Evan Wilcox

Thesis

*Close Encounters of The Third Kind* creates a clear parallel between Roy’s epic quest to find the aliens, and man’s search for god’s love and approval. The film does this by portraying the aliens as omniscient, telepathic, able to defy gravity and always associated with blinding light and by portraying Roy as just an average Joe who is unhappy with and feels stuck in his mundane life.

Revised Thesis

*Close Encounters of the Third Kind* shows the difference between the scientific word and the spiritual world. The film does this by following Roy’s spiritual journey to find the aliens being portrayed as omniscient, able to defy gravity, and always associated with blinding light while also following the scientist journey where they must hunt for clues, decipher codes, and navigate a new language through music.

**Bibliography**

Booker, M. Keith. *Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture*. Praeger, 2006.

In the chapter dedicated to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the book discusses the film and its similarities to two other films, *E.T.* and *The Poltergeist.* The chapter talks about how the film creates a “Portrait of Suburbia” when introducing the characters by showing them as a normal family living in an everyday suburb. It also discusses the tensions in Roy’s family and how Roy struggles with leaving behind his family. It also says how the invasion by aliens is both physical and psychological, showing their physical presence and placing images in the characters heads to get them to come to Wyoming.

Gordon, Andrew. *Empire of Dreams: the Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

In the chapter dedicated to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Gordan talks about how critics have noted that the film is a religious epic and its many similarities to how the aliens are portrayed and gods or angels. Gordan also talks about the character of Roy Neary as well as his family and the troubles they face as a family. Specifically, how Roy is treated and acts like a child by his wife Ronnie when it comes to the aliens and the spacecraft.

Kendrick, James. *Darkness in the Bliss-out: a Reconsideration of the Films of Steven Spielberg*. Bloomsbury, 2014.

In the chapter dedicated to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind,* Booker provides a short summary of the film as well as his commentary on the story. The chapter discuses the themes of religion in the film and describes it as a story of belief, acceptance, and quasi-religious acceptance. Booker says that some of the religious content is supplied by the audience instead of the movie and that the movie indicates no expressions of religious belief except a higher power represented by the aliens themselves.

Engel, Charlene. “Language and the Music of the Spheres: Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters of the Third Kind.” *Literature Film Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1996.

This article analyses the use of music and language in the film such as religious analogs for events portrayed in the film. As well as how new technology is a natural and expected outcome of human development. And express visual metaphors as communication barriers.