



International Society for Psychology as the  
Discipline of Interiority

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ISPD I Newsletter Spring 2025

# Spring Greetings!

Dear Members, Friends and Colleagues,

With Spring emerging (depending on your latitude), we hope (“psychological hope” of course) that you are ready for new psychological thinking this year. “Thinking psychology” is the theme of our Online Symposium, to be held this August 2 and 3. With the success of our 2023 symposium on “The Books of Wolfgang Giegerich,” we have concluded that the online format (probably in alternate years) offers a convenient and economical way for us to share our thinking between the big international conferences. We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who sent in a proposal for the Symposium. We were very pleased with both the number and quality of submissions this time around, especially from members who sent in proposals for the first time. It bodes well for a thought-provoking event! Stay tuned for more information. Registration for the symposium is now open (see the “Register Now” button on our home page).

The other big news is the release of *Where is Soul?: Psychology in Modernity*, a book from Dusk Owl Press containing most of the papers presented at last year’s conference in Berlin. Click on the “New!” button and image (or farther down, under “Featured Publications”) to order your copy.

Behind the scenes we have been working to improve and expand the ISPDI website and communications with our members. We have implemented new procedures for handling new memberships and renewals. You should receive timely notice when it is time for you to renew. If you experience any problems or have a question, though, please contact us at [tispdi@gmail.com](mailto:tispdi@gmail.com) and we can soon fix things. (We also want to express our thanks to Philip Kime for coding our solutions, and Jennifer Sandoval for managing our memberships and financial processing.)

We have also reorganized and expanded the resources available on our website. On the home page, if you click on the Conferences menu, you will find it is now organized into two sections, “Papers,” and “Galleries” (pictures). Each is further organized by conference, starting with the latest.

The featured article for this issue is “Disenchancing the ‘Coniunctio’ and C.G. Jung as Revivalist Preacher” by Hal Childs. This article arose out of the year-long examination of *Coniunctio* by Wolfgang Giegerich in our monthly Open Inquiry series. Following the conclusion in January, we have embarked on a discussion of Hal’s book *God’s Autopsy*, a deep dive into the soul history to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures and subsequent developments up to our own day.

Our other series, Topos, is also going strong. Recent presentations include Hal Childs on “Disenchancing the ‘Coniunctio,’” Jennifer Sandoval on Giegerich’s new book *Psychological Hope* and Michael Caplan on “Dialectical Thinking and Psychology.” (Members can access these and other Topos videos under the “Videos” menu, Topos Series. (For the Zoom link for Open Inquiry, see under “Newsletters and Events.” This menu also provides direct access to recent Newsletters, in case you’ve missed some.

As you can see, there is a lot on offer. We look forward to your participation and contributions, which sustain and invigorate our work.

The Executive Committee

Sat, Aug 02 | Online Conference

# "Thinking Psychology" 2025 ISPDI Online Symposium

Join us for the 2025 ISPDI Online Symposium taking place August  
2 - 3, with the theme "Thinking Psychology."

