



# Invasion of the Body Snatchers (18:26 - 00:00): 'The Body on the Table'

Key Elements of Film Form (Micro Features)
Cinematography (including Lighting)
The <b>lighting</b> (bold <i>chiaroscuro</i> - contrast between shadows and light) and use of <b>foreground/background</b> are familiar from <i>film noir</i> genre. Even though the story is not about crime, the style is appropriate as often a <i>film noir</i> hero uncovers a conspiracy and then struggles to convince others of the danger.
The <b>framing</b> of the characters in the light, and the body in darkness creates a sense of menace. This is exaggerated further, at 25:33, when the body's (now formed) face is in extreme foreground and Teddy in the far background. We see the body's eyes flicker without Teddy noticing, which creates suspense.
Mise-en-Scène
The <b>location</b> and <b>props</b> appear to be normal, suburban homes in small town USA. These help to suggest a feeling of 'normality', which - as we discover the truth - begins to feel more and more threatening. The ordinary furniture, houses, cars and even the layout of the town square starts off feeling familiar and reassuring - but later it becomes almost like a 'mask', behind which the true evil is hiding.
The prop of the ink-blotter and blank fingerprints establishes the body's ' <b>Otherness</b> ' and marks it as somehow <i>more</i> alien than if it had green skin and tentacles (and avoids expensive special effects!)
Editing
<b>Cutting</b> between the men inspecting the body (in <b>MS</b> and <b>LS</b> ) and Teddy Bellicec's facial reaction (in <b>CU</b> ) establishes the men as rational and logical, and the women as more emotional and scared. This links to the representations of gender throughout. (see <b>Representation</b> section)
Sound
<b>Dialogue:</b> Bennell's constant references to his role as the town doctor, and the Bellicec's insistence that as a doctor he may be able to explain the body, establish him as a figure of <b>authority</b> . But his inability to explain shows this phenomenon is beyond his comprehension, subverting that authority.



The dialogue also explains the uncanny nature of the body - without **CU** of the body itself. Teddy suggests it is 'awaiting completion' and growing a face... which leads to the terrifying question "...but whose face?" The dialogue is naturalistic but expository, whilst building a sense of fear.

Dramatic **non-diegetic** music is used to indicate a character's curiosity, then shock.

## E.T the Extra-terrestrial: (44:06 - 52:28): 'Learning'

### Key Elements of Film Form (Micro Features)

#### Cinematography (including Lighting)

During this scene particularly - though often throughout the film - the camera is at the **same height** as a child or ET. We are literally seeing the world from a child/alien's perspective. When Elliott is at school, he is framed so he is in the centre of the **frame**, with adults as a pair of legs walking by, their heads literally in a different place. As ET scampers around trying to avoid Elliott's mum, we barely glimpse above her waist, and the fact her **sightline** is above where the real (and astonishing) action is taking place is used as a device for suspense and comedy. It also feeds into the notion of children being more empathic and sensitive than adults (Gertie, at the same **eye-line level**, is able to see ET). Even when **MS** and **LS** are used in this scene, and we can spot ET in the background, Elliott's mum fusses over domestic mess and doesn't even realise there's an alien in her house.

#### Mise-en-scène

The home and school are **naturalistic** and 'ordinary' - Elliott's house is untidy and full of toys, food etc. As we see these things from ET's perspective (with lots of shots of his reactions), they take on a new meaning: as something strange and new. Many of the objects (and what he sees on TV, in magazines etc.) give him the inspiration and tools to create a device to "phone home", again suggesting an alien POV of human junk (and popular culture).

#### Editing

Though driving narrative element in this scene is ET's exploration of the house and responses to what he sees, there are only a few **CUs** of his face using the standard **shot reverse-shot** technique. Instead, we often see a CU of what ET is looking at, then a cut to the dog's reaction. As the scene progresses there are **cutaways** to MCU of Elliott's reactions to what ET is seeing. (**MCU** is used to show the classroom around him and show he isn't entirely absorbed by ET's experiences). When Elliott decides to release the frogs, the **cross-cutting** between the house and the classroom increases. At the climax (when Elliott kisses the girl) there is **match-on-action** between movement on the TV E.T. watches and the scene in the classroom. This reflects the 'merging' of Elliott and ET's experiences (blurring of **Self and Other** - see Narrative section)



### Sound

Throughout the scene there is low, steady orchestral **music** to reflect ET's exploration, with occasional flute flourishes to indicate discovery and wonder. This builds with faster **pace** and the introduction of strings, as Elliott releases the frogs. This music fades as ET plans his way home and becomes captivated by the film on TV: as ET's experience of the film, the events of the film and Elliott's actions converge, the music from the film becomes the music in the classroom. The sound is then both **diegetic and non-diegetic**. Along with editing, this use of sound shows the convergence of Elliott and ET's consciousness.

### Tasks:

- Can you identify similar techniques being used in other scenes in the films?
- What are some similarities between the two scenes, especially the use of micro-features?
- How are the micro-features different? How do they suit the different messages each film e.g. portrayal of authority or blurring of Self/Other (see **Representations** and **Narrative** sections for ideas about this)