

## Film Review: David Cronenberg's 'A Dangerous Method' Needed More Risk

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 16, 2011 - 3:11pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – There are glimpses of actual danger in David Cronenberg's divisive "A Dangerous Method" with Michael Fassbender, Viggo Mortensen, and Keira Knightley, and the film has a lingering power as it's easy to roll around your brain and contemplate its themes, but I wanted a bit more actual risk to the filmmaking. Easily the masterful director's most straightforward work in some time (possibly ever), this is a worthwhile piece that nonetheless disappoints in the context of the rest of his filmography.

"A Dangerous Method" is a deeply cerebral film, something that deserves at least praise in today's market, even if I wanted it to be more physical and less verbal every now and then. It is about some of the most important developments in the investigation of how we think about not only mental illness but everyday thought processes. But it's a tale of broad advances in thinking through the lives of the people involved on a very human, personal, and sexual level. Christopher Hampton's script makes the case that the men and women on the forefront of changes in the way we think about thinking were going through the research process on each other.



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The catalyst of Cronenberg's film is Sabina Spielrein (Keira Knightley), a woman introduced in a severe level of distress. She just her lower jaw forward, stammers and stutters, and looks as if she could crawl out of her own skin. Rarely has a woman's mental pain been translated into a more physical performance, and she's stunning to watch in the first act as she writhes and does her best to manipulate her still-gorgeous face.

Ms. Spielrein happens into the circle of Carl Jung (actor of the year, Michael Fassbender), a man at the cutting edge of his field. Believe it or not, as prominent as it is in therapy now, the "talking cure" was just being invented. How could merely talking about issues lead to their resolution? For decades, physical action had been the only course to a cure, whether it be shock, leeches, or something even more archaic. Jung dared to suggest that conversation could lead to resolution. Of course, it also leads to revelation



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*"A Dangerous Method" stars Michael Fassbender, Keira Knightley, Viggo Mortensen, Sarah Gadon, and Vincent Cassel. It was written by Christopher Hampton and directed by David Cronenberg. It is rated R and opens in Chicago on December 16th, 2011.*



A Dangerous Method

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

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