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Obsessive Behaviors in Jade Halley Bartlett's *Miller's Girl* (2024): A Psychoanalytic Perspective

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Abstract

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This study examines the portrayal of obsessive behavior in Jade Halley Bartlett's *Miller's Girl* (2024), focusing on the psychological dynamics between the two central characters, Cairo and Mr. Miller. The research investigates how emotional factors such as loneliness, unmet psychological needs, and emotional neglect shape the characters' mental states and contribute to the development of obsessive attachments. Grounded in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, this study employs a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing selected scenes and dialogues that illustrate patterns of obsession and psychological disturbance. The findings indicate that Cairo's obsession emerges from parental absence and her intense need for validation, whereas Mr. Miller's fixation is rooted in emotional rejection within his marriage and his desire to regain a sense of worth through Cairo's admiration. Both characters rely on rationalization as a defense mechanism, though they employ it in markedly different ways to justify or manage their behaviors. This study highlights how obsessive tendencies are constructed within cinematic narratives and contributes to literary psychology research by demonstrating the relevance of psychoanalytic theory in interpreting contemporary film portrayals of mental and emotional instability.

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INTRODUCTION

Obsessive behavior refers to a pattern of persistent and intrusive thoughts or actions driven by an overwhelming emotional attachment, often emerging in the context of romantic interest or infatuation. Individuals who display such tendencies frequently fixate on another person to the extent that their thoughts and behaviors become difficult to regulate. These behaviors may include excessive attempts to maintain contact, monitoring the other person's activities, or displaying disproportionate emotional dependency. The emotional intensity behind these actions often overrides rational decision-making and can cause psychological distress for both the individual and the person who becomes the object of their fixation. Psychological studies consistently show that obsessive tendencies are commonly rooted in deeper emotional issues such as insecurity, unmet emotional needs, low self-esteem, anxiety, or fear of abandonment.

Cases reported in psychological literature reveal that obsessive behavior, when left unchecked, can escalate into unhealthy relational dynamics. Researchers note that intense emotional fixation may lead individuals to blur the boundaries between affection and control, which can create situations of emotional risk and instability. Although extreme cases occasionally appear in the media, academic inquiry emphasizes the importance of viewing obsessive behavior as a psychological condition shaped by internal conflicts rather than simply as unusual or sensational events. Understanding these behaviors is therefore essential for recognizing how emotional vulnerability can influence decision-making, relational patterns, and personal well-being.

The representation of obsessive behavior is also a recurring theme in literary and cinematic works. Fiction often reflects the psychological depth and emotional consequences associated with obsession, allowing audiences to examine how internal conflicts manifest in character relationships. Jade Halley Bartlett's *Miller's Girl* (2024) offers a compelling example of such a portrayal. The film centers on a complex and ethically fraught relationship between a student, Cairo, and her professor, Mr. Miller. As the narrative develops, Cairo exhibits increasing signs of obsessive attachment, while Mr. Miller's own emotional vulnerabilities shape his responses to her fixation. The film's exploration of mutual emotional need, blurred boundaries, and psychological dependence makes it a rich subject for psychoanalytic interpretation.

Given the psychological depth embedded in the film's character dynamics, this study focuses on analyzing the obsessive behaviors portrayed in *Miller's Girl* (2024). By examining how emotional factors such as loneliness, unmet psychological needs, and emotional neglect influence the characters' actions, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of obsessive behavior in fictional narratives and its relevance to literary psychology.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to examine obsessive behavior portrayed in the film *Miller's Girl* (2024). A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on interpreting psychological expressions, character motivations, and relational dynamics rather than quantifiable patterns. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain, qualitative inquiry seeks to understand human experiences, beliefs, and behaviors through the analysis of non-numerical data such as dialogue, visual imagery, and narrative structure.

The primary data for this study consist of selected scenes, dialogues, and visual elements from *Miller's Girl* (2024). Scenes were chosen purposively based on their relevance to the

research focus, particularly those illustrating signs of obsessive attachment, emotional vulnerability, and psychological conflict between Cairo and Mr. Miller.

Data were collected through repeated viewing of the film, transcription of key dialogues, and documentation of screenshots to capture important visual cues. Using screenshots is essential in qualitative film analysis because body language, gestures, framing, and cinematographic choices contribute to understanding characters' psychological states. All excerpts were catalogued with timestamps to maintain accuracy and transparency.

