

Letters on A Dangerous Method

14 February 2012

The following is a selection of readers' letters in response to A Dangerous Method: The Freud-Jung controversy, among other matters, a review by David Walsh published February 8.

Mr. Walsh,

This article is another example of why I consider you the best cultural arts critic of this period.

Sincerely,

George W

California, USA

11 February 2012

Excellent—& thx for this.

David—how did you get so smart?

Rob M

8 February 2012

To say that nothing good has come out of Jungian psychology is not only misguided but wrong. One has only to speak to the thousands of people who have benefited from Jungian analysis to discover how much good it has done.

Given this was a film review I fail to see why your writer would end with such a badly misinformed statement regarding Jungian psychology. C.G. Jung was and his psychology still is ahead of his time and it would seem that your reviewer has not spent the time understanding one of the greatest thinkers of the last century.

Charlie A

8 February 2012

“Jungianism plays a harmful role in every field where it is taken seriously.” I can relate to that, David. Years

ago I become involved in Jack London scholarship after being inspired by London's work, especially *The Iron Heel*, *The Sea-Wolf*, and *The People of the Abyss*. When I encountered a dominant element in academic scholarship, I found that they eagerly sought to deny the social and historical issues (however problematic they appear to us today) in this writer's life and work choosing instead to claim him as an example of Emerson's “representative man” and a premature Jungian. This, of course was designed to gain them acceptance into the distinguished portals of the Modern Language Association, so they eagerly sought to suppress any radical interpretations of this writer's work that verged into the dangerous realms of Marxism and politics. Even when an article appeared in the now defunct *Jack London Journal* showing that what London read about Jung was influenced by Freudian ideas in 1915 and bore no relation to the Jung of the archetypes and collective unconscious, this neo-conservative group stuck to their guns. Unfortunately, London has a fan base of right-wingers rather than his original working class readers of the left. Jungianism attracts the right, and it is a shame that many people are put off London by academic champions and followers of the right rather than read what he had to say without prejudice. Learned societies championing writers are often the worst advocates of their heroes and heroines, and this factor shows how important the insights of Trotsky, Voronsky and others are in combating this one-dimensional type of distortion.

Tony W

8 February 2012

I have immeasurable respect for the site, the clean, clear crisp Marxist analysis; however, when it comes to your comments regarding Carl Jung, it seems rather apparent (even if you say you were not in the position for lack of background and or credentials) you have not read or studied previously before this review little if

any of the massive “scientific” work of Jung. In fact Jung’s break with Freud was very much rooted in Freud’s refusal to explore the “mysteries” of the unconscious scientifically, as he was satisfied (always a danger with conclusions) with his sexual theory of the roots of neurosis and all forms of mental illnesses. The ongoing controversy surrounding Jung’s theories of the collective unconscious and the archetypes must be seen in light of the fact that no philosophical or psychological system has solved the unfolding dangerous crisis facing humanity and mankind. Precisely this point Jung was attempting to confront, explore and give some clues into really!

What makes a human being both “tick” positively and what makes them in groups and as individuals act out violently, aggressively and capable of mass genocide? Surely, all these factors come into play, which move the masses into action for better or worse! Please have a look at Jung’s collective work: *Civilization in Transition Volume 10*

Best regards,

Martin F

Italy

8 February 2012

Like all the reviews on this web site it is a pleasure to read an intelligent and thoughtful response to the movie, but I am literally reeling from your dismissal of Jung and “Jungianism” (whatever that is!). I’ve literally lost sleep over it. Jung’s contributions to psychiatry, psychology and philosophy are so vast and complex that they warrant respect. Even just his work on personality theory is ground-breaking alone. Not that Jung’s ideas are beyond criticism—no one’s are, and he was a man of his time, as we all are—but a nuanced and informed approach could be expected, rather than a wholesale rejection.

Jung and Trotsky, two intellectual giants of the 20th century, are frequent targets of historical defamation and fabrication.

Your position is so sweeping that it is hard to even begin to rebut it. I suggest that you read “Jung and the making of modern psychology” by Shonu Shamdasani for a critical examination of successes and limits of Jung’s ideas. Or even better, read the man himself.

I’d like to see evidence for this outrageous claim—just who do you have in mind when you state: “Jungianism

plays a harmful role in every field where it is taken seriously, including in art. Under its influence, artists tend to draw away from the concrete examination of life and turn to myth and delineating the supposedly archetypal elements of existence, a futile and essentially anti-artistic effort.”? I’d strongly suggest that art devoid of archetypal representation is impossible. Also implied here is a rejection of abstraction because abstraction does not necessarily involve a “concrete (whatever that means) examination of life”. Evidently, this “concrete examination” does not involve any use of deep imagery or mythology.

This statement is not even consistent with your earlier argument, as the basis of Freud’s work rests on using certain selected myths (Oedipus for example), and yet his work is looked upon favourably by you.

And worst of all, it does not even accurately represent Jung’s ideas. Most troubling to me is that while I in general support the WSWS, I despair for any person or political movement that does not recognise what Jung described as “shadow” because it risks being overwhelmed by it.

Richard M

Australia

9 February 2012



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wsws.org/contact