

DISSERTATION NEWSLETTER

Spring Quarter, 2019

Bees are not only crucial members of our ecosystem but many cultures have long considered bees to be divine messengers. The Celts, the Egyptians, the Grecians all include bees in their core mythologies. Not only is the bee a potentially helpful symbol in completing your dissertation, but I thought bees would be an apropos topic under which I could introduce myself. Deborah is derived from דבורה or D'vorah, a Hebrew word meaning "bee." She is also an Old Testament figure from the Book of Judges. Not a small name to carry! It was something I learned to embrace during my time as a Pacifica student. More specifically, in a class on archetypal psychology I read this quote by [Dr. Ginette Paris](#) that later became not only a mantra for my mind but a tattoo on my body:

*Amor fati (love of one's fate). This is it. This is me. This is my life. Amor fati.
Escaping it is futile and foolish.*

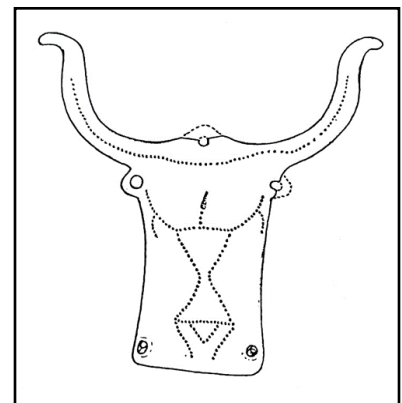
My [dissertation](#) focused on shame and making art with a Dionysian sensibility; it does not include a single reference to bees but, in retrospect, it could have. [Devon Deimler](#), a fellow researcher of Dionysos and recent graduate, did make the connection between the god and bees. She discusses Marija Gimbutas' work with a "bee goddess," in the figure depicted below. It appears to be a female form with arms raised in the epiphany gesture marked out in the center of a bull's head. The bull's head is also considered the face of Dionysos. This is but one example of making little known connections accessible to a larger audience and contributing something novel to the canon of depth psychological research. Consider this an invitation to contemplate what the bee means to you and how calling on it may assist you in moving forward with your dissertation.

I look forward to working with you!

Deborah Cluff, Ph.D.

Depth Psychology, Depth Psychotherapy Program (2015)

Archeological illustration of carved bone plate discovered in Bilcze Zlote, upper Seret valley, western Ukraine, c. 3,700-3,500 BCE. OPUS Archives and Research Center. Marija Gimbutas Collection, Box 253. Series: Manuscripts. Reprinted with permission by copyright holder.



DISSERTATION AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

2018-2019

Pacifica Graduate Institute confers annual Dissertation Awards of Excellence to recognize original research that significantly contributes to the field of depth psychology or mythological studies. Nominations are submitted by Dissertation Committee Chairs with the support of at least one faculty member. Dissertations are nominated based on the presentation and clarity of ideas, sound methodology and interpretation of findings, innovative quality, and contribution to the field of depth psychology or mythological studies. In honor of their achievements, this newsletter highlights the recipients. The Academic Senate and Pacifica Graduate Institute are proud to announce the 2018-2019 awardees of the Dissertation Award of Excellence:

Laura Franklin Chisholm

Seeing Through to the Organizational Psyche: An Archetypal Analysis

Somatic Studies Program. Committee Chair: Elizabeth Nelson, Ph.D.

Devon Erin Deimler

Ultraviolet Concrete: Dionysos and the Ecstatic Play of Aesthetic Experience

Mythological Studies Program. Committee Chair: Dennis Slattery, Ph.D.

Brian Damien Dietrich

Honoring the Ecology Between Worlds:

Depth Psychology and Relational Guided Imagery

Jungian Archetypal Studies Program. Committee Chair: Glen Slater, Ph.D.

Erik Thomas Jensen

Deconstructing Dionysus: Re-Visioning Nietzsche's Writings as a Polytheistic Odyssey

Jungian Archetypal Studies Program. Committee Chair: Glen Slater, Ph.D.

FEATURED PACIFICA ALUMN *Brian Damien Dietrich*



It was a great honor to receive the 2018-2019 dissertation award of excellence. Being recognized by my professors, committee members, and the academic senate for having made a “significant contribution to the field of depth psychology” was the best possible denouement to having crossed the initiatory threshold of my doctoral studies at PGI. When I started writing my dissertation, I was under the delusional misapprehension that I might be able to complete it in a year. After all, from my clinical work, I had some expertise in one of my study’s key domains: Relational Guided Imagery (RGI). Besides, I had already written a detailed dissertation proposal and thought that I would only need to expand on it.

