



# REPRESENTATION

## Invasion of the Body Snatchers and E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

### Before film screenings: Introduction to REPRESENTATION

#### Representations and Stereotypes

Identifying **stereotypes** of social groups are a good way to start thinking about representation. Whether we believe in stereotypes or not, we all have a **set of opinions** or **expectations** of different groups.

The groups we will be analysing in the two films are **gender, age** and **authority**.

To start it's useful to identify some stereotypes we already know about.

#### Gender Stereotypes

*What opinions/expectations do you have of men and women?*

Male	Female



Some more ideas....

Male	Female
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive, enjoys victory (esp. in sport)</li> <li>• Physically strong, take pride in fitness (push themselves)</li> <li>• Enjoys being dominant, likes to take charge (inflexible)</li> <li>• Enjoys winning – success is very important</li> <li>• Protective – esp. of family, partner, children</li> <li>• Physical labour</li> <li>• Good with technology and mechanics</li> <li>• Rational, problem-solving – decisions based on logic not emotion</li> <li>• Usually 'bread-winner' – provides for family</li> <li>• Brave, courageous (or fool-hardy, 'risk-taking')</li> <li>• Tempestuous, quick to anger</li> <li>• Resilient (physically, mentally, emotionally)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic (cooking, cleaning)</li> <li>• Clever, cunning, wily</li> <li>• Emotionally sensitive</li> <li>• Inferior, passive, don't like to take the lead</li> <li>• Flirtatious</li> <li>• Vulnerable, unable to defend themselves</li> <li>• Emotionally intelligent, sensitive to criticism (esp. 'Peer pressure')</li> <li>• Obsessed with romance and relationships</li> <li>• Able to multi-task</li> <li>• Addicted to shopping</li> <li>• Take pleasure in their own appearance ('vain'), obsessed with weight</li> <li>• Fussy / meticulous</li> <li>• Delicate, dainty, graceful ('pink')</li> <li>• Competitive in beauty (can be 'bitchy')</li> </ul>

*Can you think of examples of characters in films or TV (of any genre) that:*

- a. *Behave stereotypically - what do they do? Can you think of specific scenes where they behave in this way?*
- b. *Challenge stereotypes - again, what do they do? Can you think of specific scenes where they behave in this way?*



## Age Stereotypes

What are your expectations of, or opinions about the following age groups?

Children (5-11)	Teens / Young Adults (11-24)	Adults (24-65)	Older Adults (65 onwards)

Here is a **word-bank** of adjectives to describe different age groups. Use it to help you identify stereotypes and help your explanations.

Resourceful Intelligent Naive Defensive Angry Aggressive Creative Resilient Dedicated Determined Criminal Intimidating Rebellious	Feral Blank Threatening Victimised (by whom?) Authoritative Vengeful Corrupt Rude Impolite Defiant Curious Obedient/ Unquestioning Carefree	Confused Impetuous/hot-headed Amoral Proud Over-sexed Risk-takers Foolhardy Stubborn Proud Compassionate Wise Witty Confrontational
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## Representation of Authority

Opinions and expectations of authority figures tend to be more political or based on personal experience than other groups, so there tend not to be as many stereotypes. Having said this, the more **traditional** (or conservative) view of authority tends to be **trusting**, whereas the **liberal** (or progressive) view tends to be **cynical** and suspicious of those with power.

*What opinions do you know about (they don't have to be your views)?*

	Traditional / conservative view	Liberal / progressive view
Police (incl. FBI)?		
Politicians?		
Military?		
Doctors/ scientists?		
Teachers		



## Historical Context

One way to deeper understand representation in film texts is to put them in historical context.

Key questions:

- How do social values about gender, age, race, sexuality etc. affect the messages in the film?
- How are these values shaped by the socio, economic or political forces at that time?
- Do the films accept (and reinforce) these values? Or do they challenge (or complicate) them?

Look at the Study Guide on the **contexts** for *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *E.T. the Extra-terrestrial* for some more ideas.



## During film screenings: identifying and comparing representations

**Teacher’s Note:** As issues of representation are thematic, discussion and note-taking could be held halfway through the film screenings, and at the end. For examples linking technical features (e.g. cinematography) to the representations, please see the **Focus Scene** section. Students should use the ideas and language from pre-screening activities to help them identify and articulate comments.

### Representations of gender

Gender stereotype used/challenged	<i>E.T. the Extra-terrestrial</i>	<i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i>	Similarities/differences



### Representations of age

Age stereotype used/challenged	<i>E.T. the Extra-terrestrial</i>	<i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i>	Similarities/differences

### Representations of authority

Opinion about authority	<i>E.T. the Extra-terrestrial</i>	<i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i>	Similarities/differences



## After the Screenings

### Key questions:

- How have the representations of gender changed between 1956 and 1982? What might have caused that change (or lack of it)
- How are these representations different from more recent films?
- How have the representations of age changed between 1956 and 1982? What might have caused that change (or lack of it)
- How are these representations different from more recent films?
- How have the representations of authority changed between 1956 and 1982? What might have caused that change (or lack of it)
- How are these representations different from more recent films?

**Creative task:** Re-write the parts of a male/female character to change the way gender is represented in either film.

- How would they behave differently?
- How would that challenge/reinforce traditional values?
- Can you do the same for a child/teen/adult character?
- Or alter the way the authorities are represented?