

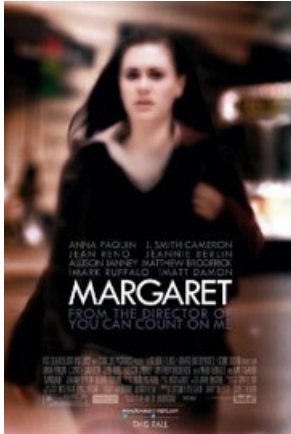
# Margaret's moral dilemma



By Eugene Yiga

11 Apr 2012

Six years is quite a long wait for a movie to come out, but after Margaret was filmed back in 2005, writer-director Kenneth Lonergan didn't want to cut the three-hour version to fit the two-hour running time that he was contracted to deliver. So, after several lawsuits and some editing help from Martin Scorsese (he called the initial version a "masterpiece"), is the final version worth it? It's hard to say.



The most brilliant thing about this movie is Anna Paquin's explosive performance, which brings a whole new meaning to the idea of teenage angst. She plays Lisa, a spoiled 17-year-old who doesn't really care much about anything or anyone. But all that changes when she accidentally causes a bus crash (an especially painful scene) that leaves a woman dead in her arms. Initially, she lies to protect the driver (Mark Ruffalo), but she has second thoughts when the guilt starts eating her up. Should she tell the truth to find closure or will that only make things worse?

Even though the movie was cut back to two-and-a-half hours, parts of Margaret still feel really long and unnecessarily slow. I'm also not sure about the need for so many subplots, including the ones involving Lisa's teachers (Matthew Broderick and Matt Damon) and the one involving her mother's relationship with a Colombian businessman.

## Acting like a spoiled brat

Still, it's interesting to see how the movie develops and how Lisa evolves. Initially, she thinks that everything is about her; later, she realises that other people matter too. Unfortunately, she spends so much of the movie acting like a spoiled brat - drugs, sex and tantrums - that it's hard to care when she finally comes around.

She also doesn't seem to get as much closure as she wanted, which means that we don't get closure either. And as the questions about morality are left unresolved at the end, we'll probably have to wait until another movie comes along to figure them out. Here's hoping that it doesn't take six more years.

In case you were wondering, there is nobody in the movie named Margaret. The title is based on a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem that opens with the line "Margaret, are you grieving". So, yes; now you know.

*Rating: 3 out of 5*

Running Time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Age Restriction: 16 (sex, nudity, screaming, and death)

## ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit [www.eugeneyiga.com](http://www.eugeneyiga.com), follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email [hello@eugeneyiga.com](mailto:hello@eugeneyiga.com) to say, um, hello. View my profile and articles...

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