



# *Jung and the Arts*

by Dr. Roula-Maria Dib

Founding Director, *London Arts-Based Research Centre*

Founding Editor, *Indelible*

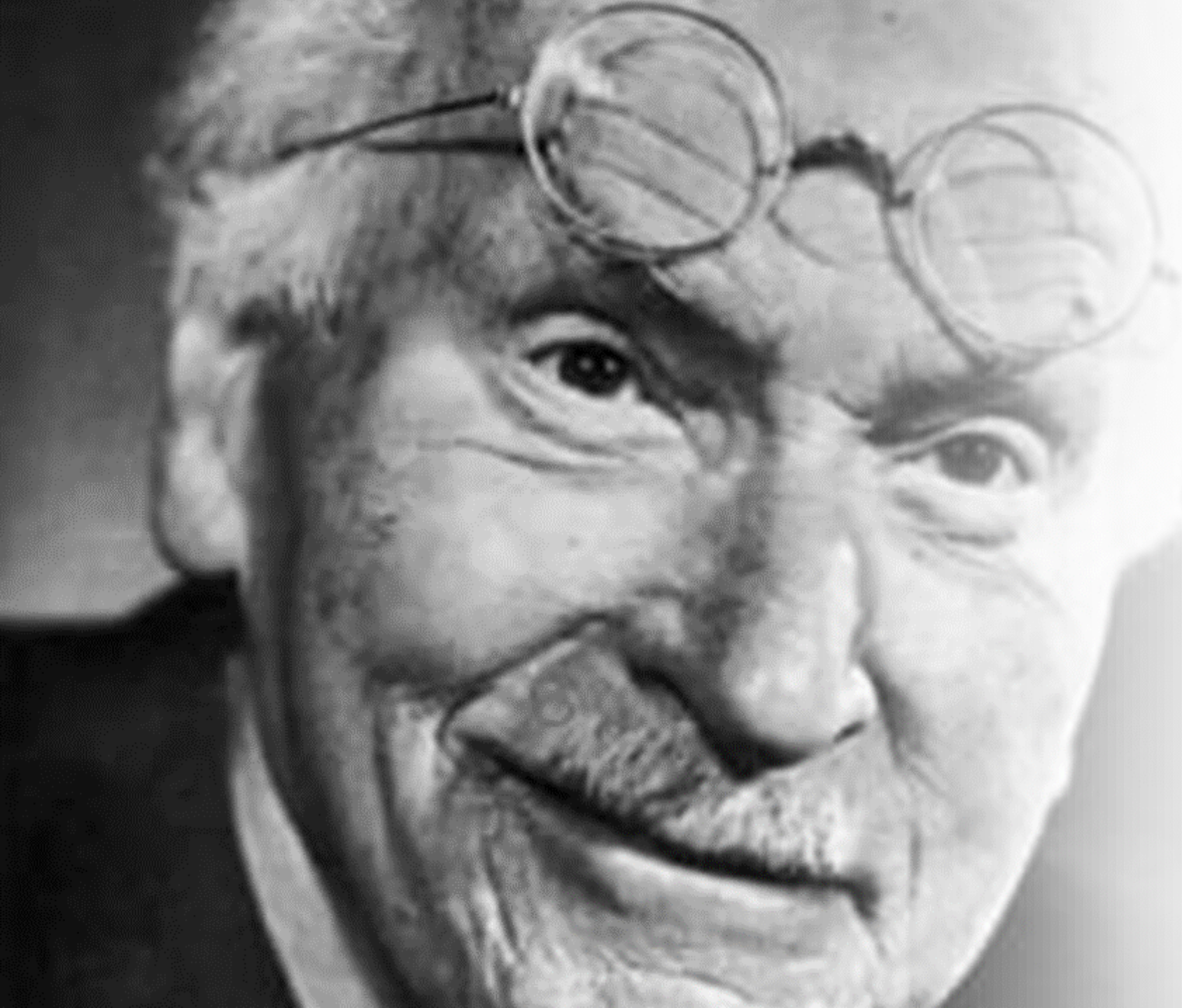


Indelible Literary  
and Arts Journal

## **What are some of Jung's greatest contributions to culture?**

- Bridging the gap between the arts and sciences
- The creative interdisciplinarity of his approach
- His psychology of connection rather than separation
- Concepts of introversion/extroversion
- The importance of metaphor
- The symbol
- The (quantum physics) concept of possibilities

'the utilization of one conceptional imaginal domain to map or articulate the experience of a different conceptual or imaginal domain. Therefore, it transfers meaning between domains of experience (from conscious to unconscious, from cognitive to somatic, from somatic to affective, from past to present, and present to future), linking realms in ways not previously seen and transforming meaning by means of novel recombination between domains,' Mark Winborne

