

BY PATRICK BLACKIE

There are only so many different ways life can be represented in art. Only now is filmmaking having the creative prominence that it inevitably needs. Films like the Blair Witch Project, Bringing out the Dead, and Fight Club, among others, are

breaking ground by presenting a new style of filmmaking.

Being John Malkovich is a good example of a movie that sets a new precedent, presenting an outlandish script that would be lost in obscurity in past markets. The opening scene is a puppet being manipulated by a seemingly demented puppeteer, a crazed dance to dramatic music. The assumption is that the puppeteer, Craig (John Cussack), is performing for an audience, but as it turns out, he is a failed entertainer, performing only on street corners for unappreciative passers-by.

His wife Lotte - a shock-

ingly frumpy Cameron Diaz suggests that he get a job, which results in Craig seeking employment as a speed filer in an outrageous office located between the seventh and eight floor of an office building.

The plot gets crazier when Catherine Keener enters the film, playing a confusing eccentric bisexual. Craig then discovers a portal into the head of John Malkovich, and a unique love triangle ensues that most certainly required months of psychologically damaging isolation or various drugs to concoct.

When Malkovich realizes that something is amiss, he consults his friend Charlie Sheen (Charlie Sheen) in another great scene which adds more confusion about the role of actors in this movie. Malkovich manages to play not only a very convincing John Malkovich, but was also brilliant at playing a possessed John Malkovich.

The entrance of Malkovich is a momentous occasion in the movie, and it allows for the actors to shine even further, with Malkovich's performance further establishing him as an accomplished actor. He shows his balls, taking a role that lightheartedly perpetuates his reputation as a

Dogma finds the sacred in

the profane

"chameleon actor."

Being John Malkovich makes moves that no other movie had the audacity to do. Although subtle, these plot twists and characters make a movie that no one can walk out of with a comparison, barring any drug induced fantasies.

The acting is great, and it would be an understatement to say the script was original. In the role of director, Spike Jonze made a movie that cannot be lost in a sea of mediocrity as so many other films are. If you have any interest in the more experimental approach that some filmmakers have taken in recent years, taking in this flick is a necessity.



God (Alanis Morisette) takes a break in a 0 dress flip-lops.

BY MARK EVANS

Dogma release has been surrounded by controversy, outrage, and protest, all of which dwarf the movie itself. More fascinating still is that some individuals have so much free time to protest a two hour film they haven't actually seen.

Dogma is a movie about faith in God, and any shots at the organization of the Catholic

church are not only well-supported, but meant in fun. The film's writer/director Kevin Smith is a devout Catholic himself who goes to church every Sunday. Why would the man tear down his

As for the movie - it's good, very good. Both thoughtprovoking and hilarious, it is one of the best films released in a while. Few filmmakers would dare to touch this material, and

fewer still could pull it off successfully. Given his roots as an independent filmmaker, it is no surprise that Smith deftly rises to this challenge

Bartleby (Ben Affleck) and Loki (Matt Damon) are renegade angels, cast out of heaven and sentenced to spend the rest of eternity in Wisconsin. An anonymous letter tips them off to a Catholic church in New Jersey undergoing a revamping of its spiritual image. In accordance with this change, the church will be rededicated, offering an absolution of any sins to those that cross its archway.

This absolution will guarantee the angels a place in heaven if they become human and die. Should the two angels do this after God has declared they may never re-enter her - yes, her - kingdom, God will have been proven fallible, causing all of existence to vanish.

Mankind's only hope rests on Bethany (Linda Fiorentino),

the last descendant of Christ. She is promised help from two prophets, who turn out to be none other than Jay (Jason Mewes) & Silent Bob (Kevin Smith), a pair of New Jersey stoners who appear in all of Smith's films. Tagging along on this journey to stop the angels is Rufus (Chris Rock) the 13th apostle who's miffed for being left out of the Bible.

There's obviously a lot of potential for offense here - even with the riotous opening disclaimer — and the movie skillfully walks that fine line. Jay is one of the foulest characters ever created and he gets the majority of the best lines. Although the angels aim to violently right a few wrongs on the way home, the religion is in-depth, and very reverential to actual Christianity, making some exceptional points.

The acting is uniformly good, not exceptional, but this is an ensemble piece that all falls together perfectly. Alan Rickman deserves mention as the Metatron, the voice of God. He is the real scene-stealer of this film, with exactly the right attitude for the

Although parts of this film drag, they aren't overwhelmingly boring. The intriguing nature of all parts of this film, either fastpaced or slow, speaks volumes for the quality of material. If you're not a fan of Kevin Smith, this movie isn't going to convert you - so to speak - and you'd be better off with something else.

Bottom line: Of his four films, Dogma stands proud as Smith's best work. It isn't as funny as Clerks, nor as emotionally draining as Chasing Amy. What it has is a slew of good laughs, and some deep moral philosophy that is offered for your consideration rather than rammed down your throat. I came out of this film with more faith in God than when I went in, which is the best recommendation I can give. Three and a half stars out of four.



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