The analysis followed these steps:

1. Identifying indicators of obsessive behavior, such as fixation, emotional dependence, and irrational decision-making.
2. Categorizing psychological factors contributing to these behaviors, including loneliness, emotional neglect, and unmet needs.
3. Applying Freudian psychoanalytic concepts, especially concerning unconscious motivation and defense mechanisms.
4. Interpreting visual and narrative elements (camera angles, lighting, character positioning) to understand how obsession is represented cinematically.
5. Synthesizing findings to explain how both characters develop and rationalize their obsessions.

This analytic approach allows patterns to emerge inductively from the data rather than imposing predetermined categories.

Because qualitative film analysis involves interpretive judgment, the researcher acknowledges that the analysis is influenced by theoretical perspective and personal interpretation. To reduce bias, psychoanalytic concepts and established film-analysis frameworks were consistently used as guiding references.

Overall, the qualitative descriptive method is well suited to this study because it enables a detailed exploration of how obsession develops and is represented within a fictional narrative. This approach accommodates the complexity of psychological interpretation in cinematic works.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the writer delves into the discovery of a significant issue: obsessive behaviors exhibited by the characters in the film "Miller's Girl." Through careful analysis, the author highlights instances where these characters display compulsive or irrational thoughts and actions that significantly impact their lives and relationships. By examining these behaviors, the chapter aims to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological complexities at play within the film.

Obsessive Behaviors Due to Loneliness

Figure 1.1

Obsessive behaviors to Mr. Miller



Note: From Miller's Girl [10.35.15], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024
Excerpt: Cairo Sweet: It means you weren't brave enough to be better. Means you're deliberately impotent. It means that you, Jonathan Miller... are mediocre. You wanna fail me? I fucking dare you. But you better make it mean somethin' to you. And you better know what it means. Because the cost is very high, Mr. Miller. And if you're not very, very careful this banality, this falsity that you wallow in, it will devour you until you are as small as you pretend to be. And you will disappear. And no one will pay any more thought to you than they do an unread cookie fortune. ... How disappointin' you must be to those who had believed you'd be more. No wonder you're here." (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024).

Cairo Sweet's emotional turmoil is deeply rooted in her loneliness. Growing up without the presence of loving parents, she constantly seeks validation from the people around her. When Mr. Miller gives her an opportunity to express herself through writing, Cairo misinterprets his guidance as a sign of personal affection. His encouragement, though purely academic, becomes a symbol of the love and attention she desperately craves. This emotional misinterpretation leads to an obsessive attachment, where every word, action, or gesture from Mr. Miller is magnified in her mind, reinforcing her belief that he sees her as special.

When Mr. Miller rejects Cairo's essay, deeming it unfit for submission, her world shatters. For Cairo, this essay is not just an assignment—it is a piece of herself, a reflection of her emotions, thoughts, and personal experiences. She perceives his criticism as a betrayal, an indication that he does not care for her the way she believed. The disappointment fuels her frustration, making her lash out, as seen in the image where she confronts Mr. Miller. The subtitle, "It means you weren't brave enough to be better"

,encapsulates her resentment. She believes he has failed her, not just as a teacher, but as the only person who made her feel seen.

This confrontation represents Cairo's emotional breaking point. Her obsession with Mr. Miller stems from a place of deep emotional void, where she projects unrealistic expectations onto him. She sees him as more than just an educator; she envisions him as someone who could fill the emptiness her parents left behind. His rejection of her essay is symbolic—it is not just about the words on the page but about the perceived rejection of Cairo herself. This emotional dependency is dangerous, as it blinds Cairo from reality, making her unable to differentiate between professional guidance and personal affection.

The framing of the scene is crucial in conveying the power dynamics between Cairo and Mr. Miller. Cairo, dressed in black, stands tall, looming over Mr. Miller, who is sitting. This height difference visually emphasizes her emotional dominance in this moment—she is no longer the submissive student but a young woman demanding recognition. The dark clothing symbolizes her intense emotions, possibly even foreshadowing her descent into darker psychological turmoil.

The background, with old wooden walls, framed pictures, and a red cabinet, creates a confined, almost suffocating atmosphere. This setting reflects Cairo's inner turmoil—she feels trapped in her emotions, unable to escape her growing obsession. The warm yet dim lighting adds to the scene's emotional weight, casting subtle shadows that enhance the tension between the characters. The camera angle is slightly tilted upwards from Mr.