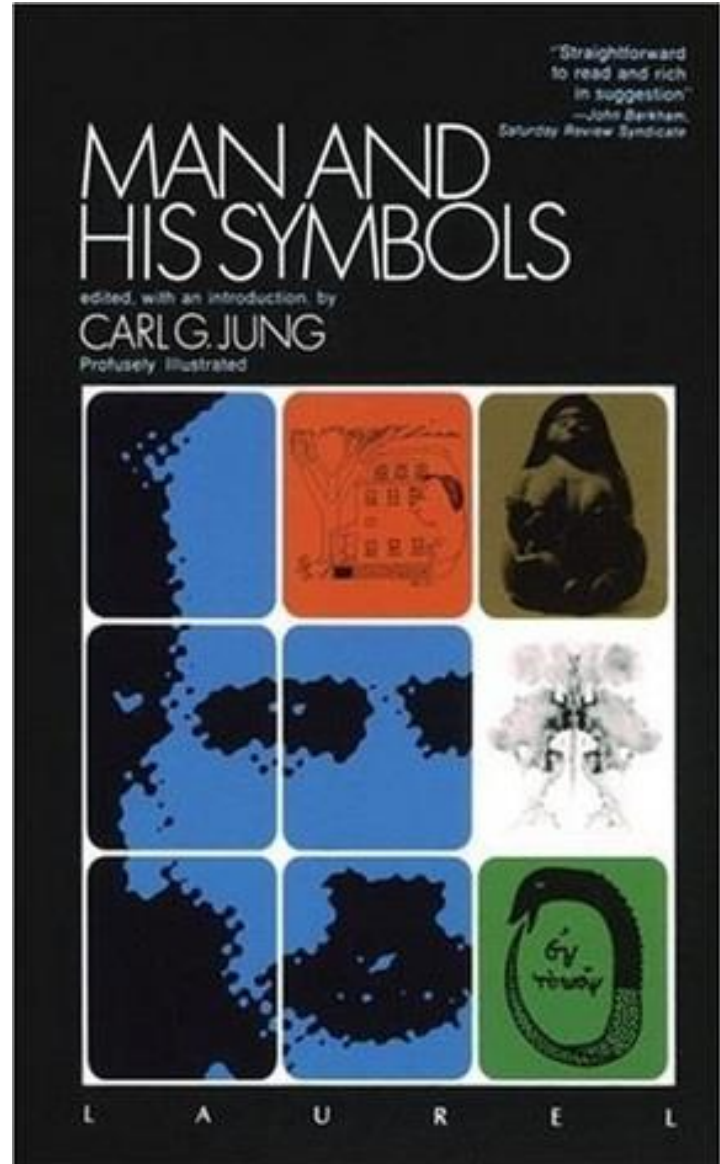


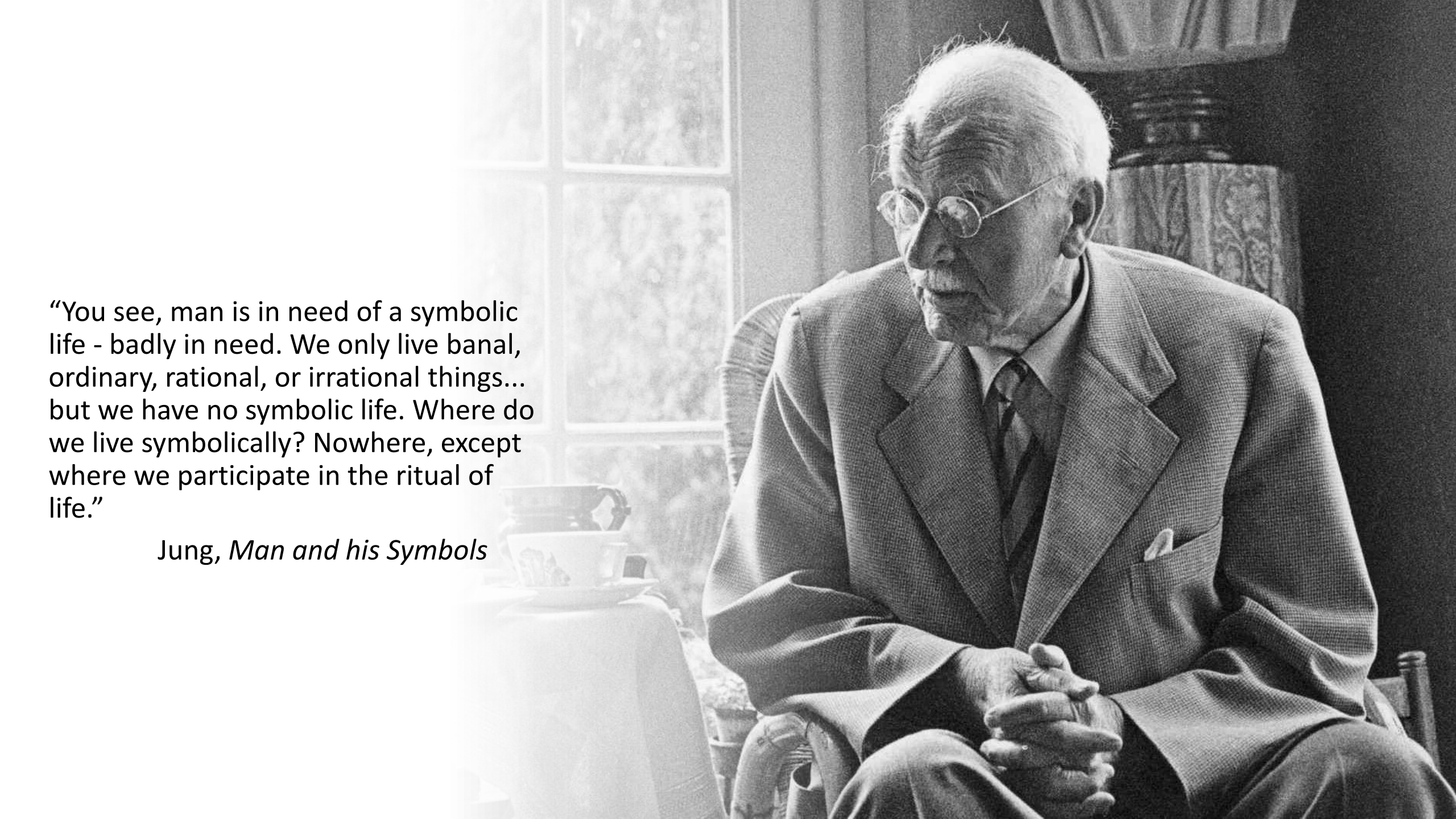
**“...two psyches engage, both  
change and both individuate”**



- Michael Meade: “Poetry, I often say is the natural speech of the soul; the soul really doesn’t speak like CNN. You know, the human soul is not easily deterred once it’s given some space, and so poetry is this space for is the soulful speech of human life. Poetry is based on taking unlike things and putting them together—that’s what all creative artists are doing, and so when we lose poetry we lose the capacity to even describe our own experiences, and I don’t mean it just from the abstract point of view”

# The Symbol





“You see, man is in need of a symbolic life - badly in need. We only live banal, ordinary, rational, or irrational things... but we have no symbolic life. Where do we live symbolically? Nowhere, except where we participate in the ritual of life.”

