

Writer as Buzz Pollinator

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Introduction

Conceiving of creative writing as interface with “nonmaterial reality” allows us to accommodate the phenomenon whereby something can be both imagined and real, fictional and true. Nonmaterial reality refers to the weave of emotions, thoughts, and perceptions in which human lives are carried out. Creative writing refers to the generation of prose fiction, poetry, drama, and other familiar literary genres and blends. In this view, stories are actual occurrences, literary characters exist, poems are true, and drama is documentary. Fiction writer Flannery O’Connor suggests, “The type of mind that can understand good fiction . . . is at all times the kind of mind that is willing to have its sense of mystery deepened by contact with reality, and its sense of reality deepened by contact with mystery. Fiction should be both canny and uncanny” (79). Poet Ted Hughes succinctly explains, “What’s writing really about? It’s about trying to take fuller possession of the reality of your life” (32). This article explores how the interface of creative writing with nonmaterial reality occurs.

Both individual writers and writing institutions – programs, courses, and guidebooks – turn a good deal of attention to practices through which the interface of creative writing with nonmaterial reality can be successfully realized. The bulk of attention takes up deployment of elements of writing such as plot, dialogue, description, characterization, figure of speech, and so on, what the poet Seamus Heaney refers to as “craft,” a largely learnable skill in the making and managing of the material of words (Driscoll 19). Writers can develop their knowledge and abilities in commonly utilized elements. Novelist and critic David Lodge expresses a widespread conviction when he says, “I believe anyone’s expressive and communicative skills can be improved by practice and criticism” (175-176). At the same time, many creative writers, Lodge among them, recognize other essential characteristics of successful writing which make it less amenable to purposeful acquisition. As Lodge explains, language generation is a forbiddingly

dense and complicated phenomenon in which the entire life of the writer and history of his language are implicated: “Even a single sentence in a novel is the complex product of innumerable chains of cause and effect which reach deep into the writer’s life and psyche. To distinguish, analyse and retrace them all would be impossible” (178). There are qualitative considerations which impact the understanding of creative writing, as well. Creative writing is not an exclusively rational activity. Instead, it incorporates affective, psychological, and other elements into a supra-rationality and asks that the writer call up commensurate qualities. O’Connor suggests, “We want competence, but competence by itself is deadly. What is needed is the vision to go with it” (86). Fiction writer Eudora Welty elaborates:

Before there is meaning, there has to occur some personal act of vision. And it is this that is continuously projected as the novelist writes, and again as we, each to ourselves, read. If this makes fiction sound full of mystery, I think it’s fuller than I know how to say. Plot, characters, setting, and so forth, are not what I’m referring to now; we all deal with these as best we can. The mystery lies in the use of language to express human life. (63)

How is the interface with nonmaterial reality actualized by a work of creative writing, and how is the “vision” of a work summoned forth? This article is the second installment in a two-part series, following on “Writing the Million-Petalled Flower.” The series aims to unpack to some small degree the mystery referenced by O’Connor, Welty and many other writers, and to render the creative writing process a shade more accessible. The discussion in this installment focuses on six prominent dimensions of language: feel, form, image, music, subjectivity, and time. These dimensions locate between the contextualized use of a specific element of writing craft on the one end of the scale, and such large and overarching realms as inspiration on the other. The six

dimensions offer windows through which to view the unfolding of the writing process at the stage when, as poet Derek Mahon says, “The lines flow from the hand unbidden, and the hidden source is the watchful heart” (113). The first section of the article describes the way in which a work of creative writing can take shape in the early and seminal stages of generation, in each of the six component dimensions of language. The second section extends the discussion into a consideration of the nature of “vision” and synthesizes the findings into a comprehensive description of creative writing, drawing an analogy between creative writing activities of humans and the foraging behavior of bumblebees.