Miller's perspective, reinforcing the sense that Cairo has momentarily taken control of the conversation. The close-up on Cairo's face captures her intense expression, showing a mix of pain, anger, and desperation. Her slightly parted lips and narrowed eyes indicate her frustration, while Mr. Miller's lowered gaze suggests discomfort and helplessness. The depth of field is shallow, focusing on the two characters while subtly blurring the background. This effect isolates them from the rest of the world, emphasizing the intimate yet unsettling nature of their interaction.

This scene is a pivotal moment in Cairo's emotional journey. It showcases her fragile mental state and her desperate need for validation from Mr. Miller. Her obsessive attachment to him is not born out of love but out of loneliness—a desire to find someone who truly sees and understands her. The cinematographic choices, from the lighting to the framing, effectively highlight the psychological tension, making this confrontation feel deeply personal and emotionally charged. Cairo's journey is a tragic one, revealing the dangers of misplaced affection and emotional dependency.

Figure 1.2



Cairo and Mr. Miller in Poetry Community

Note: From Miller's Girl [00.01.25], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Excerpt: Cairo: Why am I here? It's not for the poetry, I'll tell you that. It's for the thrill of something that I've managed to go my whole life without knowing. An ache of anticipation that you'll be here. And it will mean something that you are. Be here. Be here. Be here." (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024)

In this scene, Cairo willingly attends the poetry community gathering, but her primary motivation is not her love for poetry—it is her deep emotional fixation on Mr. Miller. From her perspective, their shared intellectual interests, passion for literature, and mutual appreciation for poetry create a strong, almost fated connection. Cairo interprets every moment spent together as proof that they are alike, kindred spirits meant to be more than just a student and teacher. Her obsession stems from a deep-rooted loneliness, caused by her emotionally distant parents, leaving her craving meaningful attention. The small gestures of encouragement from Mr. Miller—his praise for her writing, his invitation to this gathering—become exaggerated in her mind, fueling the belief that he, too, harbors hidden feelings for her.

Cairo's obsession is not purely romantic but psychological. She sees Mr. Miller as a figure who fills the void of affection in her life, blending admiration, dependence, and desire into a

dangerously unbalanced attachment. Her perception of reality becomes warped as she mistakes their common interests for romantic compatibility. The way she gazes at him, searching for validation, suggests that she has already convinced herself that their connection is something unique and forbidden. Her presence in this poetry gathering is not about the art—it is about experiencing intimacy through shared intellectual space. Every interaction, no matter how innocent, strengthens her delusion that they are meant to be together.

On the other hand, Mr. Miller's behavior in this scene is more ambiguous. While he engages in conversation and seems comfortable with Cairo's presence, his body language and expressions do not fully mirror her intensity. He appears intrigued by Cairo but maintains a level of detachment that suggests his intentions might not be as emotionally invested as hers. This imbalance in emotions heightens the tension in the scene, making it unclear whether he is oblivious to Cairo's obsession, subtly encouraging it, or struggling with his own conflicting emotions.

The cinematography in this scene plays a crucial role in intensifying the complex emotions between Cairo and Mr. Miller. The close-up framing emphasizes their proximity, allowing the audience to focus on their facial expressions and subtle eye movements. The lingering eye contact between them creates a charged atmosphere, heightening the emotional intensity. This framing choice pulls the audience into Cairo's perspective, making them feel her longing and emotional turmoil.

The warm, dim lighting creates a sense of intimacy, reinforcing Cairo's perception that this moment is special and personal. The subdued colors in the background, primarily browns and dark greens, add to the setting's cozy yet somewhat melancholic atmosphere, mirroring the emotional undertones of the scene. The classic wooden furniture and bookshelves contribute to the idea that this is a space where intellectual connection flourishes, something Cairo romanticizes as a foundation for her bond with Mr. Miller.

Their wardrobe choices also contribute to the storytelling. Cairo wears a white, off-the-shoulder dress, which symbolizes both innocence and romantic idealism. The softness of her attire contrasts with Mr. Miller's darker, more subdued clothing, which could indicate his more grounded, reserved nature. This visual contrast subtly hints at the emotional divide between them—Cairo, lost in her fantasies, and Mr. Miller, possibly unaware of the depth of her feelings or unwilling to fully confront them.