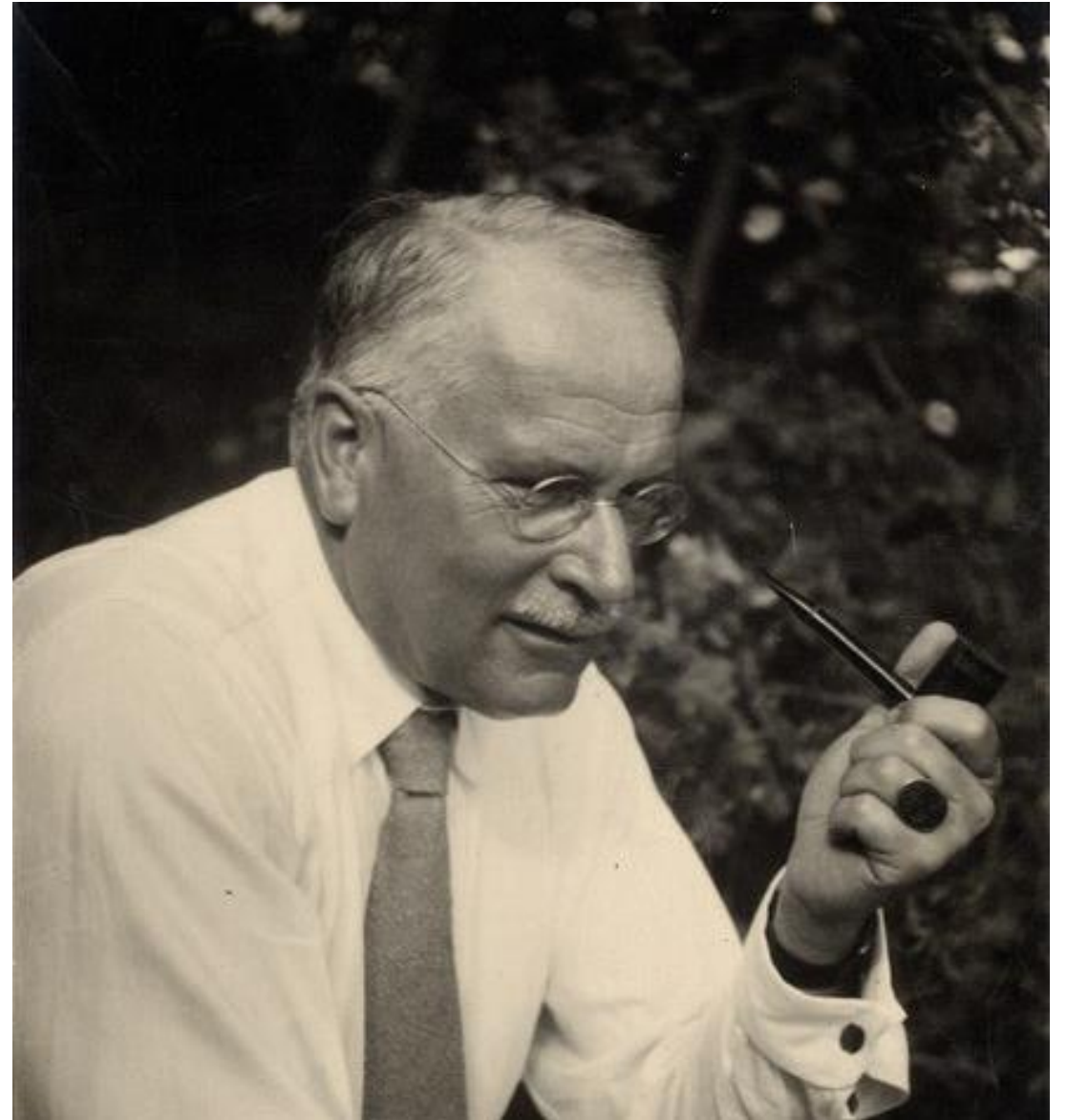
*Jung, Man and his Symbols*

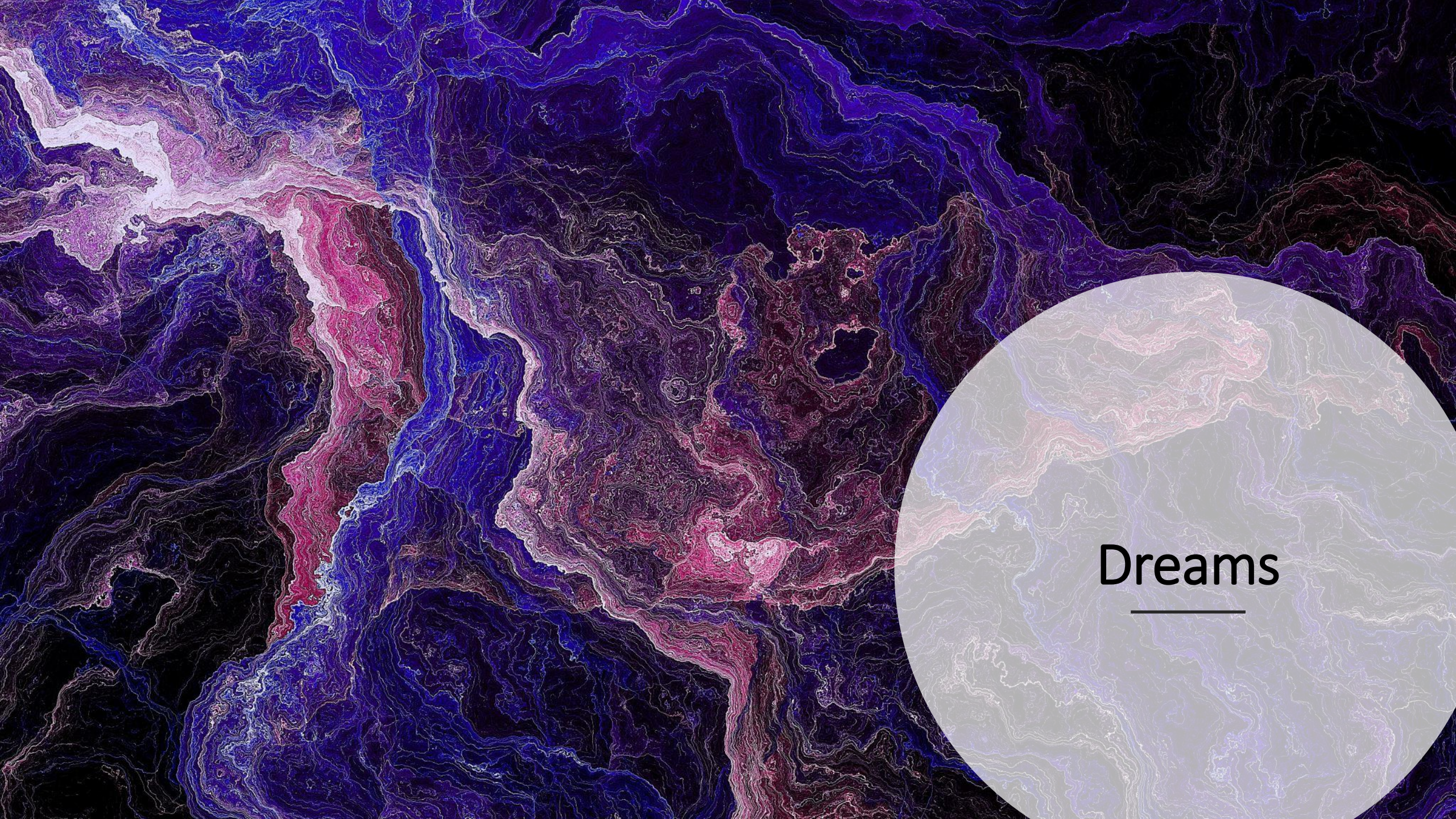
**“I would not give priority to understanding, for the important thing is not to interpret and understand the fantasies but primarily to experience them,” Carl Jung**



‘Modern man does not understand how much his “rationalism” (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy of the psychic “underworld.” He has freed himself from “superstition” (or so he believes), but in the process he has lost his spiritual values to a positively dangerous degree. His moral and spiritual tradition has disintegrated, and he is now paying the price for this break-up in worldwide disorientation and dissociation.’

*Jung, Man and his Symbols*





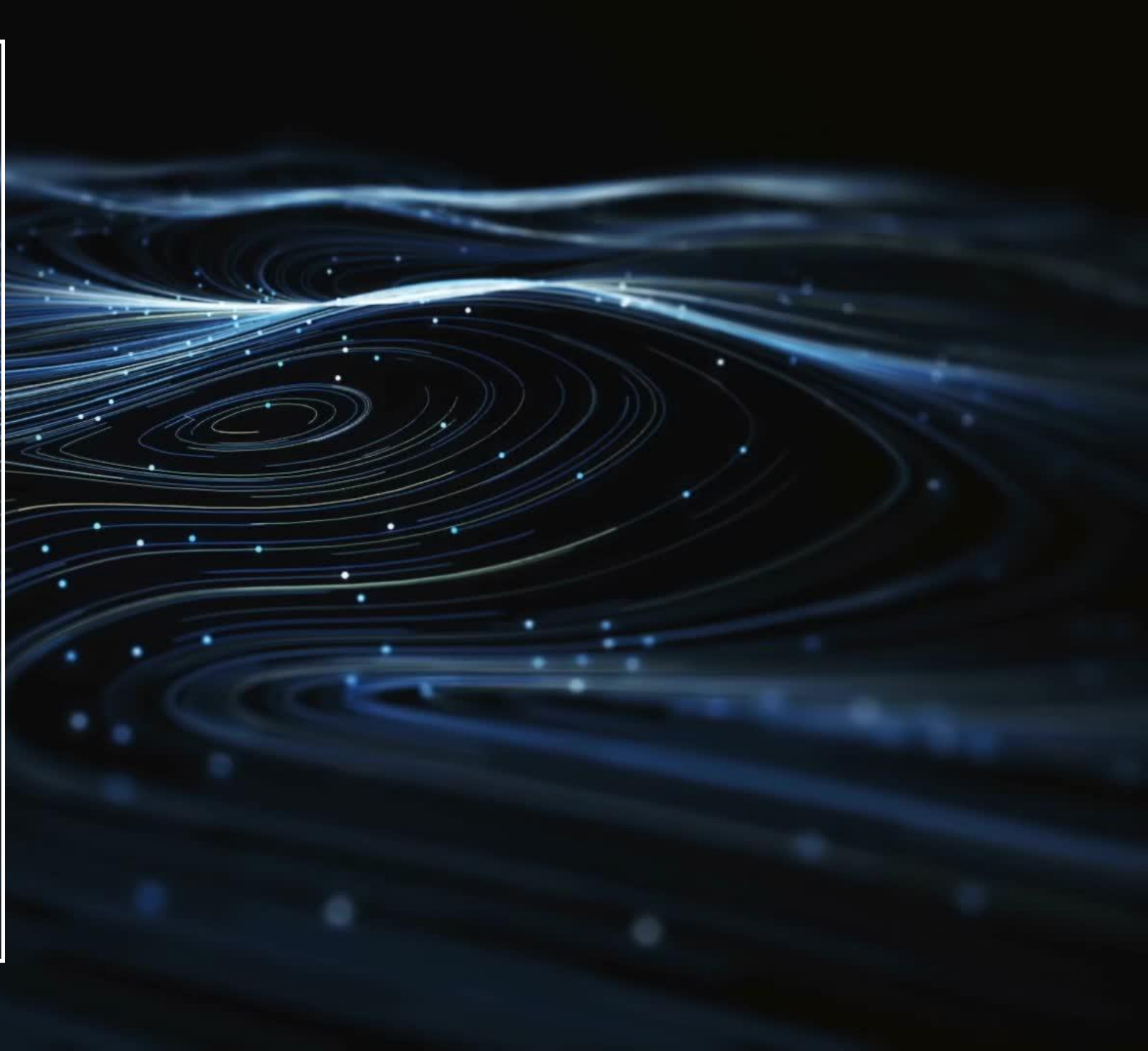
Dreams

---

# Dreams and Poems

A poem, like a dream:

- reflects the psyche's vision-making
- reveals depths of the unconscious (no matter how conscious it is)
- has its own personality matching the archetypal voice activated while writing it...it brings the darkness of dreams into the light of consciousness