I was concussively disabused of this fantasy, however, when I began to review the different philosophically informed approaches to mental imagery used in psychotherapeutic practice after Jung and realized I would first need to situate the depth psychologies of the unconscious and Jungian depth psychology in particular—especially Jung’s method of active imagination—in the Western philosophical tradition. In broad terms, Western philosophers imagined the faculty of imagination in one of three ways: 1) as a low-level mimetic function, 2) as a mid-level function that mediated sense perception and ideas, or 3) as a superordinate function and world creating power. From my review, I learned that the imaginative faculty and the importance of images, imagery, and imagination reached its zenith in German idealism and the superordinate creative imagination conceived by it. This third conception of imagination partly formed the intellectual context in which Jung’s theorizing emerged, including his idea of a creative unconscious and his notion of *esse en anima* or being in soul which Jung argued, “admits the subjective nature of our world perception [while] maintaining . . . the subjective images is the indispensable link between the . . . entity of consciousness, and the unknown, strange object” (Jung, 1925/1989), p. 135). Similar to Jung, I also learned and can unreservedly proclaim that I am not a philosopher, so my deep philosophical dive to contextualize the emergence of Jung’s ideas—which inspired all subsequent mental imagery practices in the West—was as painstaking as it was laborious. This section alone took over a year to write, and I still hadn’t conducted a single interview for my Interpretive Phenomenological Study (IPA) which asked: what themes and patterns emerge in participant descriptions of their experience of inner guide imagery? And how do participants’ accounts relate to Jung’s imaginal engagement with personified archetypes?

Because I am not a facile writer, my process each day entailed spending 6 to 8 hours in front of my computer. To produce writing, I discovered, required that I stew in consternation for at least an hour before ideas and sentences began to flow. Although I experienced tremendous satisfaction in those watershed breakthroughs, if I took a break from the pressure prematurely, it seemed that Prometheus-like, the pain-clock started all over again. The way forward, I realized, would only reveal itself after interminable periods of suffering, thankfully punctuated by luminous moments clarity and daimonic inspiration. For me, the dissertation process was a night sea journey of dark initiatory descent, one in which my humbled ego cycled through phases of inflation and deflation and shifted from its fantasied regency to a subordinate, receptive relationship to the objective psyche that Jung called the Self—the creative wellspring from which all my insights, ideas, and prose flowed. Said differently, dissertation writing is arguably an iterative process of death and rebirth that contributes to and propels individuation, which is the full and unique development of the individual personality.

Jung, C. G. (1989). Introduction to Jungian psychology: Notes of the seminar on analytical psychology given in 1925 (R. F. C. Hull, Trans., W. McGuire and S. Shamdasani, Eds.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.



Pitfalls to Avoid in Dissertation Writing

Jody Gentian Bower, Ph.D.



In my years of editing academic papers, I make the same kinds of corrections and give the same advice to most of my clients. There are plenty of resources out there you can use to check your spelling (or whether the word you use means what you think it does), grammar, and punctuation.¹ Your professors will provide feedback on your choice of topic and how well you construct your arguments. But some issues fall into the cracks between these two areas of feedback.

Over-Writing

Yes, you want to sound scholarly in your paper. This does not mean you need to write long and difficult sentences! Your professors will welcome clear, concise writing as a refreshing change from the awkward constructions they so often have to wade through. Presenting your concepts in simple terms demonstrates your command of the subject. If you can't say it simply, it may be a sign that you aren't sure of what you are trying to say.

Your first clue that a sentence has become too convoluted is that it goes on for more than three or four lines of text. The second clue is an overabundance of prepositions (of, in, for, etc.): more than two or three can be a sign that you need to shorten the sentence. Another warning sign is overly elaborate constructions, like "due to the fact that" instead of "because." Look at your long sentences and see if you can break them into two or more sentences or rephrase using fewer words.

Tip: try telling someone out loud what it is you are trying to say. Most of us naturally use simpler language when we talk.

Obfuscation

Every field has its jargon, its particular set of terms that hold specific meaning for initiates in the discipline. Jargon is shorthand for complex ideas. It can be useful when talking to peers; for example, the term "the collective unconscious," which cannot be defined in just a few words, is a helpful shortcut when talking to other Jungians. But an over-reliance on jargon can be a sign of lazy writing. Too much jargon can come across as an attempt to "dazzle 'em with bullshit" instead of crafting a solid argument; most professors will not be fooled.

Plus, jargon can make your paper inaccessible to anyone who is not of your specific field.² If you do use jargon, define each term at first use. It will not only help the reader, you can demonstrate your understanding of essential concepts to your professors by describing them in your own words. Once you have defined a concept, you can use the shorthand term.

People often invent their own jargon in dissertations. I did this myself; I wanted to avoid using the gendered term "heroine," so I used *aletis* instead—explaining first that it is an old Greek word for "wandering heroine." But I have edited many dissertations in which people come up with a noun modified by a string of adjectives (for example, "the dominant white American political-cultural matrix") in an attempt to capture a concept. I push them instead to write out exactly what they mean.

Often they have only a vague idea of what they are trying to say. But they do have an idea, and my job becomes helping them articulate it. Once they can do this, they usually abandon the complicated term as unnecessary. The jargon term was just a placeholder for an idea that needed development. Falling in love with an invented term can be dangerous, as well. I had a client who worked so hard and long on developing the rationale behind an invented jargon that they lost track of their main argument entirely and never finished the dissertation.