1 . Daydream Externalized

The six dimensions of creative writing – feel, form, image, music, subjectivity, and time – are addressed here in the initial and improvisational stages of writing. The hope is to project into the working mechanisms of the writing process in order to gain a fuller and more dynamic overall sense for the generation of language than would be possible through examining finished writing products. The initial stages of the writing process, to the best of my knowledge, typically receive relatively little explicit attention. These early stages of the writing process are difficult to access, as they consist of ineffable and ephemeral mental operations. The operations take place instantaneously, even simultaneously, before they recede and disappear. Grounded exploration of this stage of composition would involve minute, detailed inspection of incremental drafts of a single work and examination of each subtle evolution which has taken place in it. Much activity, especially that which did not find its way into words, would be lost even so, and a thorough account of micro-poetics would become laborious. The descriptions in this section are composite, generated cumulatively over time through creative writing experience and observation, interchange with other writers, and archival research into the perspectives of widely recognized writers. As composites, the accountings will induct obvious weaknesses in their generalized nature but will hopefully be faithful to the phenomena involved in creative writing, rather than distorting, and will be helpful in their practicality.

Feel: The first conduit to nonmaterial reality available to the writer is an intuitive feel. “Feel” is a pre-verbal intuition which has been commonly described as a palpable tug or tingle somewhere in the abdomen incurred in the course of a reflection, a gut feeling based most characteristically in memory. Feel might be considered a node or knot of psychic energy. It is a pulse from a distant unknown, a faint rippling. It is the sense of a disturbance, an unsettled condition, or unlikely concentration, an indication of life in a dimension of nonmaterial reality. This feel is often the prompt and spur for writing. Heaney suggests, “The crucial action is pre-verbal, to be able to follow the first alertness or come-hither, sensed in a blurred or incomplete way, to dilate and approach as a thought or a theme or a phrase” (451-452). Heaney refers to this feel with the word “technique,” and describes it as a largely innate ability to tap inarticulate realms of memory and experience in order to allow first stirrings to form around words and grow toward articulation. The phenomenon of feel can succeed in locating a compromised or otherwise laden region which may have long lay hidden from consciousness. Playwright Tennessee Williams explains, “I think all plays come out of some inner tension in the playwright himself. He is concerned about something, and that concern begins to work itself out in the form of a creative activity” (Wagner 124-125). The phenomenon of feel calls attention to an experience in nonmaterial reality in which injury or union or other noteworthy event continues. When the writer continues to mull and move into these experiences, and to tap them in words, surprising content emerges.

Feel should be distinguished from feeling, as in affect or emotion. The experiences which feel locates will contain all range of associated feelings. Honest emotions are essential elements of creative writing and must be recognized and included in the unfolding writing process if the work is to accrue strength, genuineness, and persuasion. However, writing will be sustained with difficulty if it addresses an experience of “happiness, sadness, anger, fear,” or other pre-conceived emotion, or if it makes the sharing of emotion the end of the writing. While indispensable, naturally occurring, and intrinsic to any experience, human feelings are unstable, mercurial,

and blind. They have blurred boundaries and overlap. Feelings are intermediary and worked through. They would be erratic and arbitrary elements to steer by. Feel or intuition, by contrast, is a stable and reliable guide to a place of, often, conflict, where feelings cluster. It moves in a slow but informed and sure manner. It is inveterate and uncompromising. Once feel guides the writer in the migration to the vein of significant experience and the extracting process, it remains operative throughout the process. Functioning as rudder and ballast, it keeps the process centered and the writer on task. It directs toward long-standing, perhaps unregistered, preoccupations, sensing the irregularity, the rift, sometimes one so insubstantial that otherwise it would simply slide by.