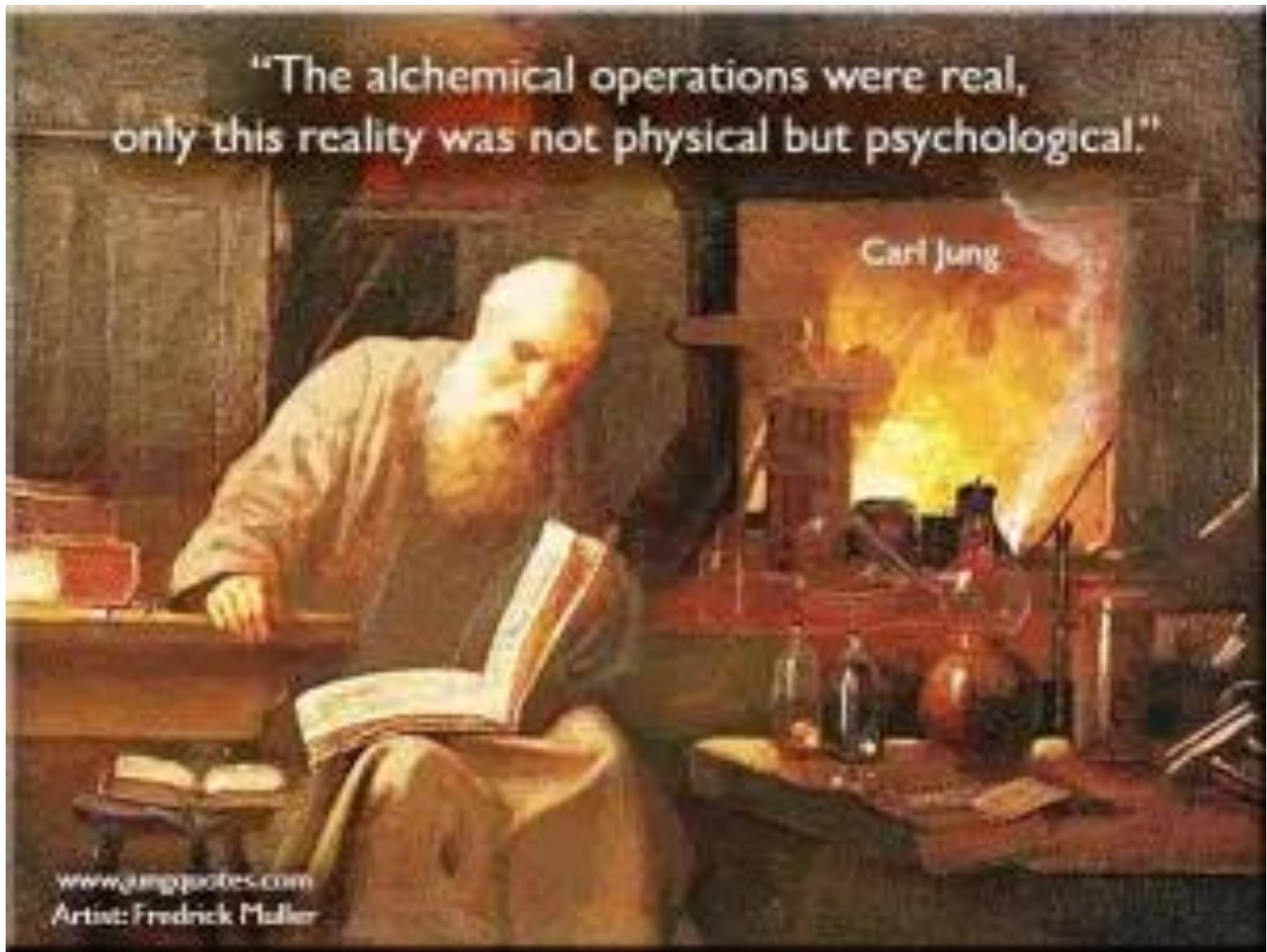


# Active Imagination

"The alchemical operations were real,  
only this reality was not physical but psychological."

Carl Jung

[www.jungquotes.com](http://www.jungquotes.com)  
Artist: Fredrick Muller



# What is Ekphrasis?

---

- “Ekphrasis” = “Description”
- Ekphrastic poetry = poems vividly describe a work of art through verse



“Art is not about itself  
but the attention we  
bring to it.”

-- visual artist Marcel Duchamp



# Carl Jung: the “impersonal creative process”

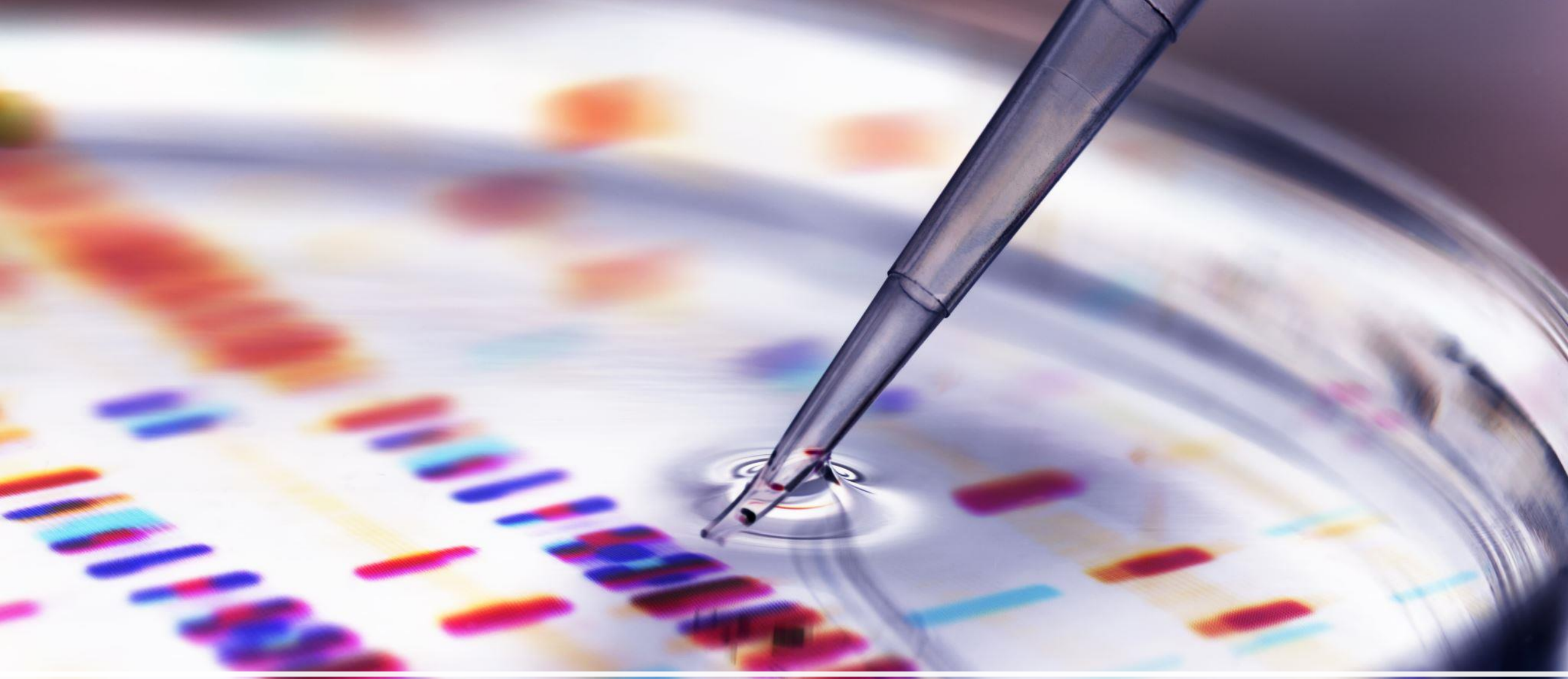
- During the creative process: “the conscious ego is swept along on a subterranean current [and is] nothing more than a helpless observer of events.”
- “[the poet] must leave the interpretation to others and to the future.”

“The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life.”