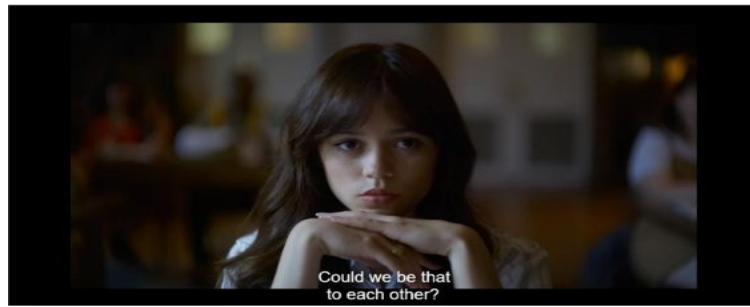
Another key visual element is their body language. Cairo leans slightly toward Mr. Miller, holding her cup delicately, as if fully engaged in the moment. Her nails, painted black, contrast with her white dress, possibly symbolizing the mix of innocence and darker obsession within her. Mr. Miller, while engaged in conversation, maintains a more relaxed posture, suggesting that he does not share the same intensity of emotions Cairo does.

In the scene also has the use of shallow depth of field helps isolate the two characters, making them the sole focus of the shot while subtly blurring the background. This reflects Cairo's tunnel vision—her world in this moment revolves around Mr. Miller, and nothing else matters. The careful cinematography choices reinforce the psychological complexity of their relationship, making this scene an important visual representation of Cairo's obsession and the emotional tension brewing between them.

Obsessive Behaviors Due to Rejection and Indifference

Figure 2.1

Cairo who focused on paying attention to Mr. Miller in class



Note: From Miller's Girl [00.20.58], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Feels like I'm not right. Feels good. It feels pink." (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024). In this scene, a medium close-up shot is used and the focus is on the character Cairo who is watching Mr. Miller and there is a blur effect on the back and sides of Cairo, showing that he doesn't care about anything around him, and only focuses on Mr. Miller. Excerpt:

CAIRO: "To inspire. To be so inspired. Could we be that to each other? What was I saying?"

Cairo's behavior can be interpreted as a form of infatuation that has crossed the line into obsession. The intensity of her feelings, coupled with the fact that they are directed towards an authority figure (her teacher), highlights the unhealthy nature of this attachment. This situation raises concerns about the power dynamics in teacher-student relationships and the potential consequences of unhealthy infatuation. The blurring of lines between fantasy and reality is another important theme, as Cairo's daydreams begin to consume her thoughts and actions. These images offer a starting point for a discussion about the dangers of unhealthy infatuation, the power dynamics in teacher-student relationship.

Figure 2.2



Mr. Millers had a fight with his wife

Note: From Miller's Girl [00.70.33], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Excerpt: WIFE: "I'll tell you. This is about a girl who flattered you, who read your little book, and your inevitable surrender to adulation. You fucking fell for it. Finally. Finally! Someone gave your reductive short stories a second glance. And you can't help but get hard for it because, what, now suddenly you feel worth somethin', is that it?"

JONATHAN : "Yes! She made me feel worth something. What does that tell you"(Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024)

The provided image offers a glimpse into Mr. Miller's complex and disturbing behavior, revealing a deeper layer of his character beyond his role as a controversial author. As a banned writer with a checkered past, Mr. Miller harbors a deep-seated desire for recognition and

connection. When Cairo, his student, expresses admiration for his work, he experiences an overwhelming sense of validation, highlighting his underlying emotional needs and vulnerabilities. This scene suggests that Mr. Miller has developed a form of countertransference towards Cairo, inappropriately transferring feelings and expectations that should be directed towards a romantic partner, like his wife. Instead of seeking emotional fulfillment in his marriage, he fixates on Cairo, neglecting his wife who is constantly occupied with her work. This excessive focus on Cairo and the neglect of his marital relationship are clear indicators of his obsessive behavior.

This scene uses a medium long shot, showing the expressions of Mr. Miller and his wife who are arguing because of Cairo's presence in their lives. The lighting used is dark to show the disharmony of their relationship and looks contrasting in Mr. Miller's part to give the impression of the character's focus that he wants to be proud and feels that he is indeed proud.

Obsessive Behaviors Due to Longing to Experience Something

Figure 3.1



Cairo complains to Mr. Miller

Note: From Miller's Girl [00.30.12], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Excerpt: "CAIRO: Tennessee is a fucking tar pit. No offense." JONATHAN: "I think you'll appreciate it when you're older." (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024). The obsessive behavior displayed by Cairo can be attributed to the statement made by Mr. Miller, "I think you'll appreciate it when you're older." This phrase carries an ambiguous and misleading implication. To Cairo, this statement suggests a sense of permanence and mutual dedication to their shared interest in literature. Cairo interprets Mr. Miller's words as a promise of an enduring connection, leading her to believe that their teacher-student relationship transcends professional boundaries. She starts imagining that Mr. Miller's actions, thoughts, and aspirations revolve around her. This misunderstanding fuels her growing obsession with him, blurring the lines between admiration and possessiveness. She begins to view Mr. Miller not just as a mentor but as someone whose presence and guidance are indispensable to her own goals and identity. Consequently, Cairo disregards the reality of their formal roles, she as a student and Mr. Miller as her teacher, and loses sight of the professional and ethical distance that should define their relationship.