Form: The consciousness of the writer gravitates toward a reverberant region of nonmaterial reality. Once a promising experience is located, the writer begins channeling it into language. At this point, when the writer feels into language, language forms are born. It should be uncontroversial to say that sounds, phonemes, words, phrases, sentences, utterances, stanzas and paragraphs, entire works, genres, language of every scale and dimension represents nothing but forms. Creative writing, like other arts, consists of creation and manipulation of forms. The shift from pre-verbal to verbal can be instantaneous. The emergence of language, in a flow that might range from an initial trickle to a cascade, is a sign that a significant experience in nonmaterial reality has been located and is ready and available for exploration. At this point, the writer is exploring nonmaterial experience in an open-ended way, putting down the words that emerge. Regardless of whatever content may be emerging, the writer doesn't know what he is writing about. As playwright Tom Stoppard explains, "It's very seldom that you sit down knowing pretty much what you have to put on this page of paper. It's much more the case that it creates itself in the doing, almost as though it creates itself in the physical act of writing."

At this stage, words come relatively easily. They are not what we would consider thoughts, and the writing does not involve thinking, per se. The writing does not partake of an organization or scaffolding. Over time, the language forms that emerge grow and link. Chunks emerge. They may become paragraphs or stanzas,

eventually scenes or chapters. A form gives birth to another form and is subsumed in it. Forms and scales of forms cannot be separated from one another. The emerging forms are extensions of feel and reifications of the experience in nonmaterial reality. They are not imposed, but rather emerge. In the early stages, like the limbs of a young plant, the forms are very fluid, pliable, and flexible. They grow into further, extended forms. Even more advanced forms receive guidance and shaping from the writer in accordance with their own manifest tendencies, but they are not imposed. Heaney explains, "Form is not like a pastry cutter – the dough has to move and discover its own shape" (477). Across the drafting and revising process, as the balance between finding and making shifts, forms exhibit a life of their own, as playwright Harold Pinter explains:

I think I can say I pay meticulous attention to the shape of things, from the shape of a sentence to the overall structure of the play. This shaping is of the first importance. But I think a double thing happens. You arrange and you listen, following the clues you leave for yourself, through the characters. And sometimes a balance is found, where image can freely engender image. (*Complete* 14)

Forms of any scale, from local to global, may be tightly drawn and thoroughly patterned, or they may be more loosely woven, sketched, and detailed, to differing effects. They exhibit greater or lesser cohesion and coherence, regularity and symmetry as they embody and dramatize nonmaterial reality. The degree of rawness of form at which a work is left, or refinement to which it is ultimately drawn, will be worked out later in the writing process, informed by many variables. The needs of the work at hand and the formal sensibilities of the writer are important factors in the determination. At the same time, language forms are shared, inherited, communal constructs with an objective existence for members of a language community, much as colors and musical notes are; consequently, received practice, contemporary shapings, and anticipated readership will also affect the formal calibration.

Image: A work of creative writing emerges in

images. The forms that emerge raise images. Creative writing generates a visual rendering of experience in nonmaterial reality. A work of writing unfolds visually and effortlessly, depicting scenes and settings, beings, actions, and interactions, like a film in replete silence, memory, daydream, and reverie. Images comprise the environment of the creative writing. Images wear the trappings of life in reifying nonmaterial reality. While vivid to the senses, images serve as vessels of implicit, unfixed meanings and significance. They speak through association and require evaluation or interpretation of significance. Each image has an integrity and in-folded meaning of its own. Famously plastic, they embody their plural meanings, complementary and contradictory. They are not to be explained and are irreducible. They are simply born into existence. They peel off and link into sequences. They are elaborated into scene and plot. An image does not elucidate its own significance; rather, it is experienced, and its provisional significance emerges through the interface. The significance continues to morph and evolve.