# Carl Jung: Introverted and Extraverted Art

- “... when we discuss the psychology of art, we must bear in mind these two entirely different modes of creation,... *introverted* and... *extraverted*.”
- “The **introverted** attitude is characterized by the *subject's* *assertion of his conscious intentions* and **aims against the demands of the subject**, whereas the **extraverted** attitude is characterized by the **subject's subordination to the demands which the object makes upon him.**”



**What is Arts-Based Research?**



---

• “any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology...the arts may be used during data collection, analysis, interpretation and/or dissemination”

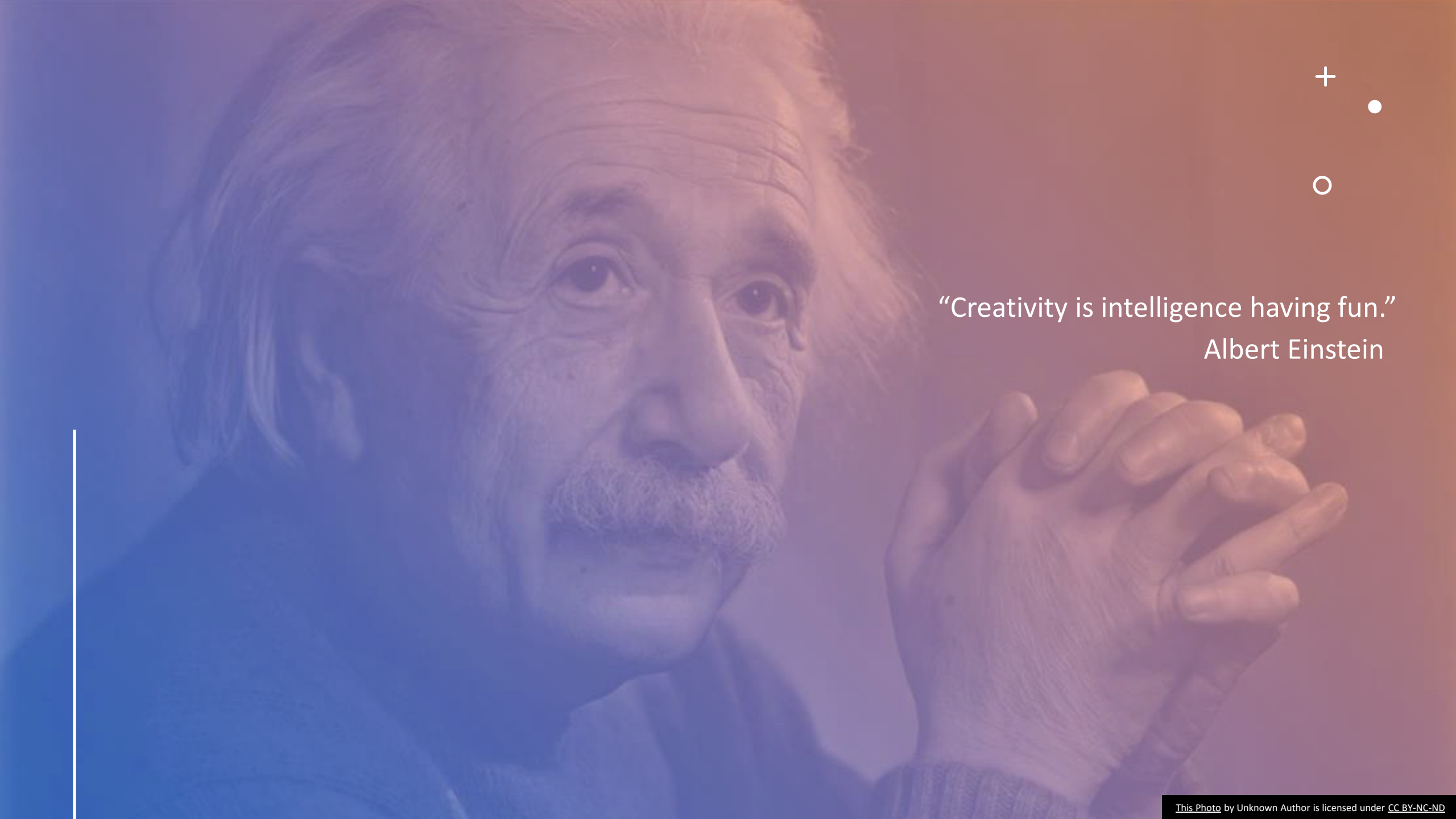
• Kip Jones and Patricia Leavy

- beyond conventional modes of knowledge and understanding
- The multi-dimensional quality
- A wider community (includes non-academic audience)
- *Research AND perform art*



### **Arts-based researchers believe in:**

- Deconstructing the split between art and academic research
- Transdisciplinarity is a new framework for knowledge
- The integration of creativity into traditional research methods
- Research as part and parcel of creativity



+

●

○

“Creativity is intelligence having fun.”

Albert Einstein

# What is “poetic inquiry”?

“Art and science bear intrinsic similarities in their attempt to illuminate aspects of the human condition. Grounded in exploration, revelation, and representation, art and science work toward thinking about art and scientific inquiry, a serious investigation regarding the profound relationship between the arts and sciences is underway”

**-- Patricia Leavy, *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2015 (pp. 3-4).**

- A form of arts-based research (ABR)
- An aesthetic method to generate, present, and interpret data
- A way to communicate research results
- An invitation to engage in authentic interdisciplinary dialogue.
- Poetry may advance inquiry into subjective lived experience
- Brings the arts and humanities together to craft more expansive ways of understanding the social and physical world and expressing this knowledge to wider audiences
- Engaged during all phases of research: data generation, analysis, interpretation, representation, and presentation
- Poetry embodies experience to show truths that are not usually evident, opening our research to new understandings.



## **Poetic inquiry can take several forms:**

- Researchers create poems from qualitative data
- Researchers write poems about the research process
- Research participants or participants and researchers together create poems that they jointly interpret and analyse