From a cinematographic perspective, the scene visually emphasizes the power dynamic and emotional undercurrent of their interaction. The positioning of the characters in the frame reveals the subtle tension in their relationship. Mr. Miller stands slightly taller, with a calm and composed demeanor, holding a mug, symbolizing his authority and maturity. In contrast, Cairo, dressed in casual attire with a backpack, appears youthful and somewhat vulnerable, standing rigidly as if eager for validation. The wide-angle shot captures the intimate yet professional

setting, with the wooden floor and vintage decor, such as the ship's wheel and bookshelves, reinforcing the academic and reflective atmosphere. The lighting is soft and natural, streaming through the window, creating a warm yet slightly melancholic mood that mirrors the emotional complexities of the dialogue. These cinematic elements work together to deepen the viewer's understanding of the characters' relationship and the consequences of misinterpreted communication.

By combining these narrative and visual analyses, the scene effectively conveys the roots of Cairo's misperception and the resulting emotional turmoil that shapes her behavior.

Dealing Obsessive Behaviors by Rationalization

Figure 4.1



Rationalization of Jonathan

Note: From Miller's Girl [00.50.42], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Excerpt: "CAIRO: Good morning. Are you okay? What's wrong?"

JONATHAN: Your story.

CAIRO: Oh. (CHUCKLES) You didn't like it?

JONATHAN: You have to choose another author.

CAIRO: Why?

JONATHAN: This is inappropriate.

CAIRO: "Inappropriate." What does that mean?

JONATHAN: Why did you write this?

CAIRO: You asked me to.

JONATHAN: Uhuh. Okay. Why did you choose that material?

CAIRO: You said, "Write what you know."

JONATHAN: And this is what you know?

CAIRO: This is... us.

JONATHAN: No. This is... This is you. I don't... I don't understand this." (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024)

In this scene, Mr. Miller comes to a profound realization about the inappropriate nature of his relationship with Cairo. He acknowledges that his actions and behavior, which may have unintentionally encouraged Cairo's obsession, were misguided. As a teacher, he holds a position of authority and responsibility, whereas Cairo is a student, young and impressionable. The blurred boundaries in their relationship have led to misunderstandings and unhealthy emotional attachments. Mr. Miller recognizes that fostering such a connection was a grave mistake, not only because it undermines the professional and ethical standards of their roles but also because it exacerbates Cairo's fixation on him. Her intense admiration, which has grown into an unhealthy obsession, becomes evident in her writing, a piece that Mr. Miller finds deeply inappropriate and troubling. This moment of clarity forces him to confront the potential

consequences of their closeness: Cairo's inability to separate personal feelings from reality, and the looming threat this poses to his personal and professional life. He realizes that maintaining their current dynamic could have devastating repercussions, including the loss of his career, reputation, and peace of mind.

From a cinematographic perspective, this scene is composed to highlight Mr. Miller's internal struggle and the weight of his realization. The close-up framing centers on his facial expression, capturing his furrowed brow and downcast eyes, which reflect his guilt and turmoil. The muted, dim lighting creates a somber and introspective atmosphere, drawing the audience's attention to the emotional gravity of the moment. The blurred background, featuring a chalkboard, subtly reinforces the academic setting, reminding viewers of the teacher-student dynamic and the professional boundaries that have been crossed. Mr. Miller's attire, consisting of a cardigan and a button-up shirt, portrays him as a reserved and introspective character, further emphasizing his role as a mentor grappling with his own fallibility. The choice of a static, steady camera angle mirrors his emotional stillness, suggesting that he is absorbed in self-reflection and regret.

Together, these visual elements enhance the storytelling, conveying the complexity of Mr. Miller's emotions and the gravity of the situation he now fully comprehends.

Figure 4.2



Rationalization of Jonathan

Note: From Miller's Girl [00:53.00], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Excerpt: JONATHAN: "This is pornography."

CAIRO: Yes.

