors in the workshops did not submit writings for research (only two writings were submitted). The downside is, firstly, the underlying idea of creative writing is that the authors write intimately, only for themselves. Secondly, creative

writing workshops seldom have a common theme or objective to get writings on some common topic, as we did. Thirdly, the writings are also often written in the creative writing workshops using thought flow technology, to follow one's thinking freely, so authors often prefer to edit them afterwards if they are to be published. Thus, texts ending up with the researchers or being published is very uncertain. Finally, what things should be considered to make material generated in creative writing (more) available to researchers (RQ 3)? In this study the participation research method was only part of the research process and did not extend to the design of workshops and analysis or interpretation of texts, for example. It would be useful to involve authors in a more long-term research collaboration.

Regarding the continuous collection of material of experience-based knowledge from citizens, the advantage of the Loki web pages is that they are open arenas for writings spatially linked on a map. They provide the possibility of locating observations and memories, increasing the chances of more accurate historical contextualization of research results. However, the development of an equivalent online service, which would ask for observations on current changes in the environment, would be interesting.

Nevertheless, one of the targets in our study was to inspire writing about observations, experiences, and memories. Writing is a good activator; it tends to elicit a desire to make more accurate observations and further reminiscence. The results may be visible only in the writer's later works or publications, or in the change of their relationship to the sea. The written concerns of environmental issues can also give rise to attempts to solve problems. Thereby thinking and writing also indirectly increase civil activity in taking part in the negotiation about sustainability in our relationship with the Baltic Sea and living with it. They at least defuse climate anxiety.

Factors that worked well for the generation of knowledge using creative writing include working with existing partnerships whilst forging new ones, using subject-oriented tasks and methods to generate material, and planning for contingencies. Some of the challenges include shifting time frames and resource intensity. This chapter documented this case with the aim of guiding interdisciplinary researchers in future transdisciplinary projects who want to use creative writing as a means of material acquisition, generation of knowledge, and meaning making. We used creative writing to engage people to write about their environmental heritage. Also, however, the researchers were actively involved in the process of environmental heritage, not only by examining other people's ideas but also as participants of the process of environmental heritage itself by organizing creative writing habitats and facilitating people to write, verbalize, and conceptualize their experience-based local and tacit knowledge. On the one hand, this could complement more traditional forms of research by adding the voice of participants – the writers

and the researchers – as co-creators and verbalizers of knowledge. On the other hand, this could lead to a way of research in which participating extends to the whole process of the study and facilitates on a more continuous basis – for example, in permanent premises for creative writing habitats connected with universities or museums, such as writing laboratories – the harnessing of local environmental knowledge for stewardship of the environment.

NOTES

1. The research has received funding from Tiina and Antti Herlin Foundation and the Academy of Finland grant number 315715. We are grateful to all those involved co-researchers, participants in the creative writing workshops, and other stakeholders in the study.
2. The width of the exhibition wall is 3 m, height 2.5 m, and depth 0.4 m.
3. Numbers in parentheses refer to the archive number of the text file.
4. In that high school there is a line of study oriented towards marine studies.

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