**Creativity, arts-based  
research, trauma, and  
history**

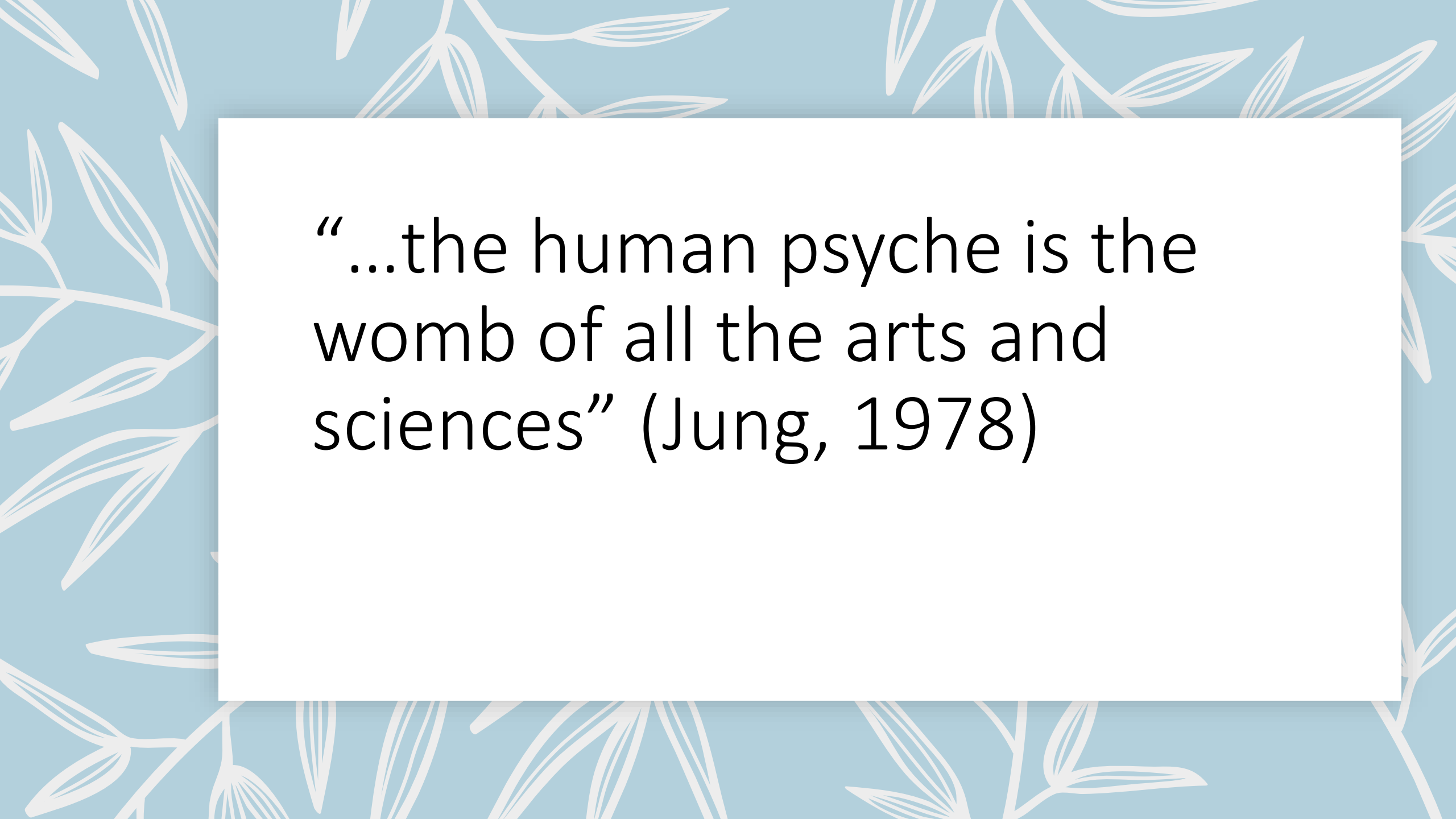




“Just as psychological knowledge furthers our understanding of historical material, so, conversely, historical material can throw new light on individual psychological problems” (Jung, *CW 5*).

"It seems to me perfectly possible to teach history in the widest sense not as dry-as-dust, lifeless book-knowledge but to understand it in terms of the fully alive present." (*Letters* Vol. II, p. 37).

“The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work” (Jung, 1978)



“...the human psyche is the womb of all the arts and sciences” (Jung, 1978)

"It is evident, of course, that history takes on a new aspect when considered not only from the standpoint of our conscious reason, but also from that of the phenomena due to unconscious processes which never fail to accompany the peripeteia of consciousness" (Letters Vol. II).





“Genuine self-expression and authentic communication of one's story. Art is the way we determine who we are--as defined by ourselves and not by others. Art is the medium through which we communicate what we really want in a language that differs from that of political semantics and religious formulas.” (Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb)

“Thus, just as the one-sidedness of the individual’s conscious attitude is corrected by reactions from the unconscious, so art represents a process of self-regulation in the life of nations and epochs” (Jung, 1978).

“...a creative act which is of  
importance for the whole epoch”  
(Jung 1930, *CW15*).

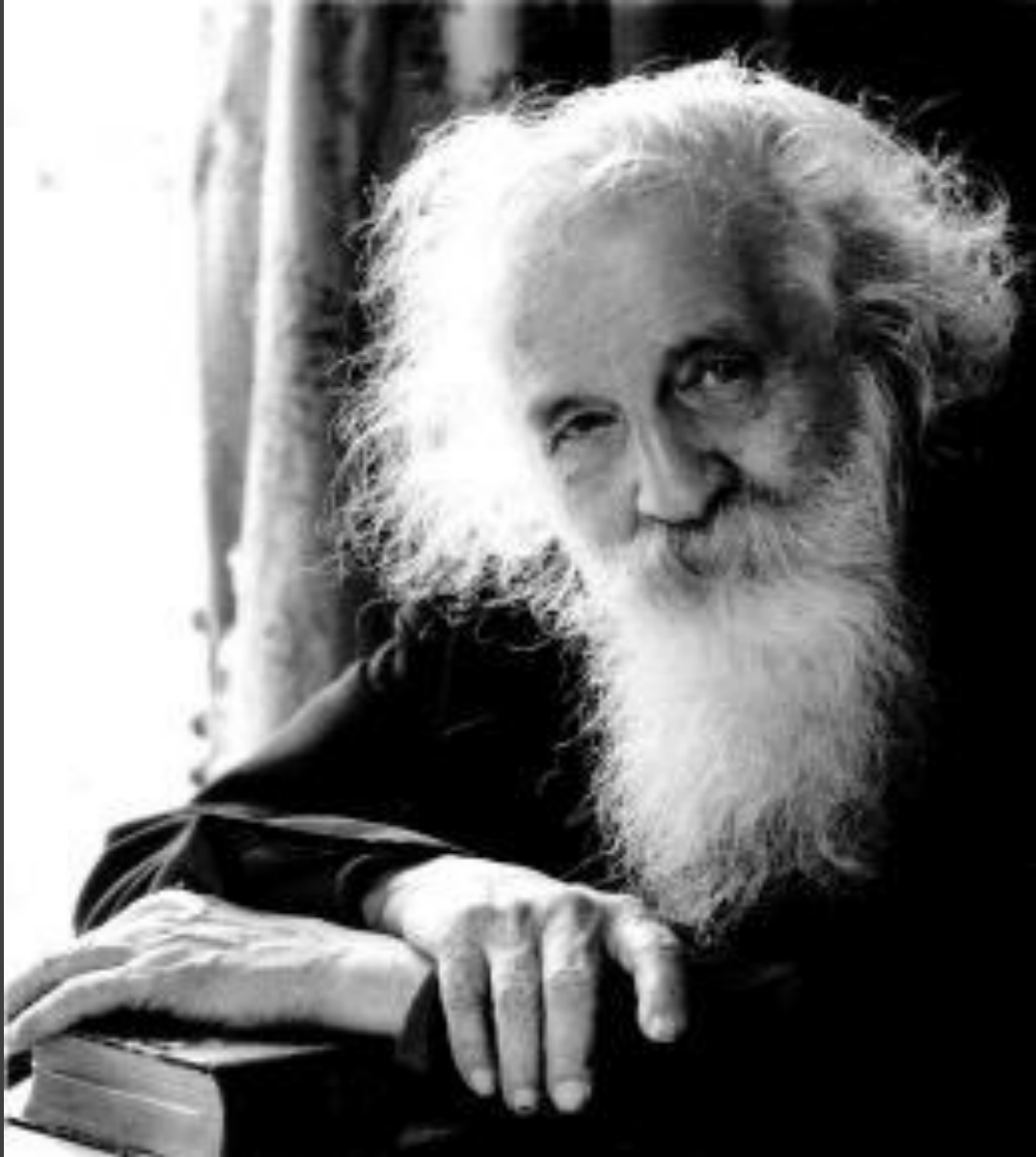
“The work of genius is different in the way that it fetches up these distant fragments in order to build them into a new and meaningful structure” (Jung, 1957)

“While we need history books, we also need human witness and art during times of turbulence and global cataclysm. Poetry teaches us that the human voice in all of its vulnerability and in the face of trauma can and will create beauty.” (Christine Murray)

“Psychology and aesthetics will always have to turn to one another for help, and the one will not invalidate the other” (Jung, 1978)

HERITAGE  
AESTHETICS

ANTHONY  
ANAXAGOROU



“We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost” (Gaston Bachelard)





