

Movie review on the joneses a literary analysis

[Psychology](#), [Success](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Joneses, directed by Derrick Borte, is about four people who are pretending to be a family living in a wealthy neighborhood using personal product placement to try to increase sales of particular items in the community. It sounds like a simple idea, but the movie has characters, themes, symbolism, irony, and cinematography styles woven in complex ways that give the movie depth and a multifaceted message.

The main characters are the family of four, including Steve Jones (David Duchovney), Kate Jones (Demi Moore), Jenn Jones (Amber Heard), and Mick Jones (Ben Hollingsworth). The movie takes a limited omniscient view, showing each character and their actions, but not always revealing the underlying thoughts and motives. At first, the characters seem superficial, single-minded in their goals to sell products, but as the movie progresses, the underlying personalities come out. For example, Steve's ambivalence about the job interferes with his performance. Kate has pushed her own self and personal goals aside in favor of the business and reaching "icon" status. Jenn gets into trouble with her promiscuous ways which are not helping her sales at the high school. Mick's secret, that he is homosexual, as well as his friendship with a high school girl who gets into a wreck at an alcohol-fueled party he hosts could have potentially ruined the pseudo-family's ability to conduct their business in town. All of the characters have problems balancing who they really are with the role they have to play to have success.

Themes include greed, family, secrets, business, success, failure, and honesty. Every character is a part of all of these themes. For example, the Joneses' neighbor, Larry Symonds (Gary Cole), is greedy to have the things

that Steve Jones has, but he is hiding a secret from everyone, that his house is about to go into foreclosure and that he can't really afford the lifestyle he is trying to live; he feels like a failure. Kate has focused her entire life on doing whatever it takes to get to "icon" status, and in her greed sometimes abandoning her past teams. Steve finds himself struggling with the issues of secrets, family, success, and honesty; he has fallen in love with Kate, he appears to forget that they are not a "real" family, he still wants to be successful in his job, and feels so guilty about his dishonesty that he finally confesses to the entire neighborhood who the "family" really is.

Symbolism is everywhere, starting with the title of the movie. The whole neighborhood is trying to "keep up with the Joneses." The products the Jones family blatantly use and flaunt symbolize apparent success, preying on the greed and envy of supposed friends and neighbors. The characters in each of their roles symbolize what is supposed to be an ideal family.

The movie also makes heavy use of irony. The fact that the Jones family is fake, but trying to sell products they claim lead to real happiness and an ideal life or family is one example. Characters make many ironic statements to each other, such as when Kate says to Stephen, "You've met one Mr. Jones, you've met them all," insinuating there is nothing special about him even though she has high hopes for him as a business partner. When Larry gives Steve a gift and says, "That's what friends are for," the irony is that Steve is only pretending to be Larry's friend.

The cinematography including colors, and music are at first peppy and bright, to depict the happy nature of the Jones family and the atmosphere they are trying to create. There are a lot of close ups in conversation, which

adds to the irony because it seems as if it is a personal interaction even when it is “ strictly business.” As the movie progresses and unfortunate things happen, the music and colors take on more serious and darker tones. All together, these elements make the movie compelling. Watching the characters struggle with the themes, their reality, others’ lives, their own personal desires, as well as the very personal angle and perspective the cinematography adds make the Joneses a movie surprisingly deep in perspective despite its theme of superficial business.

Works Cited

The Joneses. Dir. Derrick Borte. Perf. Demi Moore, David Duchovny, Amber Heard, Ben Hollingsworth, and Gary Cole. Premiere, 2009.