They re-released Close Encounters of the Third Kind a few weeks ago, the way they did with American Graffiti, the director, Steven Spielberg, cut out some scenes and added new ones. He obviously knows what he’s doing, because the new version (I call it C3AK) is better. The scenes Spielberg cut out were either confusing or simply deadwood; the ones he added make the film move faster. Richard Dreyfuss’ character no longer takes half the film to become estranged from his family, and you get to see the inside of the alien mother ship. Granted, the ads have over-emphasized this part, and the film as a whole is the same film, but all the things that people disliked about old Encounters of the Third Kind the first time around simply aren’t there any more.

Re-editing Close Encounters was such a good idea, in fact, that Hollywood should consider a careful cutting and pasting of a few other films; Star Trek, for example. Star Trek — the Motion Picture is slow, pretentious, special effects-oriented, and aimed a little too precisely at Trekkers and Trekkies, but it is not un挽救able. Gene Roddenberry must think so, rumor has it that he intends to re-edit Star Trek, which was finished hastily in order to be released on time.

If I were Roddenberry, [smooth transition, not!] I’d cut out half of the Enterprise’s flight through V’ger’s belly. It’s tedious. Navigator Ilia’s unusual and not use so much film on shots of Smallville, that he intends to re-edit Star Trek, which was finished hastily in order to be released on time. The visually striking title sequence is much too long, the film as a whole is the same film, but all the things. The ending, however, is simply dumb. If Superman can go back in time to save the world, why can he no longer take half the film all the time? I’d rather see a slightly more mundane denouement, like one where he simply gets there in the nick of time.

Now, the biggest problem with The Wizard is a simple one, but not simple to correct. There is no way a mature, adult woman (Diana Ross) could believably play Dorothy. The role should have been given to Stephanie Mills, who played it on Broadway. What’s more, Richard Pryor was wasted as the Wizard, because the Wizard was a wimp. In the play and in the original version of The Wizard of Oz, the Wizard was a wimp, but with some redeeming qualities, as well as a little flesh. This is what Pryor really does best.

Now, how many more movies could be improved only by shedding into tiny pieces? Let’s see, there was Monty Python: Melts Beyond The Fringe, most ripoffs of Star Wars, American, Airplane...

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