



A Dangerous Method: A Tale of New Beginnings

by Van Waddy and Cathy Shepherd

For us in the Jung Society, who are so enthralled with the Jung we know and love in the *Red Book*, director David Cronenberg's new movie, "A Dangerous Method," is a *prequel* to that period in Jung's life. Grounded historically in the letters between Jung and Freud and notes from Sabina Spielrein's diaries, the movie is a luscious, pre-war "period piece," a provocative view of Jung's early life, and an opportunity for our different pockets of thought about Jung to have a heyday of discussion.

The movie opens with Jung, played eloquently by Michael Fassbender, as a young, upper middle class Swiss doctor at the

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Burgholzi Clinic in 1904. Sabina Spielrein, played by a feisty Keira Knightley, is his first patient with whom he uses Freud's new "talking method" of "psych analysis" (Jung's term). We meet a somewhat repressed Jung, traditional to the core, faithful to his wife and personal beliefs.

When Jung travels to meet with Freud in Vienna for the first time in 1906, we witness Jung's passionate hunger for collaboration and personal growth. Jung is seen piling his plate with food, not even noticing he is at table with Freud's family, and later that evening, unaware he has sequestered Freud in his office for a thirteen hour tete-a-tete.

Freud, played masterfully by Viggo Mortensen, comes across as well grounded and sympathetic to Jung, eventually naming Jung crown prince and heir to Freud's throne. The first rumblings of disagreement between them surface with their different interpretations and expectations of Jung's work with Sabina Spielrein. Freud thinks she must be anal and controlling, like his patients, according to his theory; Jung suggests she's disorganized and emotionally generous, not like Freud's women patients at all.

One interesting character in the movie is Otto Gross, played wickedly by Vincent Cassel, sent to Jung by Freud as an up-coming genius and potential heir. Gross is a drug and sex addict, convinced and convincing with his belief that nothing, especially sexual desire, should ever be repressed. Jung is eventually won over by Gross in this movie and gives in to the sexual desire he feels for his patient Sabina.

Jung's battle for his own soul and sanity waver in the balance. Besides battling with his own inner demons, Jung finds himself at odds with Freud, his teacher and father figure. While Freud insists on holding firm to his pure, rigorous scientific method, lest others attack any openings for weakness, Jung begins exploring his own intuitive gifts and interests, eventually calling Freud's way "rigorous pragmatism."

Freud declares himself a new Columbus, just putting his foot on land in a new country. Jung fires back, in youthful enthusiasm, that Freud is rather a Galileo, meant to walk through this new country "and open doors for others to come through." Gradually, through his own growth and development, Jung comes to see that *his* desire for his patients to become who they are *meant* to be rather than to just understand how they got where they are is a finer and more rich prospect.

The drama of this dynamic relationship, its rise and deterioration, is exquisitely portrayed by Fassbender and Mortensen. Their famous exchange on the deck of the ship that Freud and Jung take to America (for a congress held up for two years so Freud could attend) prophetically highlights their break. Jung tells Freud his night dream, but Freud refuses to share his own, unwilling to lose his "authority" over Jung. This is not lost on Jung. In a later scene, Freud loses his footing and falls to the floor, a symbolic dramatization of Freud's realization he was losing his footing with Jung. The divide between them widens as Jung takes the lead in discussing things beyond Freud's interests and parameters. Freud eventually dethrones Jung as his son and heir.

Emma Jung, played by Sarah Gadon, is true to form in this historical piece, except that the real Mrs. Jung, more robust and unsophisticated, did not resemble the petite, delicate woman presented here. Emma was, indeed, the ground, the solid pillar at the center of Jung's world, presenting him with children, (eventually a son), a beautiful home on a magnificent lake in

Kusanacht, and a sail boat with red sails that Jung had longed for but could never afford himself. Jung later called her “the foundation of my home,” with Toni Wolff being the “perfume in the air.”

Interesting sidebars in this movie surround the disparity of financial status between Freud and Jung. When they sail to America, Jung is not fazed that he is sailing in first class quarters with Freud below deck (arranged by Mrs. Jung), nor does Jung catch the startled look in Freud’s eyes when Freud visits him at his Kusanacht estate. (Freud lived in a small flat in Vienna.) It points to the dominant introverted, intuitive side of Jung. Externals were not on his radar.

Jung’s intuitive side deepens. We see this in the premonito-

ry dream he has about the impending onslaught of World War I and the blood that would cover Europe.

And, whatever kind of relationship Jung and Sabina Spielrein had in real life is forever up for conversation. Jung calls her his “jewel of great price,” as she brought him passion, intellectual stimulation and drama as well as issuing in demonic struggle and an impending breakdown.

Two New York Times film critics list this movie as one of the top five films of the year. The actors have been nominated for prestigious awards. And we of the Jung Society have been given another bird’s eye view of the early beginnings of the man we have come to know and admire as Carl Gustav Jung.

First Dance

by Amani D. Lagagneur

First, she danced,
and changed to form
the shape of a basin
round, deep, and warm.

From the depths, a movement,
like a wave pre-crest
beyond a ripple in the current
beneath eventide’s request.

She moves like the ocean
farther than we can see
dancing all that ever was
and all that ever will be.

Longing flows toward mourning;
mornings flow toward song;
and in the easing of the waves
a birthing process moves along.

Sea sighs, seaside,
she sighs, sea heaves,
tide ebbs besides,
she lifts her head and breathes

Life.

Life not a whisper.
Life, the hope and its resolution.
Life the water churning and stayed.
Life the problem and its solution.

Still waters, yes, be still,
allow still a safe way.
Evolve from liquid to solid to air
and transfigure night as day.

“First, dance,” begs the water,
“Dance with me, and we’ll go
into our innermost depths,
places neither of us may know.”

“Dance and we will laugh;
how, I adore your grin.
We may weep too, you know,
then the tide will turn again.”

Meet me at the horizon
before we seek the shore.
Dance with me, first, dance.
It is enough and more.”

You ask me about faith.
I say, “It’s more than chance;
when Dawn throws her arms open to Day
I pray, but first, I dance.”

Written to accompany the liturgical
dance of Keri Olsen
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