

# Tone in Cocoon

You have spent a lot of time watching science fiction that shows aliens as hostile or as presenting problems. The tone for most of these movies was serious, with an occasional humorous moment (think of Will Smith or the goofier moments in *Close Encounters*).

In *Cocoon*, the focus shifts to the deeply human concern with dying and with the decline that so often goes before dying. That is a deadly serious theme.

- One of the techniques that directors use in controlling tone is to control pace and lighting. Generally, a faster pace and a greater use of illumination make the tone lighter.
- Costume or makeup also affects tone. The aliens in *Independence Day*, for example, were made to remind us of insects; but the oversized head and large eyes of the aliens in *Close Encounters* were designed to remind us of infants (and you would have seen the same appearance for the extraterrestrial in *E.T.*)
- Obviously, the actions of the characters affect tone: blowing up New York would probably be heavier than getting a slight electric shock from an alien's machine.
- Plot surely plays a role in setting tone: contrast the climax of the aliens' discovery of the humans' trespass in *Cocoon* with almost any climax in the plots in *Independence Day*.

In an essay of approximately 300 words, explain whether *Cocoon*, in comparison with other sci fi movies, has a generally serious or more lighthearted tone. Make sure to take account of the central issue of dying.