

■ Forgotten film

Material far from mainstream in 'Altered States,' 'God Told Me To'

The films' subject matter includes interesting drug trips and social commentary about faith and religion

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PULSE EDITOR

Sometimes movies slip under the radar of public consciousness undeservedly, gaining no notice despite the many qualities that recommend them. Sometimes they are missed because their material is intractably separated from mainstream culture. I've recently come across two films that fit into this latter category. The first deals with different states of human consciousness and the origins of man. The second deals with the true

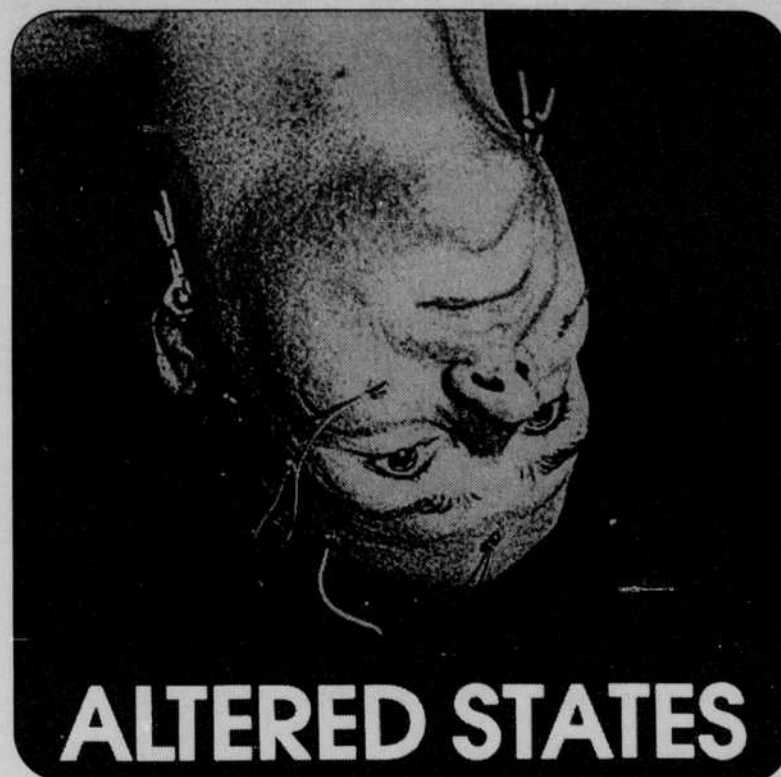
nature of faith and the extremes it can take people to. Both come to conclusions that are in their own way profound but remain removed from the ideas and philosophies expounded in the majority of popular cinema.

1980's "Altered States" cobbles together a wide range of esoteric material into a film that deals with the history of man and the origins of life. It concerns the brilliant but eccentric physiological researcher Eddie Jessup (William Hurt in his debut role) who experiments with isolation tanks

and hallucinogenic drugs. This isn't too absurd of a beginning, seeing as such research was actually done in the 1960s by scientists such as isolation tank inventor John Lilly.

Jessup believes that through such experimentation he can reach the collective past of mankind, both in a physical and mental sense. The film builds a moody atmosphere through the majority of its first half and like any good horror film holds off on the shocks for as long as possible. The real scares start up when Jessup actually succeeds in regressing himself to a primitive form. Despite warnings from friends and family he continues

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COURTESY

The 1980 film "Altered States" was the debut film for William Hurt and Drew Barrymore. The film was disowned by author Paddy Chayefsky.



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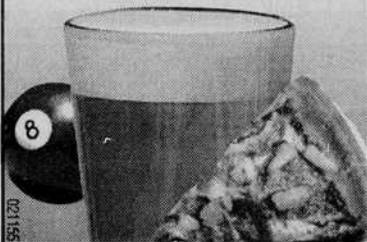
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