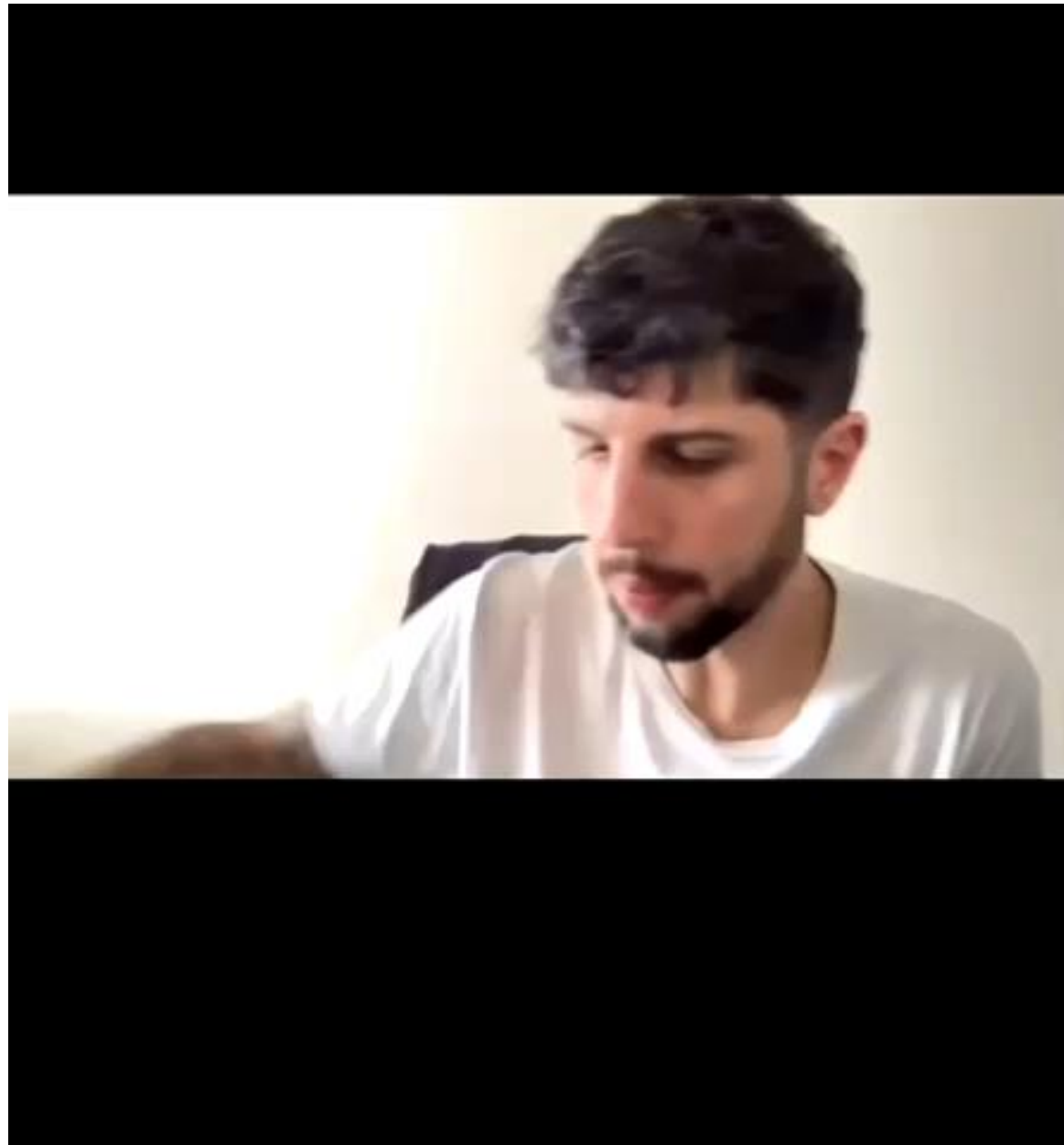
Naomi Shihab Nye, Palestinian-American (Poet Laureate)

“This wounded country, and particularly its capital Beirut, need their arts and culture to thrive in order to create a foundation of national understanding, across borders, sectarian belongings, and generations; the arts communicate snapshots of times that can be preserved and interpreted long after the events have passed and languages have been forgotten” (Pamela Chrabieh)



**“Art is one of the most important elements for people's survival...In conflicts, people focus on those who kill ‘the body’ but often forget about those who kill ‘the soul’, that is, the dignity, creativity, and vision of a people. Without a vision, nations ‘cast off restraints’. Art allows the soul not only to survive but to thrive.”**

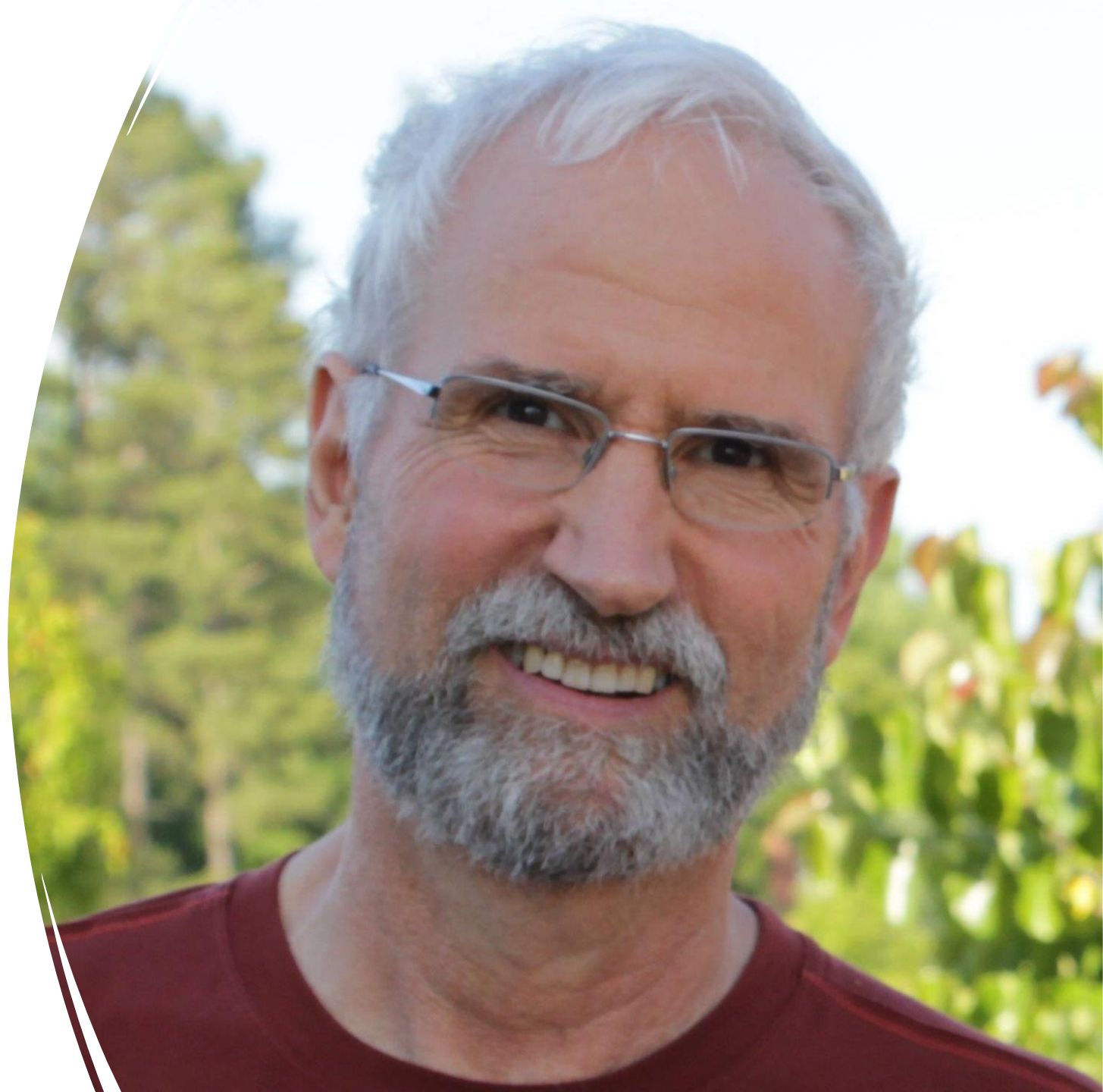
**“Art of the collective unconscious is transformative of both creator and consumer. With art, knowing is connected to being as a mutually informing process. Ultimately, visionary art provides an epistemological process of social, historical and cultural concerns by and through transforming being into knowing. In so doing, it eradicates the subject/object split, for this artwork is no mere object! Jung’s visionary art is made of the archetypal stuff that weaves us into the fabric of the universe.”  
(Susan Rowland)**



# Ralph Earle

---

“The act of writing poetry helps me make sense of my experience as a human being, more so during times of stress, and especially during the pandemic”



# Debra Kaufman

---

‘First the shock of it, and then recognizing that this was an unprecedented phenomena, I decided to be more intentionally present... Reading and writing poetry connected me to something larger than me, and reminded me of the beauty of the souls of others.’



# Yahia Lababidi

---

“yes, reading and writing poetry is typically how I self-medicate — reducing anxiety, spreading me — and this has been doubly important during dread of pandemic which has felt like a period of enforced mass meditation and intangible *momento mori* ...”





# Susan Rowland

---

“Covid is a kind of alchemy, a transformation of the collective in us in a dark nigredo state where we are forced to get to the prima materia, the core of our existence, the essence of ourselves.”





# Florence Nash

---

“Also, this year has prompted a number of pandemic-related poems (which all seem to arrive in sonnet form — maybe indicative of a need for structure in a disordered world?).”



# Bernard Pearson

---

“the disquiet in the world has been the backdrop to creativity.”