Image is the basic “figure of speech.” An image contains a physical reference, and also the seed of a metaphor, symbol, and so on. It may be coaxed to these enriched figures of speech over the course of the writing process. Then again, it may be left to comfortably stand alone and speak for itself and be experienced in its multiply implicative manner. The channeling of images is another mode of creative writing’s plumbing of nonmaterial reality. Images are spawned by the central disruption or concentration of energy. They are incarnations and interpretations of a startling event which occurs along a fault in nonmaterial reality. Disturbing or soothing, shocking or settling, prompted by conflict or ecstasy, images are constructive phenomena. Gaston Bachelard refers to written images as “beneficent spaces” (35). Imagery unspools in a state of absorption. Prose and poetry writer Fernando Pessoa describes the actively receptive nature of his experiences of the early writing process:

I often write without even wanting to think, in an externalized daydream, letting the words caress me as if I were a little girl sitting on their lap. They’re

just meaningless sentences, flowing languidly with the fluidity of water that forgets itself as a stream does in the waves that mingle and fade, constantly reborn, following endlessly one on the other. That’s how ideas and images, tremulous with expression, pass through me . . . (350-351)

The generation of images, the exercise of the imagination, is not marked by deliberation. Images are a basic and characteristic mode of human comprehension and occur naturally and beyond volition. The beneficent spaces cohere and coalesce, link and wax. The world fills in. An experience is housed. Writing is an inhabiting.

Music: The language of creative writing emerges with a sonic profile and patterning. Even though written words are silent, they correspond to and mentally evoke distinctive sequences of sound – the music of the work. Language cannot help but accrue a musicality which is both endowed and attributed. Literary critic Robert von Hallberg explains that the challenge is “to compose a text that is compelling not so much in two separate ways – semantically and sonically – but in one way that draws sign and sound into collaboration” (145). Music interprets the nonmaterial reality in a directly sensory manner. A work of creative writing literally and silently “sounds” nonmaterial experience. In the early stages, although the nascent sound patterns can be rich and complex, they emerge relatively effortlessly and semi-consciously, in a stream of feeling and as part of the feel for resonant experience, one dimension of the emerging forms and images. Sounds and music have no semantic meaning, of course. Rather, they raise affect and state of mind.

Dense, dilute, angular, jagged, opaque, arrhythmic, cacophonous, euphonious, the silent music of written language corresponds to the affective quality of the nonmaterial experience and is one dimension of the meaning in the work. How something is said, it is widely observed, is centrally implicated in what is said. When the writer visits a resonant experience in nonmaterial reality, the experience reverberates. There are infinite striations and gradations to sound and sound interplay. The range in the sonic quality of a work of creative writing can be influenced by the size and shape of the

perceived rift in existence. A work of creative writing will be informed by different timbres, rhythms, cadences, and tempos as well as sounds. These all collaborate in generating attitude, tone, emotion, mood, and other aspects of affect which exercise pivotal effect on meaning and are capable of redirecting or even reversing semantic meaning. Like imagery and other elements of form, the music in a work of creative writing can be consonant, assonant, and dissonant. All of these handlings exert varying fundamental effects. Robert von Hallberg cites poets who “gladly followed the lead of vowel tones, consonance, rhymes, and rhythms in the prospect of a discovery of thought and feeling. The music transforms one thought into another, usually unforeseen, and sometimes indeterminate too” (238).

Sound serves as a primal, subtle, nimbly responsive channel of interpretation, with a close relation to the original, animating feel or intuition. Because sound is not affixed to declarative meaning, it can be wielded with great suppleness and nuance. It will inform and influence the experience of the work at various levels of consciousness. Just as forms and images are capable of leading the writer and writing process, sounds can lead as well, with the writer following his ear. All of the six dimensions of creative writing discussed here are inseparable parts of a unitary phenomenon. Emerging in the first stages intuitively and instinctively, the silent sounds of a work of creative writing can be increasingly orchestrated and combed out through deliberation – while still being fed throughout by the original animating feeling and while still aiming at sharing an absorbing and living experience. The music of a work of creative writing can be tightly or loosely woven and patterned. It might be foregrounded, backgrounded, exalted, or apparently disregarded, across a work and by turn within it. The variegating sonic profile of a given work can be influenced by the individual writer’s activated musical sensibility, a lifetime of language encounters, state of mind at time of writing, the arbitrary qualities of the language itself, and aural inheritances from wind and waves, animals and plants.