## Time & Location

Aug 02, 2025, 8:00 AM PDT – Aug 03, 2025, 4:00 PM PDT  
Online Conference

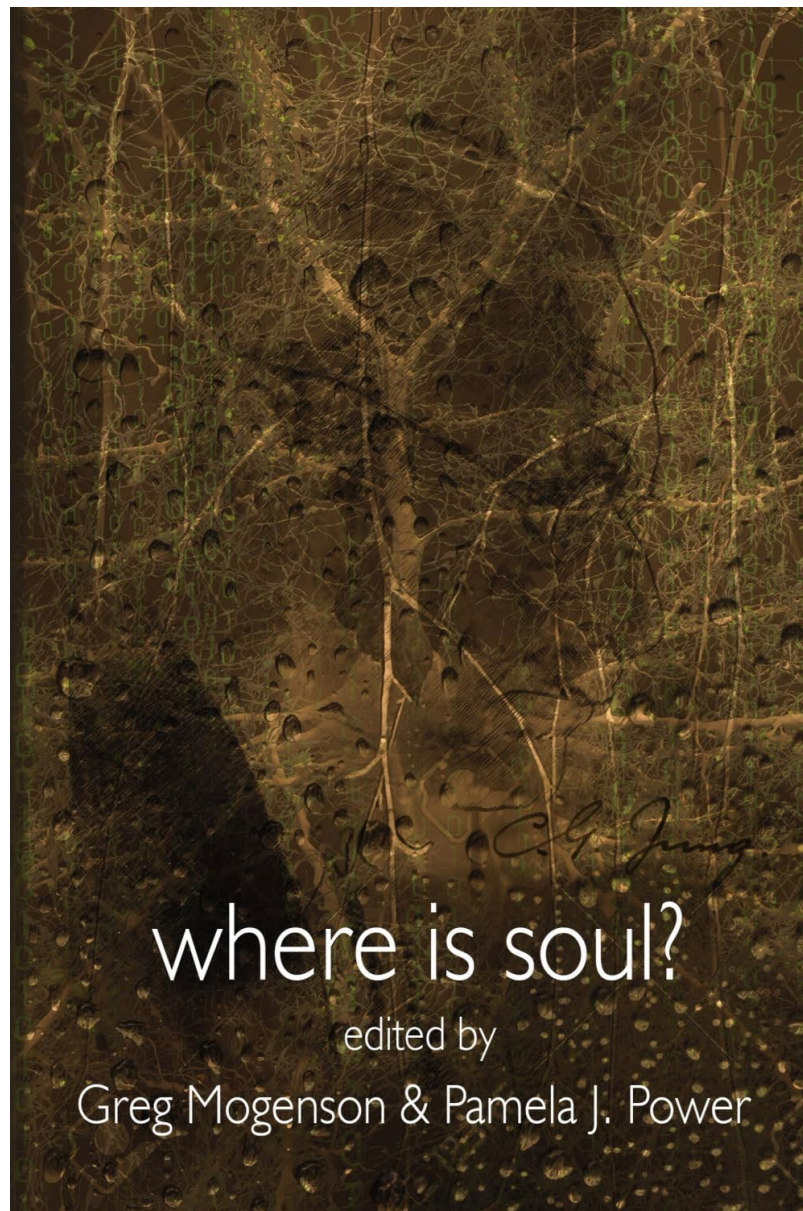
## About the Event

A Few Words About "Thinking Psychology" Psychological thinking is uroboric; a thinking that, so to speak, "eats its own tail". It turns back on itself in order to "think through" the ordinary appearance of things unveiling their deeper truth or meaning. This returning to itself forms the uroboric circle embodying wholeness, eternity, the unity of all things and, for psychology, soul.

This kind of thinking can also be conceived of as psychological interpretation, i.e., when the deeper essence of a phenomenon, through our work with it, becomes available to consciousness. This is the purpose of, for example, dream work when through circumambulation the dream becomes, as Jung quoting the Talmud said, "...its own interpretation".

We would like to delve deeper into how psychological thinking releases the mercurius inherent in phenomena such as dreams, fairytales, clinical symptoms, cultural realities and so on. The thinking that we are concerned with is not personal or egoic but rather the objective thinking which contains the ego.

To register, go to <https://www.ispdi.org/event-details/thinking-psychology-2025-ispdi-online-symposium>



Giving the lie to psychology's having long ago dropped the word "soul" from its vocabulary, the authors of these essays tenaciously explore the theme of "psychology in modernity" by asking with respect to our times, "Where is soul?"

Having come together for a symposium in Berlin in the summer of 2024, Jungian analysts and scholars from Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, England, Spain and the United States presented papers on such topics as interiority and accomplished modernity, Jung's thematization of the spiritual problem of modern man, technology as antichrist, the logic of love in relation to the Holocaust, human dignity, the psychology of simulation, the search for the arcane substance, reflexivity and the edge of the psychological, Mexican shamanic experience as the other of modernity's linguistic turn, and the soulful significance in modern Japan of love suicide, Minamata disease, and the creation of outer space as this pertains to "the birth of man." Introduced by its editors, Mogenson and Power, and with a keynote address by Wolfgang Giegerich, this remarkable collection of essays—each of which carries forward Jung's focus upon the objective psyche—will be of interest for the insights it offers into a wide range of contemporary cultural topics.