Jody Gentian Bower, Ph.D. graduated from Pacifica's Mythological Studies program in 2013 and has been a professional editor for over 30 years. She is a member of the Plain English Association, has taught courses on writing, and coaches book writers.





Pitfalls to Avoid in Dissertation Writing

(Continued)



Flow

As a developmental editor I focus primarily on the flow of the argument: on how well one thought leads to the next, whether there are gaps in the logic or unnecessary repetition of ideas. There is a useful technique I suggest to almost all my clients for checking your own writing for flow:

Step 1. Take a piece of lined paper. Read your work and jot down a single phrase that sums up each paragraph, one per line. For example:

Anima—etymology of term

Anima—Jung's early definitions

Anima—Jung's later ideas

Animus—Jung def.

Animus—Emma Jung def.

Step 2. If you cannot sum a paragraph up in one phrase, it's probably because you have too many ideas in that paragraph. Split it up to keep one idea per paragraph.

Step 3. When you've finished, read down the list of phrases. The sequence of ideas should make sense. This exercise can help you identify where there's a gap you need to fill in or a paragraph that needs to be moved. You may realize that two or more paragraphs say the same thing. Look at them to see how you can merge them or if you can simply delete one (or more).

One problem I often see is when a writer keeps repeating an argument that's already been made in another chapter. While it is fine to refer back and forth between chapters and show how the discussion in Chapter Four is related to that in Chapter Three, you should keep your recapitulation of the earlier argument succinct. If you find yourself repeating the argument, it may be that you didn't do a thorough job of stating it before or left out an important point. In such cases you may need to expand that earlier discussion.

But often the problem is that the writer doesn't trust that the reader will remember the earlier chapter. Probably this happens because for the dissertation writer, weeks or even months may have gone by since you wrote the earlier chapter. It's a good idea to re-read the completed parts of your dissertation when you start a new chapter so you don't feel the need to re-invent the wheel.

The summing-up exercise can also help you remember what you already said.

A third use of the summing-up exercise is to help you identify information that is "nice to know" rather than "need to know." It may be interesting stuff, but does it really serve your argument? Is it a digression that might distract the reader? Be judicious about whether it can stay in.

Tip: Consider moving "nice to know" information to an end-note.

Random Suggestions

Avoid sweeping generalizations. They are another form of lazy writing. Worse, they often reveal unconscious bias. You should be able to substantiate every claim you make in your work, either through a citation that supports the point or through your own research.

All too often, writers throw in a quote that seems out of place. Never introduce or end a paragraph with a quote, and don't rely on quotes alone to make a point. When you include a quote, introduce it first; lead up to it in some way. Then after the quote, restate its meaning in your own words. Doing so will not just make sure the reader knows why you used the quote, but prove to your committee that you used it intentionally and understand its full meaning.

Finally, if one of your professors tells you to work with an editor or writing coach, don't be afraid to do so. Yes, what they say may feel like criticism. (One client told me that being edited is "like being told your baby is ugly.") But they can help you make sure that others understand what you are trying to say—and help you prove that you deserve this degree.

¹ A favorite of mine for the basics is Claire Kehrwald Cook's *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing*. Clear, simple, and short.

² You never know who might read your work. A paper of mine in a mythology magazine was recently cited in a medical journal article.

³ If you are a "P" type on the Myers-Briggs scale, you may need editorial help; most editors are "J" types who will have no compunction about telling you when you've wandered off-topic.

Recently Published Pacifica Dissertations

Melissa McIntosh, Clinical Psychology

City of Soul: Activist Artists' Responses to Hurricane Katrina

Gonzalo Venecia, Depth Psychotherapy

American Top 40 Mythology: A Soundtrack to Individuation

Nasrin Beyraghdar, Depth Psychotherapy

The Citadel of Enchanting Images: The Last Unfinished Story in Rumi's Mathnavi

Dana Weimer, Depth Psychotherapy

The Imaginal Spirit of Waiting

Barbara Weber, Jungian and Archetypal Studies

Portraits of Philanthropic Largesse: The Experience of Giving to Alleviate Global Poverty

Bruce Strumpf, Jungian and Archetypal Studies

Marriage Equality: A Depth Psychological Study of Men Marrying Men

These dissertations are available on ProQuest and in the Pacifica Research Library.

Featured Faculty Publication

Dennis Patrick Slattery is a core faculty member who helped shape the development of the Mythological Studies program and has received the prominent rank of Distinguished Core Faculty at Pacifica. His areas of emphasis include the poetic imagination, writing and reading as mythic activities, the relation of psyche, spirit and matter, and the place of contemplation within the academic setting. He is the author of several books and three volumes of poetry: *Casting Shadows*; *Just Below the Water Line*; and *Twisted Sky*. Dr. Slattery recently collaborated with Deborah Anne Quibell, Ph.D. and Jennifer Leigh Selig, Ph.D. to publish:

Deep Creativity: Seven Ways to Spark your Creative Spirit

