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Q3 Cinematic Analysis

Red Group

Movie: Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)

Part A:

Set in 1956, the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, directed by Don Siegel details the story of Dr. Miles J. Bennell attempts to save the people of his town from an alien invasion. This helps the director express the theme that there could always be something hiding in the dark, even after some investigation.

The beginning of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* starts off in Santa Mira, California, with a deranged Dr. Miles J. Bennell in a hospital's psychiatric office. There Dr. Bennell starts to tell another physician Dr. Bassett about Bennell's traumatic experience. This experience starts with Dr. Bennell coming back from a medical convention and getting dropped off by a train in Santa Mira. He then heads off to his office where he is met with a couple of cases of patients claiming that one of their close relatives is not related to them. The first hint that there is possibly something suspicious in the dark. Bennell becomes so startled by this outbreak that he soon goes to his girlfriend, Becky Driscoll to go out to a restaurant for dinner. However, he is quickly caught up by a phone call from his friend Jack Belicec's wife who tells him to get to his house immediately for an emergency. Once arrived at the scene, Bennell is shown what seems to be a dead body by Belicec and his wife. After a couple minutes of investigating, the body seemed to be an alien adaptation of Jack that had absorbed everything of Jack and even resembled the blood mark Jack had gotten from a glass cut. This left Bennell very surprised, giving him yet another hint of something in the dark, so he left the scene and dropped Becky off at her house. Later on, in her house he soon finds another alien dead body identical to Becky in her basement. He attempts to call his close friend Dan Kauffman and the police, yet is left with little assistance, and even further leading get targeted by the police. They eventually escape to Miles's office where they see that the entire town is being absorbed by alien seed pods, revealing another example of something hiding in the dark. Soon after Becky and Miles camp in Miles's office they are met up by Jack and Dan who come to tell them that the alien invasion is for the better and that everyone should be the same, signaling betrayal. As the situation escalates and the police officer comes in, Becky and Miles try to get to the highway to tell the rest of the people.

However, they are quickly in a rush as they are getting chased by the rest of the town. They manage to find a good hiding spot and then as they stay in their spot for a while Miles finds out that Becky was secretly being absorbed by an alien. Miles quickly gets caught by the police and the rest of the town, and finishes his story to Dr. Bassett. One of the other physician's quickly denies, until he finds out that someone had seen vegetable-like seed pods. That is when the darkness is revealed.

Part B:

Invasion of the Body Snatchers attempts to portray American society as in danger from Communism. Around this time in American society most people had been relieved that World War two had ended, but had also been skeptical about more communism due to the war. Additionally, in this time in America, "fewer than 50,000 Americans out of a total US population of 150 million were members of the Communist Party. Yet in the late 1940s and early 1950s, American fears of internal communist subversion reached a nearly hysterical pitch." (Wall). In the beginning of the movie, Miles clearly saw that there were not a lot of victims of the alien invasion. However, he still feared that something big might happen later on which caused him to further explore the situation. Another aspect of American society from the 1950s portrayed by *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is conformity, and its pressure that was prevalent in the 1950s. This aspect of American society is revealed in the film when Miles chooses not to conform to what the police and the people of the town are telling him to get into. Moreover, conformity in the 1950s mainly consisted of, "But not all Americans conformed to such cultural norms. A number of writers, members of the so-called "beat generation," rebelled against conventional values." (Arts Faculty of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands). Miles also aligned with non-conforming people of the 1950s by not buying into the big idea. All in all, the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* attempts to portray American society as a country in danger from Communism and representative of conformity in the 1950s.

Part C(response to the first choice of question 2):

The movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* has had great significance in the development of the film industry especially in making the scientific-fiction genre popular. The film used its unique science-fiction to tell a story about contemporary issues and that idea spread like wildfire, "In particular, it has spawned two remakes: Philip Kaufman's

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) and Abel Ferrara's *Body Snatchers* (1993). The former is an important film in its own right." (Booker). The creation of multiple other science-fiction films would not have been possible without the idea of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, yet its significance in film doesn't stop there. Additionally, the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* helped change the way that B films were viewed, as it was one of the few films that received outside-of-Hollywood attention. The film's popularity started as, "Although the B-units closed down in the 1940s, the name stuck for later low- budget genre flicks like "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." Lacking stars and first-run theater distribution, the film barely got reviewed outside the Hollywood trade papers. But it soon took on a second life on television and within a few years achieved secure status as a cult classic." (Sklar). With the film's nationwide presence as a B film, which wasn't necessarily heard of in the 1950s, it made *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* a real game changer. In conclusion, the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* had significance in the development of the film industry, by making scientific-fiction films popular, and by getting B films more notoriety across America.

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