Subjectivity: Someone or something speaks through a work of creative writing. This entity is the subjectivity of the work. The subjectivity is an open position which

accommodates writer, speaker(s) or narrator(s), and every reader, an envelope self which is shared, an emptiness which accommodates everyone and everything, someone who is not the writer speaking to someone who is not the reader. This subjectivity is a dislocation in time and space, a projection of an ever-present here and now. Like the other dimensions of language discussed thus far, subjectivity emerges effortlessly and spontaneously in the early stages of the writing by the writer placing himself in an actively receptive state of mind. This active reception is achieved through withdrawal of assertion and displacement of self. An umbrella subjectivity assembles when the writer places himself at zero. Self-awareness of any kind – sense of identity, interest or self-benefit, conscious value, any thought or idea – would narrow the fullness of the flow, impact the nature of the process as exploration. Upon visiting the resonant site of nonmaterial reality, the writer abandons himself and discriminating or evaluating consciousness to the experience. In this state of mind, the limited self is replaced by the extended self. The writer assumes a singular plurality. Immersed in the experience, he gives himself to the flow of forms, images, and sounds. As speaker and every character, he relates the experience through every possible perspective. The writer is nobody and everybody. He is language and the emerging work. The writer occupies both center and periphery of inter-relating coalescences. He is linked by empathy with all the other participants in the unfolding experience of nonmaterial reality which is being created through him as the generating subjectivity of the work.

As esoteric or implausible as the construct may sound, in practice it is straightforward and readily realized. Pinter explains, “I have usually begun a play in quite a simple manner; found a couple of characters in a particular context, thrown them together and listened to what they said, keeping my nose to the ground” (*Various* 17). The abdication or abandonment of self can induce the feeling or perception in the writer that it was not he who created the work. Writers appear to consider the displacing of the self as essential and unremarkable. The poet Paul Muldoon shares his perception, “The poems are not actually written by me. They are written through me . . . Something else wrote them.” Perspectives

incorporated in the unbound subjectivity include those of original participants, the narrator and others, as well as supplemented characters, the writer, and anticipated readers. At some point in the writing process, the writer can begin to shape and reconcile the subjectivity and its various dimensions in the work. Displacement of self is something which everyone can achieve. It is something which everyone does as part of everyday life, when lost in a work of art, for example, or wrapped up in an activity to the point of forgetting surroundings, losing sense of time, etc. Needless to say, it would be the rare human and writer who could set the organizing ego aside perfectly unselfconsciously and indefinitely. The attempt is key, achievement relative. Progress in this area, presumably, occurs through experiences in both living and writing.

Time: A work of creative writing presents a singular moment in time. The moment is singular and curious in that it knows no lines, borders, or boundaries. As such, it locates in the ever-ongoing present. It is the creation of a new fold of the present which lives each time the work is read, and when it is resurrected in memory. The resonant experience in nonmaterial reality which the writer accesses is a durable and enduring moment. Creative nonfiction writer and memoirist Eva Hoffman describes this psychic mode of temporality as a time apart:

We need to acknowledge the mute motions of our interiority, and catch their drift through reflection or a sort of inner interpretation. Sometimes we need to pause in order to listen to the inchoate movements of our thoughts and feelings, to let them meander in free association, or crystallise into an unexpected insight. (115)

When this nonmaterial experience is interpreted into language, the experience retains the same enduring quality and presence as the original. The literary moment becomes part of the fabric of material and nonmaterial reality. “A poem is an event, not the record of an event,” explains poet Robert Lowell (291).

Whatever the base tense that a work is written in, it unfolds and is received in the ongoing simple present, flowing boundlessly and subsuming the past and future.

