As for director Ken Russell, never has he said so much with so little. The scenes are dark and claustrophobic with emphasis on the potent dialogue. His trademark lavish sets have been toned down to exclude the over-done symbolism that was so prevalent in some of his previous films.

But don’t think that Ken Russell's eye-poppers have been excised. Tommy forbid! In a script sprinkled with hallucination, time travel, and transmutation, he gets to strut his stuff in the grand tradition of bright lights and loud, noisome. The result is a controlled and faithful rendition of Chayevsky's original concept. William Hurt is the hero who is seen hanging upside-down in the movie's ads. His performance is a fine mix of fear and obsession. After each trip into the unknown, he returns more alienated from family and friends and more emotionally drained by the experience.

Blair Brown, as his wife, gives the film its emotional drawing power. Without her, we probably wouldn’t care what happens to Jessup because he shows a definite disregard for everyone but his much-touted "self." A major shortcoming of this film is its omissions. In the original story, Jessup is motivated as much by a desire for fame as by curiosity. There is considerable talk of Nobel Prizes and the "race to Stockholm." The research is characterized by competition as well as comradeship, the hoarding of ideas as well as the sharing, all of which has been deleted in the film’s final version. Chayevsky, Russell, and the film’s producers have missed an opportunity to repay his scientific mentors by detailing this facet of their actual environment.

This film will make a lot of noise around Boston, responses which may be louder than the film itself. Because it deals with so many intangibles, it ultimately must be judged for what it attempts. But even without the degree of difficulty factor, this film is a success. It should relieve the tension headache that Hollywood gave us for Christmas.

Peter Thompson

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**THIS WEEKEND: SEE ALPHA DELTA PHI ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE WORLD MARATHON BASKETBALL RECORD**

Proceeds will benefit the Pine Street Inn, a shelter for the homeless people of the inner city.

Tipoff will be at 11:00am, Friday January 23 in duPont. The game will go all weekend.

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