

*1. Does the film adhere to any stereotypes in terms of GENDER? Or does it subvert those stereotypes? How? Be specific.*

Typically, in American media, we see this stereotype of women having a smaller role compared to men, and those roles conflict with each other. Men are shown with greater power and agency while women are insignificant things with a lack of control. However, in *Nope*, Emerald is the braver, louder protagonist. While this does relate to the assumption of the loud Black girl, she is the only female in *Nope*, besides the minuscule characters such as Mary Jo Elliot. Peele works to display women as an assertive force, especially at the end of the movie with Emerald bounding towards Jupiter's Claim to save OJ and take a picture of the alien. There are still moments where OJ and Emerald stick to what is usually seen with gendered roles, such as OJ being more logical and Emerald being more emotional. Another large point about gender in the film is how Jean Jacket doesn't have a specific gender. It removes any negative stereotypes that one would associate with a woman or man, in this case, the audience is rooting for "it" to be defeated or captured on film.

*2. Does the film adhere to any stereotypes in terms of RACE? Or does it subvert those stereotypes? How? Be specific.*

There were two examples of race that stood out to me in the film. The character of Ricky feels very "token" to me. When he was going through his child film star past, we were shown how he was the token POC character in 'Gordy's Home.' Even later, with Jupiter's Claim, his wife is white and all the tourists that visit the park are white as well. Another example of race, that ties in with ideas of patriarchy and Marxism, is shown through the Haywood Ranch. Emerald points out at the beginning of the film that the first motion picture is a Black jockey; however, no one knows who that jockey is. What is more widely known is the White man who shot the film. But, having Ricky and the Haywoods play critical characters in the film works to subvert stereotypes. Rarely in typical American media are people of color shown owning their own businesses, if they are owning a business it adheres to the stereotypes that groups have. Yet, in *Nope*, both businesses, Jupiter's Claim, and the ranch, are independent and move away from stereotypes. In fact, they note in the movie that Haywood Horses is the only black-owned horse company in Hollywood. Having the main characters be Black also works to remove that Black sidekick stereotype shown in the media for decades, such as Lisa in *Saved by the Bell* to Winston in *Ghostbusters*. Having Black protagonists opens the worry for assimilation, however, nothing in the film removes or replaces their culture. It's clear through the dialogue and music that the Haywoods appreciate their culture.

*3. Does there seem to be any IDEOLOGY at work in the film? Or does it seem to be resisting/pushing against any particular ideology? How? Be specific.*

The greatest reference to ideology I found in the film is the distribution of power. The being with the most power is Jean Jacket, but what differs from character to character is how that power is responded to. Ricky is the biggest exploiter in the film, and in order to do that he gives all the power and control to whatever he is exploiting. Instead of trying to overcome his

childhood trauma, he gives into it and gives it strength to direct how he lives his adult life. Similarly, he understands that he cannot control the alien, so he inadvertently works for the alien by providing it with food. The Haywoods try to fight against this ideology, especially with their complex plan to get Jean Jacket on video. They work to hold the higher ground and not give in to the alien. The other reference I found was privilege. The reporters and individuals working on the movie production hold themselves to a high degree, they believe they can act rude and curt. However, the Haywoods and Angel cannot act out or speak up because the backlash on them would be greater.

*4. How does the film uphold or undermine the PATRIARCHY? How? Be specific.*

The film starts off with the standard display of patriarchy, Haywood Horses attempting to make a name for themselves in a bourgeoisie status environment. Those working on the production seem to care less about OJ as he attempts to speak up for himself. The dialogue held between the producer and the actress' assistant reveals how they're upset that OJ is there instead of his father. In terms of gender, Emerald undermines patriarchy in an ideological way. She isn't doing anything that would affect her life in the film, but to the audience, she changes the final girl stereotype. By the end of the film, OJ could have been the one to drive Jean Jacket away, instead, Emerald does. She takes dominance over the situation and ultimately becomes the one who kills the alien.

*5. Does it seem like the characters are subject to any psychological DRIVES? Do any of the characters seem to be REPRESSING anything important? Does DESIRE play a role for any of the characters? How? Pick one (or more). Be specific.*

Ricky seems to be the character that holds clear drives and desires while being repressed. The transparency for this primarily comes from his trauma and desires explicitly revealed. He is driven to achieve wealth and popularity with his theme park. He almost believes that using his past in his present life is a way for him to cope, but really all Ricky is doing is surrounding himself with what haunts him. He can't get rid of the experience he had with 'Gordy's Birthday', so much so that at his final performance at Jupiter's Claim, Mary Jo Elliot was in attendance. OJ was a character, to me, who was not very clear or open about what he wanted. What drives him the most is experiencing his father's death. There's a scene where he's alone in the house and just focuses on the coin that hit his father. Capturing an image of Jean Jacket is more than getting credit, rather reclaiming a title in honor of his father. Later, that drive changes his desire to protect Emerald. While OJ's character development may not be obvious, his appreciation for his sister grows as the film progresses.