“I felt a genuine connection across culture, life experience, and creative ability. I have never felt anything quite like it before, despite these occasions being virtual, they had a profound effect on me in a way that other 'in the flesh' networking however enjoyable had not. My horizons had been widened and my understanding of what writing really is about expanded.”



# Carole Mora

---

“The surreal challenges of the recent year or so have thankfully been tempered by opportunities to also listen to readings of poetry by others, bringing a refreshing sense of reorientation, tethering, and needed connection to sensibilities and qualities of being that really matter. These gatherings have provided an additional sense of mooring during these stormy, pandemic times.”

# Susan Porterfield

---

“In a time of covid and social distancing, when so much has not happened or has stopped happening, for me, writing poetry, which is itself an isolating, lonely activity, has strangely connected me more to the closed-down world. ‘It survives,’ and by doing so, helps me (us, the world?) to survive. It truly is ‘a mouth,’ a way to interact in a still, more muted world.”



# Lorette C. Luzajic

---

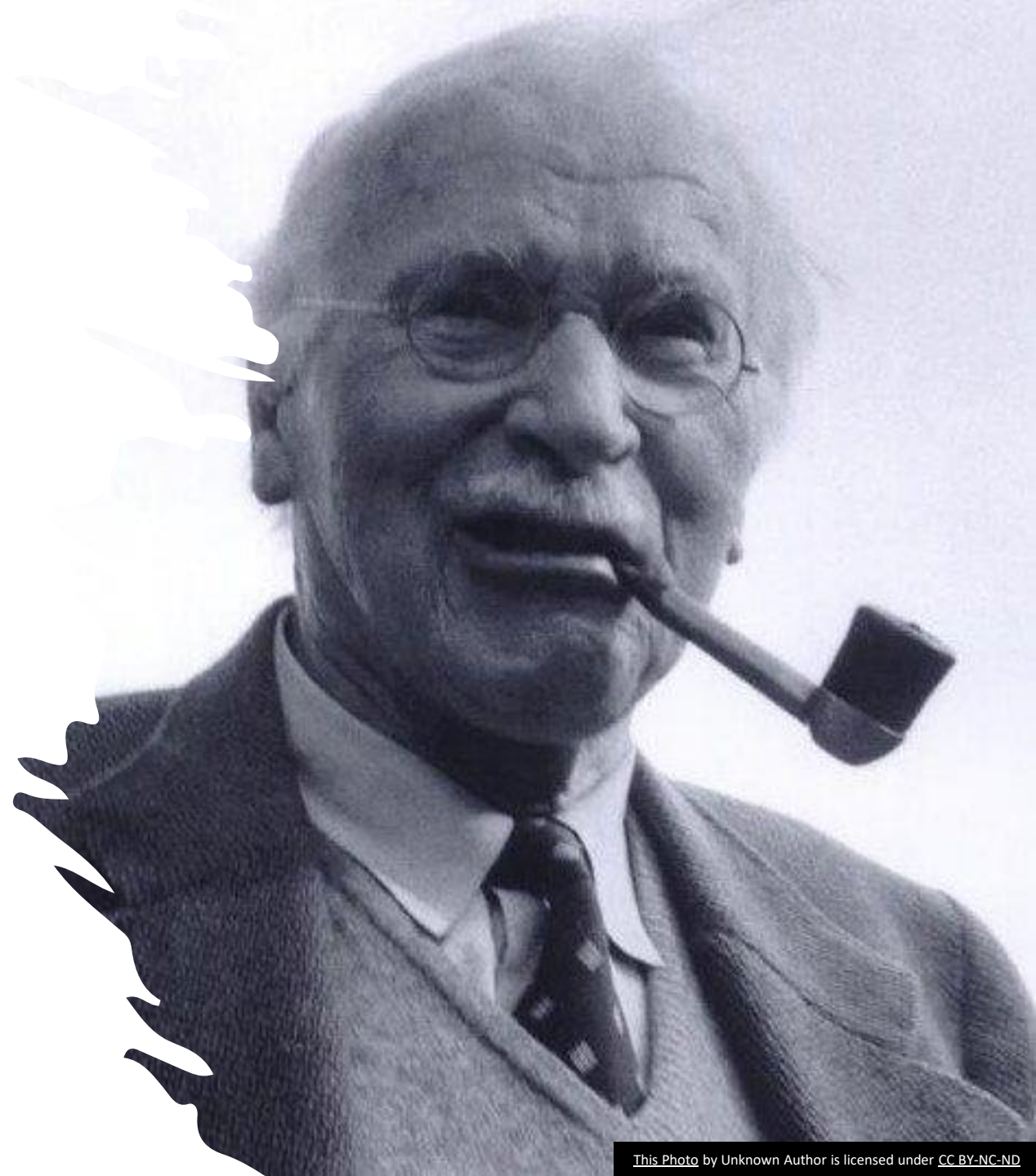
“The pandemic was unique as an emergency because it was truly universal, and that truth contributed to my thoughts and my writing. Being able to connect with others through poetry readings or similar Zoom events has been a really important way to bond with other writers and to grow as a writer in a frightening circumstance.”





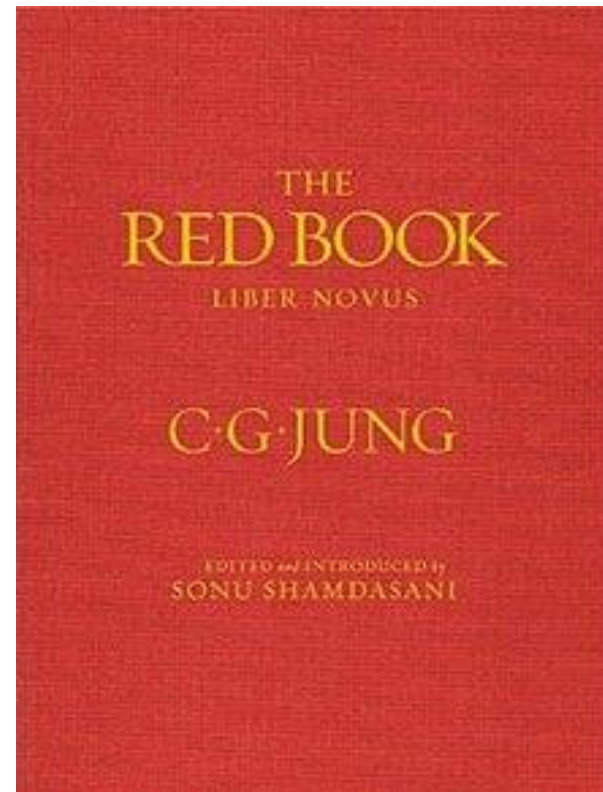
“...voice rather more clearly and resoundingly what all know [...] The mass does not understand it although unconsciously living what it expresses; not because the poet proclaims it, but because its life issues from the collective unconscious into which he has peered.”

“An archetypal content expresses itself in metaphors as such a content should speak of the sun and identify it with the lion, the king, the hoard of gold guarded by the dragon or the power that makes for the life and health of man; it is neither the one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all of these similes. Even the best attempts at explanation are only more or less successful translation in the other metaphorical language” (Jung)





- “We recognized that the world comprises reason and unreason; and we also understood that our way needs not only reason but also unreason”.
- “...the greater part of the world [that] eludes our understanding...part of the incomprehensible, however, is only presently incomprehensible and might already concur with reason tomorrow”



# Steve Pottinger

---

“Primarily, I’d say poetry helped me in that it allowed me to articulate my response to what was happening, and – as always – what I wrote often came as a surprise, an expression of a truth or an attitude that I’d not have been able to come to in everyday conversation. This was, and still remains, invaluable. I think poetry does that a lot. It’s one of the things I love about it – it’s like a conversation with myself in which I’m always learning.”



# Hedy Habra

---

“It has been extremely rewarding to make new friends and get to know a diversity of voices through these virtual gatherings that offered a network of support and solidarity. I think that the poetry we created during the pandemic enabled us to transcend the quotidian by living in alternate worlds and redefine ourselves. It is as though poetry allowed us to see ourselves reflected in these collected, disparate fragments as one would in an ever-expanding stained glass, creating a harmonious whole, encompassing time and space.”