This singular experience of the simple present emerges with the initial stages of the writing, in the force of the manifesting language. Over the course of the writing process, the writer can continue to elaborate the original moment into the time frames it assumes, the many folds of time that emerge, and establish relationships among these. Just as language forms, images, music, and subjectivity can diversify across the writing process, time frames can branch off and evolve within the work. A chronology emerges. Backstories, flashbacks, foreshadowing, and so on takes place. Needless to say, any plot unfolds to a variegating tempo and cadence. Time in a work of creative writing might be negotiated into a complex braid. It is protean. It can become a hetero-chronicity. This may be explicit or implicit. The various currents of time within the work can exhibit orchestration and/or dislocation. They will be engaged by readers, directly and in recollection, and in this way be distributed across chronological time, as well, with a multiplicity of present times moving from potential to manifest through the interaction. There are so many potential inflections of time within the work that it would be impossible to parse them all. Meanwhile, the simple present of the work remains fluid and ever flowing and embracing. Hoffman observes, “We carry time within us, and we make human time out of our own dark and light materials” (116). The experience of a work of creative writing is a proto-present. The work is an alternative time created by a run in the fabric of experience. It is at once a creation and recreation, rendering and repair.

2. The Spirit Which Makes Itself

The “vision” of a work of creative writing, we see, is evoked from the early stages of the writing process and increasingly thrown into relief by the emerging language. We have seen how composition begins in a bodily tug of tingle. This prick indicates something unresolved and compelling, a tension or concentration of energy. In reflection, the writer returns to the location of rupture or rapture. In a state of absorption in which the self is displaced, he channels it in language. He taps a resonant moment and all of its unfolding implications. Forms, images, sound, subjectivity, and time emerge. Experience assembles and is reassembled. The language allows the

uncovering of the nonmaterial reality, just as the reality prompts the language. The experience emerges from latency to manifestation.

The animating energy for the creative dynamic is a sensed gap, resulting from a perceived fracture or dislocation. The writer perceives a gap between an experience in the material world along with its nonmaterial dimensions, and his vague and inchoate sense of the reason underlying reality. The marked experience foils the unmarked reason. The strain or contrasts prods and prompts response. This sense of the background reason, its communication by indirection, comprises the “vision” of a work of creative writing. The reason is an ambient absence. It is cast in the empty space raised by the disharmony of a disruption or the unlikely harmony of a concentration. The vision is a peripheral one, an oblique sense of the background reason that has prompted and sponsored the writing all along. O’Connor explains, “The artist uses his reason to discover an answering reason in everything he sees. For him, to be reasonable is to find, in the object, in the situation, in the sequence, the spirit which makes itself” (82).

Vision is a comprehensive dimension of creative writing which is itself unworded. It is a compounded and indirect comprehension of nonmaterial reality. It emerges and is worked out through the experience of the writing. Craft and vision in creative writing are mutually implicated entities. The vision in any work of creative writing has always been present from the beginning, as an intuited sense, and it is drawn out in the articulation. Language and vision create one another. Vision is central and intrinsic to the writing, but it is resolutely and absolutely impervious to direct statement. The vision has been worked toward in incremental stages in the interlinking dimensions of language, resides implicit in the body of language and cannot be alternatively phrased, restated, or reduced. It remains unconditioned. Its untouchability affords a space to inhabit, as the next work will afford another space. It is an intrinsic and unconscious part of the writer’s experience of reality. It is the particular vision of a specific work which has been articulated and worked up in stages from a faint intuition. A sensed vision may well raise awareness or sense of another tension or unsettledness, prompting the reader or

writer to feel toward another exploration.