*6. Does the film seem to be making a MARXIST critique? How? Be specific.*

Jean Jacket acts as an opportunity for the Haywoods. When the audience is introduced to the protagonists, they already have inequality in terms of where they are in the film industry. People talk down on them and regard them as close to nothing in the industry. Emerald talks up Haywood Horses so much before they even film anything. That reassures the audience that

the Haywoods have a lower social class than the rest of the people they work with. When Angel is introduced, the film also shows that he's in a social class like the Haywoods due to his work being at a technology store like Best Buy. When these characters attempt to get help from or discuss business with others in a higher social class, they get rejected or disregarded. Specifically, when Emerald reaches out to Antlers Holst, he says he isn't interested in working on the project. That is someone in a high-up position who is not willing to spend time helping people in a lower social class. Ricky is another example of a figure who is willing to take from the Haywoods, but won't give back. In both instances, there is no equity. Arguably, having Holst and Ricky dead by the end of the movie and the Haywoods alive, is a message of there needing to respect no matter what the circumstances may be.

*7. Did you notice anything about the FORMAL properties of the film? Did anything stand out in terms of space, line, color, composition, brightness and darkness?*

This movie dealt a lot with framing and lighting, which pushed not only the thriller aspect of the film but also the idea that the story took place in a desolate valley. The way most shots were composed had a character in the foreground or background, applying the rule of thirds. This really pushed the isolated reality of the Haywoods and Ricky, the only time that the viewer is drawn to something in the background is when Jupiter's Claim can be seen from the ranch and vice versa. What I found unique is how the audience never explicitly sees the alien eating anyone, we hear it and see the aftermath, but never the full process. It creates a more ominous tone for the alien. The constant light, except for the scenes at night, threw me off a bit. Typically, with a film targeted at horror, darkness overpowers the light. But the brightness in the film felt paralyzing. There were little to no shadows when it was day, and when it was dark there was a significant lack of light. Securing a feeling of being alone, that there isn't even anything in your environment that could bring you comfort. The pops of color fit the color palette of a science fiction film, with neon orange and blues. Another thing with the composition is how the Haywoods were placed alongside Angel during important conversations. The scene where they're in the diner is a key moment in their deciding whether to go back to the ranch. OJ is placed in between Angel and Emerald, who both don't want to deal with the alien anymore contrary to what OJ wants.

*8. Read the film like a TEXT. Does it seem to be "saying" anything? Does it have some sort of "message"? (Put another way: What is your "interpretation" of the film?) Cite evidence from the film. And don't ask Chat GPT.*

I interpreted the film as a commentary on the dangers of exploitation. Both storylines feature a character who is going through, or has experienced, a great trauma. Rather than looking for a way to remove themselves from the situation, they both want to capture that moment and use it to prove something. As seen with Ricky, he holds onto the shoe and uses it, and his short-lived child star past, to create profit. It's as if he cannot move forward, so he uses those pieces of horror from 'Gordy's Home' to tackle the new unknown, which is his adult life. For the Haywoods, they were given an opportunity to make a name for themselves with the discovery

of the alien. However, the process of being able to capture any image of Jean Jacket is incredibly dangerous and poses many obstacles. What stands out to me about the film is how polysemic it is. Especially nearing the end of the story, is the audience supposed to root for the characters to survive or get evidence of Jean Jacket? What is that to say about the overall message? Protecting the people you value is more important than any opportunity you're given. Or are we to focus on the message of how we should be pushing through difficulties we face in order to get the greatest end result.

*9. Did you notice anything that isn't covered above?*

What I found interesting about the film is that the audience views it as a science fiction film, not a film that is explicitly adding to the discussion on race or gender. There's no fear of the Haywoods being killed by a white supremacy group or some personified form of capitalism, rather we are rooting for them to survive this alien.

*Bonus: What's the deal with the chimp? Why is he in the film? What narrative and/or thematic purpose (if any) does his subplot serve?*

I think the subplot serves as a parallel. In the 'Gordy's Birthday' scene, we see Ricky in a traumatic moment where he attempts to calm himself down since he knows he cannot go anywhere without being a target. OJ and Emerald face the same circumstance with the alien and try to escape. They understand that they must stay in the valley. While Ricky and OJ appear as conflicting characters, shown through Emerald taking the horse statue and Ricky looking to buy the horse ranch, they have more parallels. This is also where the standing shoe ties in, it carries a similar symbolism to the nickel that kills OJ's father at the start of the film. The objects are the tangible reminders of trauma, when one loses something important to them and the process of losing that seems impossible.

What is interesting about the shoe is how it's stored. I feel that in western culture, there's such a craze around traumatic events and crime. Especially ones that seem impossible to explain, so that by holding onto objects that were a part of the events we can try to form an explanation. We have museums dedicated to serial killers and pieces of the past that are so horrifying that we can't help but memorialize them. The shoe stands for that "bad miracle" OJ brings up to Emerald. By some miraculous happening, that shoe stood on its own and ended up being something that saved Ricky as a kid, and consequently providing him with a purpose as an adult.

*Bonus #2: Same question but for the alien? What's the deal with Jean Jacket?*

Jean Jacket is more so the main plot, that is the antagonist the audience sees for most of the film and allows the film to be science fiction. While it can be used as something unrealistic, I think it can drag pieces of reality down to a much more tangible level. What happened with Gordy is something that could happen in real life. There was an actual incident with Travis the chimp who attacked his owner's friend. By showing that parallel with Jean Jacket, it reassures the audience that these great American UFO tales could never

happen, but that fear is very much real. Jean Jacket is the impossible that still manages to impact us psychologically.