To Order: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1738860655>

## Ann Casement

(1938-2025)

We note the passing of ISPDI member Ann Casement in January of this year. For decades, Ann was an admired student and scholar of all things Jungian. She had an enthusiastic interest in the work of Wolfgang Giegerich, writing in a personal email, “I am always keen to do anything to promote Wolfgang’s work as he is the most stimulating thinker in the Jungian world today. Reading his books and working one-to-one with him has, for one thing, deepened the way I now approach and work with alchemy psychologically”.

Promoting Giegerich’s work took the form of including his essay, “Psychology—a study of the soul’s logical life” in her edited collection *Who Owns Jung?* published in 2007. She described her interest in Giegerich’s work in her essay “The interiorizing movement of logical life: reflections on Wolfgang Giegerich,” published in the *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, September 2011. Ann presented a paper at the inaugural conference of ISPDI in Berlin, 2012 with the title, “Interiorizing a new kind of subjectivity through the sublime and the numinous” and she participated on a panel with other ISPDI members at the IAAP Congress in Kyoto in 2016 presenting the paper, “Reflections on Interiority”.

We are grateful for her long-standing presence in the larger Jungian world and, more specifically, her contributions to psychology as the discipline of interiority. Her presence in the ISPDI community will be missed.

# Disenchanted the “Coniunctio” and C.G. Jung as Revivalist Preacher

Hal Childs

## Preface (establishing context)

The ISPDI discussion forum known as Open Inquiry meets monthly to read, taste, chew on, savor, and hopefully digest a book, usually by Wolfgang Giegerich. We take our time. We spent all of 2024 reading *Coniunctio: Reflexions on a key concept of C.G. Jung’s psychology*. Each month someone volunteers to summarize that month’s reading in order to refresh our thinking and begin the conversation. We finished the book this past January and I summarized the final section and conclusion. This was simply an informal summary for our little group, and I was not thinking about a Topos presentation, nor an entry in the ISPDI newsletter. But, John Hoedl and Harry Henderson encouraged me to present this “summary” in both arenas. I’ve come to think of this “summary” as an informal review of the whole book. “Revivalism, after all” is the book’s final section (171), followed by a short Appendix, and an even shorter Concluding comment.

One final contextual comment: In the following I assume that the concepts *coniunctio* and *individuation* are synonyms, and while there are several statements by Giegerich (and Jung) to support this identity, here is just one: “Coniunctio is the final goal of the individuation process. But it is also its presupposition, its *sine qua non*. Indeed, in order to really come about as the final result it must already have been there from the outset.” (13)

## 11. Revivalism, after all

**Revive and Revival:** This word is from Latin, *re-viver*, “to live again”; “bring back to use or notice”; “the bringing back to the stage of a play which has not been presented for a considerable time”; “return to a flourishing state”; in early America, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, revival referred to “enthusiastic religious meetings” meant to inspire revival of religion. Revival also means revivification, and resuscitation, as of a dead body (bring back to life).

Jung abides by the modern mind’s complete exclusion of mythology, religion, and metaphysics when he theorizes as an empirical scientist, and claims he is only dealing with facts (direct experience), and that metaphysical and theological truth claims are invalid, even dangerous (due to fears about inflation). Above all, Jung rejects and abhors any claims to metaphysical truth because he knows this *form* of truth no longer speaks to his, or our, psychological condition (as he stated about the Catholic Mass).

However, when Jung speaks personally, existentially, and emotionally, he is indeed aiming for the revival of the deep and eternal (archetypal) soul truths for the modern individual. He does claim that these traditional truths can be a “present reality” for the modern person, but this is limited to the *private* subjective experience of the individual.

So, Jung acknowledges that the old soul truths are no longer valid today, and that they cannot be celebrated publicly anymore. The former public and shared truths of mythology, religion, and metaphysics are dead for the logic of modernity, the realm of the universals is no longer the

common true reality: this is the *excluded* aspect of these truths. They are excluded from our modern world and mind by definition.

Jung, however, believed that through the direct and immediate present reality of numinous experiences, the individual would be transformed, and freed from their neurotic pathology. But, this neurosis was conceived as the modern “illness” of meaninglessness, and so connecting with the pure source of truth by way of “the unconscious” was the modern person’s way to fulfillment and meaning in our rational, superficial, and meaningless world. This is how Jung tried to *include* what was fundamentally *excluded*.