A work of creative writing is the fruit of uncertainty and unsettledness. In the contrasting of what is with what could or should be, the creative impulse is in the broadest and most general terms a moral one. It is a moral impulse which, in the realization is inevitably limited and compromised, though no less significant for that. The poet Robert Frost explains that a poem “begins in delight . . . and ends in a clarification of life – not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion” (vi). Even if only in the naming and recognizing, the enterprise of creative writing is a reclamation project. Pinter explains, “Truth in drama is forever elusive. You never quite find it but the search for it is compulsive. The search is clearly what drives the endeavor. The search is your task” (*Essential* 1). As many writers do, Fernando Pessoa testifies frequently to feelings of despair which unsuccessful attempts at writing can provoke. However, at other junctures, he shares the intrinsic joy he can find in the process:

I am writing late one Sunday morning, on a day full of soft light, on which above the rooftops of the interrupted city, the always astonishing blue of the sky clothes in oblivion the mysterious existence of the stars . . . It’s Sunday inside me too . . . My heart is also going to church, although quite where the church is it doesn’t know, and it’s wearing a little velvet suit, and, above, a collar several sizes too big, its cheeks, flushed with the excitement of so many first impressions, positively beam, resolutely happy. (293)

Humans interface with nonmaterial reality because that is our condition – the interface, after all, is who we are, it is the life living through us – and also because those who are drawn by predilection to language, at least, find it compelling. The despair and the joy which virtually every writer has experienced, presumably, both derive from the significance which writers attribute to the activity. In reading, the reader follows a path with similar but parallel stages to that of the writer, and the work can be enriching for reader in similar ways, as well. For both

writer and reader, the sense of an engagement with an underlying reason rendered – no matter how ephemeral, distant, and indirect – reassures and encourages.

We might find an analogy for creative writing in the manner in which a foraging bumblebee seeks and secures nourishment. Pollen is airborne and scattered imperceptibly everywhere, and nectar is widely obscured. The worker bumblebee seeks laden blossoms in new and familiar places. In her meandering flight, the bee searches for palpable concentrations of nectar and pollen. When she finds a laden blossom through shape, color, size, clustering, electric field, temperature, or other sensory indications, she shapes to the flower and undertakes a protocol of collection. She extracts nectar with her tongue and stores it in her crops. As she works inside the flower, pollen clings to her pile or fur incidentally, and she may dislodge pollen from the flower's anthers through sonication (buzz pollination) at resonant frequencies. She packs pollen in her pollen baskets. She carries the harvest of nectar and pollen home to her nest, which is located in a relatively undisturbed, shaded location, often a low-lying place, or even underground in an abandoned rodent burrow. There, the bumblebee processes the pollen by chewing and shaping it and storing it in wax cells and brood cells. The food supports the colony. The securing of nourishment and the life of the colony is a cultural activity. In her foraging activities, the social bumblebee coordinates and collaborates with others. Each flower surely brings different approaches, tasks, and yields. Through making the rounds of flowers, the bee inadvertently disperses grains of pollen among flowering plants, and in all likelihood without consciously realizing it, contributes to the ongoing viability of the plants, advancing the germinating process and the formation of seeds. The bumblebee can hardly help but engage and participate in these processes and be part of them. Who could ascribe limits to the bumblebee's understanding of botany and climatology, to her planes of consciousness? It is hard to imagine that the individual bumblebee does not operate from a position of trust and alignment with larger and enfolding processes.

Conclusion

This article has described phenomena which occur during the early stages of the creative writing process. It is hoped that the descriptions and accountings might be of help to aspiring and working writers, in individual and group contexts, as they try to locate the zones in which to carry out their active reception, and to write with fulfillment and in a fulfilling way for others. As mentioned in the first installment of this series, the characterizations of creative writing in this article are necessarily offered with every kind of caveat. Each writer, genre, work, component of work, every sentence and indeed use of a word is unique and unprecedented. Eudora Welty explains, "How it [creative writing] is learned can only remain in general – like all else that is personal – an open question" (61). Creative writing is a realm of infinite variety and diversity in which components are ultimately indistinguishable and inseparable, to the best of our understanding, and any distinctions and discriminations are asserted arbitrarily. For this very reason, the more that creative and critical perspectives are shared, the better. Every critique of and contrasting perspective on the specific suggestions offered here would be valid, and any endorsement ungrounded. The critiques and endorsements promise to spark further explorations.

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