

# The New York Times

## Staring in Awe? It's 'the Spielberg Face'

By Melena Ryzik

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For Steven Spielberg completists even beyond Kathleen Kennedy, the Bagger would like to point you to a video essay that's been making the rounds from Fandor.

Written by Kevin B. Lee, it's a nine-minute meditation on "the Spielberg Face" – the director's use of close-ups on his actors, especially children.

"Eyes open, staring in wordless wonder in a moment where time stands still," Mr. Lee writes, the look has come to be shorthand for a cinematic discovery on the part of the characters and the audience. It conveys "sudden shock or creeping dread, the trauma of remembering the past or of confronting the future, discovering humanity in another person, or discovering humanity in oneself."

Mr. Spielberg did not invent the tight face close-up, of course, but he did perfect it – especially with a swooping dolly shot – to the point where it's almost a film cliché. "Nowadays, it seems you can't have a spectacular special effects action sequence without a Spielberg face to cue you to be in awe," Mr. Lee writes. Now that it's been ID'd, the Bagger expects 'Spielberg Face' to quickly become a pop culture meme, alongside the various Kim Jongs looking at things. But whatever you do, don't confuse it with the Kubrick Stare.