However, what was included was not any specific semantic content of the former mythologies, religions, and metaphysics, but simply the pure form of the so-called numinous experience itself. The content did not matter; only this world-shaking transformative experience within the secret recesses of the private individual mattered. This is because Jung himself was thoroughly modern and logical truth did not have any real existence for him either: they were just intellectual beliefs. What Jung wanted was the individual to experience shattering earthquakes in the bowels of his/her individual depths, profound psyche-altering knee-quaking encounters with the Self as *imago-dei*, leaving the individual panting in an auric bath of ecstasy. Such real, concrete, embodied, present empirical experiences were not to be denied in the face of any rational, scientific epistemology to the contrary.

Because Jung was a child of the positivity of modernity, he had to find a way to positivize the reality of the soul through *direct experience* of “the unconscious.” This was his attempt to revive, to resuscitate, what was now, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, long dead. He wanted to bring back to the “public” stage a play that had not been presented for so long it was completely forgotten.

Jung either did not understand, or could not accept, that the only valid way to include what modernity had excluded (the old soul truths) was through the *memory* of their actual historicity for us. Mythology, religion, and metaphysics have much to teach us if we can understand them as once true, and magnificently true and real in the past, and that they were also the logical foundation of our current form of consciousness. The old soul truths are the historical ground and source of the logical form of truth that we live as today.

Unfortunately, Jung’s solution to the modern problem, the felt and perceived loss of Meaning, continues to be as fruitless and useless as the Catholic Mass. A personal numinous experience is nothing more than a drug induced haze that blinds the individual, and protects them from the truth that is *Today*.

On a personal note, it is truly odd to me that I find myself saying, after a long love-affair with Jung’s ideas (30 years; 1973–2003), that Jung’s consciousness (Jungian consciousness?) is a false consciousness, and (agreeing with Giegerich) not only leads us astray from truth, but is also fatal for soul itself because without a true consciousness (a *psychological* psychology) soul cannot be made and dies.

### Three comments on the foregoing:

Comment 1: In the light of the contemporary truth of soul as modernity, which is the logic of disjunction (not coniunctio), Jung’s notion of individuation, locked inside the literal individual as it is, is nothing more than rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic; or perhaps it is more honest to

say, given the already prevailing truth of modernity, Jung's individuation fantasy is rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic after it has already sunk!

Comment 2: Regarding the emphasis on the personal and private direct experience of "the unconscious", it is significant to note that this is what happened in the field of theology during the nineteenth century as modernity and its positivistic epistemology dominated public discourse. Faith in the public dogma (truth) of Christianity became impossible, so faith retreated to the inner, the heart, the private belief of the individual, where the rational and empirical claims of science could not enter. So, we see that Jung, in a sense, did try to create a new privatized "religion," but he did so at the cost of identifying with the aggressor (Modernity) and retreating to the private domain of personal experience.

Comment 3: Giegerich states, "The coniunctio [that the psychology of the unconscious] teaches is its semantic message; the disjunction that it *is* is its syntactical form." (173) While trying to understand this formulation of the difference between the semantic and the syntax of Jung's notion of "the unconscious" and the coniunctio, these images came to me: The semantic content it teaches is like a lavishly illustrated historical book about mythology and religion (how about *Man and His Symbols?*), and the syntax is like a life-size replica of the Greek temple to Zeus, made out of plastic and erected in the heart of Times Square in New York City, where tourists can go and turn on electric votive candles to Zeus. In other words, the content is merely a historical textbook, and the form is so utterly incongruous in the modern situation as to be ridiculous.

#### IV. Appendix: Individuation as just ordinary life

Just as Giegerich titled the previous section, "Revivalism, after all," I will say, "Individuation as *just ordinary life*, after all." This brings the notion of "individuation" down to earth, as it can no longer be dressed up in mythical garments and cosmic significance. Individuation has been stripped of its claim to metaphysical importance. Individuation in this more ordinary sense is simply living as truly and sincerely as one can one's own unique specificity. As Giegerich puts it, it is "the inner *logic* of the soul's life the way it in fact lives itself out in concrete individuals." (180) Jung himself stated, "Individuation is just ordinary life and what you are made conscious of." (180) The word "individuation" within the Jungian world has gathered up a kind of mystique and mystery, when it might more honestly and simply be referred to as "*your* life." I've always enjoyed this paraphrase of a statement attributed to Oscar Wilde: "Just be yourself, because all the others are taken."

