



Representation

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

Quickfire Quiz - How well do you remember the films?

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial	Invasion of the Body Snatchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the name of the main (human) character? • What are his brother and sister’s names? • What do we see ET doing at the start of the film? How do we know he’s benevolent? • What piece of costume/prop is used to show a particular character? • Where is Elliott’s father? • How do we know that ET and Elliott are initially both scared of each other and how does ET show he isn’t a threat? • What are Elliott’s brother and sister’s reactions to ET? <p>Answers below</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main character’s name? • What is the name of the main female character? • Why does he return from a conference early? • What are two strange things he encounters over the first two days in the town? • What do the Bellecics discover in their basement? • What’s strange about the body? • What does the hero discover in the basement of Becky’s house?
<p><i>Now you think of your own plot questions for the rest of the film and test each other.</i></p>	<p><i>Now you think of your own plot questions for the rest of the film and test each other.</i></p>



Answers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the name of the main (human) character? Elliott. • What are his brother and sister’s names? Michael and Gertie. • What do we see ET doing at the start of the film? How do we know he’s benevolent? He’s collecting plant specimens; a rabbit isn’t afraid of him. • What piece of costume/prop is used to show a particular character? A pair of keys. • Where is Elliott’s father? He’s left the family to go to Mexico with a new girlfriend. • How do we know that ET and Elliott are initially both scared of each other and how does ET show he isn’t a threat? They both scream, drop things and run away. ET mimics Elliott’s movements to show he is not a threat. • What are Elliott’s brother and sister’s reactions to ET? Michael is scared but then impressed; Gertie screams, but quickly overcomes her fear and is totally enchanted with ET. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main character’s name? Dr Miles Bennell. • What is the name of the main female character? Becky Driscoll. • Why does he return from a conference early? Lots of appointments from townspeople. • What are two strange things he encounters over the first two days in the town? A boy who swears his uncle isn’t really his uncle; Becky’s cousin who has the same feeling about her father. • What do the Bellecics discover in their basement? A half-formed male body. • What’s strange about the body? Face isn’t fully formed and no fingerprints. • What does the hero discover in the basement of Becky’s house? A ‘copy’ of Becky.
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Discussion Questions

Representation of gender

- How are men and women represented in *Body Snatchers*? Can you think of a particular scene that illustrates this? How does this link to the historical context?
- Compare these to the representations of gender in *ET*. Can you think of a particular scene that illustrates this? What is similar between the two films? What is different? How might these link to the historical context?

Representation of Age

How is age represented in *Body Snatchers*? Can you think of a particular scene that illustrates this? How does this link to the historical context?



Compare these to the representations of age in *ET*. Can you think of a particular scene that illustrates this? What is similar between the two films? What is different? How might these be linked to the historical context?

Representation of Authority

- How is authority (police, doctors, army, government etc.) represented in *Body Snatchers*? Can you think of a particular scene that illustrates this? How does this link to the historical context?
- Compare these to the representations of authority in *ET*. Can you think of a particular scene that illustrates this? What is similar? What is different? How might these be linked to the historical context?
- In terms of narrative, how is *Body Snatchers* structured? How does this engage the viewer? How are enigmas constructed? What binary oppositions are used? Is the ending closed or open? How does this affect the viewer?
- Compare to the narrative structure of *ET*. What is similar to *Body Snatchers*? What is different? What binary oppositions are used? How does the ending offer more closure than *Body Snatchers*?

Exam Practice - Genre

Sample questions:

- a. Identify one genre convention used in your chosen film. [1]
- b. Briefly outline why conventions are used in genre films. [4]
- c. Explore how the convention you have identified is used in **one** sequence from your chosen film. In your answer, refer to at least **one** key element of film (e.g. cinematography, *mise-en-scène*, editing or sound). [10]

How could you answer these questions?

- a. Pick one example from *Bodysnatchers* that is an example of science fiction or horror



convention e.g. There is an alien invasion; characters are threatened by a dangerous 'Other'.

b. Some ideas:

- Audiences like a balance of familiar and unique elements. Conventions fulfil audience expectations. They also provide genre-specific audience pleasures - *What are some of the audience pleasures provided by the sci-fi and horror genres?*
- Institutions use genres to target audiences - films require massive financial investment, and using genre conventions usually means safe investment.
- They also like genres because the films are fast to write and produce. The conventions are almost like a writing guide for what to include in the film's plot.

c. Use the **focus scene analysis** or your own independent analysis to link one example of a convention being used in *Body Snatchers*. The question is worth 10 marks, so your answer will need to be clear and detailed. You could structure your answer like this:

1. Explanation of convention:

E.g. The film uses the sci-fi/horror convention of an alien 'Other' trying to invade Earth - and the human body. Other films with this theme are *The Thing* and *Independence Day*.

2. Link to audience pleasures:

E.g. This offers the pleasure of exploring big 'what-if?' questions like what would aliens be like? Would they be friendly? It also explores fear of being 'taken over' by the 'Other'.

3. Link to audience expectations fulfilled:

Focus scene - in the greenhouse: When they first emerge from the pods, the aliens are grotesque and monstrous, covered in slime - we would expect evil aliens to look this way.

4. Link to audience expectations surprised:

E.g. The aliens then grow into exact copies of humans. They no longer look like the 'Other' but like anyone else, even friends and family. It's really difficult to tell who is the enemy, and who is 'normal', unlike in *Star Wars* where it's clear who the aliens are.



5. Link to technical features:

E.g. Editing: in the greenhouse scene, there is shot reverse-shot used to show us both the spectacle of the aliens emerging from the pods, and Henry's horrified reaction; this is typical of the horror genre. The special effect props of the pods, slime and bodies fulfil sci-fi convention of showing us bizarre aliens. Editing and props have been used to provide both sci-fi and horror conventions.

Extension: Now do the same for *ET*.

Teacher's note: The above questions are from the specimen assessment materials at <http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/film-studies/as-a-level/WJEC-Eduqas-A-level-Film-Studies-SAMs.pdf>, where there is also a mark scheme and further indicative content. There are also extension activities in the other parts of the study guide that extend students understanding and give opportunity for independent study.