As Giegerich states in another place:

The way I am has been given to me: for better or worse I have been "gifted" with my nature . . . My nature or truth has been entrusted to me like a ward, so I have to act as its guardian. I have to stand by it and behind it, support it as its caretaker. I have to lend it my voice, because it can only make itself heard through me.

(*Neurosis*, 417)

In the light of "individuation" as *just ordinary life*, I am not undertaking the salvation of the world, nor my own salvation in any grandiose sense. I am simply the guardian of my truth, which could be a truth I am not particularly enamored of. Nevertheless, this ordinary undertaking is what we are about today.

**An important distinction:** We must maintain the crucial distinction between psychology as a *methodology* that studies soul phenomena, and a psychology that preaches, promotes, and promises



“individuation” as a path to some kind of ontological salvation. The psychology that preaches individuation is a regression to an earlier ontological form of truth (revivalism), and in fact, with such a move, is the murderer of modern soul.

Modern soul is the result of soul’s own negation of its former ontological form of truth, and soul now stands, as it were, outside of itself as psychology as the discipline of interiority. The egg that was the form of ontological truth, and was the real for us, has been ruptured by soul itself. The discipline of interiority, because it is the result of being thrust out of soul, is the discipline of discerning the truth of the real because truth is no longer naively identified with the real. The discipline of discerning the truth of the real is the way psychology operates as soul observing itself knowingly.

A psychology that preaches individuation is trying to get back inside the egg, and thus it destroys the differentiated consciousness that is its modern truth. A psychology that preaches individuation is trying to merge again with soul, and thus loses itself. A true psychology must know that soul, as the organ of knowing, is today outside itself and inside itself at the same time. If a true psychology is to exist, it must exist as a *conscious* ouroboric consciousness instead of an *unconscious* ouroboric consciousness.

## Concluding comment

My concluding comment on Giegerich’s “concluding comment”—

Giegerich states that the “result of our analysis [of the coniunctio concept in C.G. Jung’s psychology] was unfortunately disenchanting . . .” (183) For my part, I find this disenchantment a profound relief, and am happy to finally understand it. I do feel fully recompensed, as Giegerich suggests, by this deeper understanding of why Jung’s coniunctio idea was a failure; however, it was a necessary failure without which we would not have come to this new understanding. I am glad to be liberated from another salvation and self-improvement project.

Giegerich tells us this small book was to be Part One, and that a Part Two was planned. Part Two was “to be devoted to the coniunctio that *is*, that is always already at work in life: the coniunctio as the nature of humanness, as man’s very being or essence, and to discuss the variegated phenomenology in which it displayed itself in history and in the present.” (183)

We are told Giegerich, unfortunately, for varied reasons, will probably not be able to write Part Two. I am sad this is the case, as I would certainly look forward to such a work.

However, I believe that “Part Two”, in another sense, has already been written and that it comprises the full corpus of Wolfgang Giegerich’s work. Now I know how to read Giegerich and understand how the coniunctio is “always already at work in life.”

I find this book, *Coniunctio*, after multiple readings and full immersion (baptism?) in its ideas, to be an extraordinary condensation of all of Giegerich’s thought that has come before. And, it provides a new level of illumination to continue to read all that work I have already read.

Hal Childs, PhD, MFT is a psychotherapist (halchilds.com) in San Francisco CA. He has been a seminar leader with the Guild for Psychological Studies (guildsf.org) for over forty-five years. He is the author of *God's Autopsy and the Living Truth of Soul: A History of Western Consciousness* (2022) and *The Myth of the Historical Jesus and the Evolution of Consciousness* (2000), as well as other book chapters and essays on the integration of depth-psychological hermeneutics and biblical interpretation.

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## Ongoing Events

### Topos

Topos will continue, and we will announce new presentations by email.

### Open Inquiry

A reminder that the next Open Inquiry is scheduled for April 20 at 2 PM EDT. We continue our discussion of *God's Autopsy and the Living Truth of Soul* by Hal Childs, pp. 87-122.

Please note: The Zoom link and information for the Open Inquiry can be found on the ISPDI website. After signing in to the website: [ispdi.org](http://ispdi.org) go to the drop-down menu under the "Newsletter and Events" tab and click on "Open Inquiry."