JONATHAN: So put it in your diary, not on my fuckin' desk. Write a new story with a new author. I'm not gonna indulge this.

CAIRO: Are you talking about the story or us?

JONATHAN: Both.

CAIRO: You already have. You inspired it.

JONATHAN: I can't accept it.

CAIRO: But you can't or you won't?" (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024)

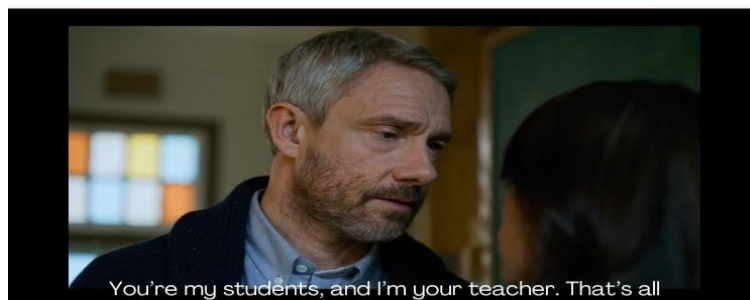
In this scene, Mr. Miller engages in a process of rationalization, confronting the consequences of his earlier decision to allow Cairo the freedom to write an unrestricted essay for her midterm assignment. Upon reading her work, he realizes that Cairo has crossed the professional boundary that should exist between a teacher and a student. Her essay not only reflects an inappropriate level of personal attachment but also reveals her inability to separate her academic endeavors from her emotional fixation on him. This prompts Mr. Miller to acknowledge his own culpability in fostering an environment where such behavior could occur. He recognizes that by giving Cairo too much creative freedom, he inadvertently encouraged her

to express thoughts and emotions that were inappropriate within the context of their teacher-student relationship. In an attempt to rectify the situation, he sets clear boundaries by demanding that Cairo rewrite her essay, adhering to proper academic guidelines. He justifies this decision as necessary for her to pass his class, emphasizing the importance of professionalism and discipline in her work. This moment represents Mr. Miller's effort to regain control over the situation and restore the integrity of their academic relationship.

The medium long shot used in this scene, this scene is carefully constructed to highlight Mr. Miller's inner conflict and his determination to reestablish boundaries. The mid-shot framing positions Mr. Miller slightly bent over, with his body leaning toward the desk, symbolizing his engagement with the problem at hand and his authoritative stance. His serious facial expression, coupled with his gesture of pointing or addressing the essay, conveys his firm resolve and his struggle to address the issue without escalating it further. The warm lighting from the desk lamp creates a contrast with the darker tones in the background, symbolizing the clarity he is seeking amidst the emotional complexity of the situation.

This moment effectively portrays Mr. Miller's efforts to take responsibility for his role in the situation while attempting to guide Cairo back to an appropriate path, both academically and emotionally.

Figure 4.3



Rationalization of Cairo

Note: From Miller's Girl [00.56.19], by Jade Halley Bartlett (director) 2024

Excerpt: JONATHAN: "You're my student. And I'm your teacher. That's all. Any misconception of that is something, regrettably, that you have to shoulder... alone.

CAIRO: "Write what you know" is what you said.

JONATHAN: Yeah, I know what I said.

CAIRO: You don't know anything you say. This is good.

JONATHAN: Mmhmm.

CAIRO: And you know it is. So, let's examine the real issue. It's not my writing. It's yours.

JONATHAN: Good try." (Jade Halley Bartlett, 2024)

This scene captures a pivotal moment in the dynamic between Mr. Miller and Cairo. For Cairo, Mr. Miller's words, "You're my student, and I'm your teacher. That's all," represent an outright rejection and a harsh dismissal of her feelings. This declaration draws a clear boundary, but to Cairo, it feels like a cruel insult, invalidating the emotional connection she believes exists between them. Her obsession with Mr. Miller transforms into resentment, and in her anger, she crafts a scheme that leads to Mr. Miller's dismissal from his teaching position. This act of vengeance reflects Cairo's inability to process rejection healthily, and her obsessive tendencies culminate in an action that harms not only Mr. Miller's professional life but also his personal integrity. The scene underscores the destructive consequences of her unbridled

emotions, turning what might have been a one-sided infatuation into a harmful act of retribution.

From a cinematographic perspective, the framing and lighting intensify the emotional gravity of this interaction. The close-up shot brings the characters into an intimate focus,

emphasizing the tension and the disparity in their emotional states. Mr. Miller's expression is calm yet firm, his gaze steady as he delivers his definitive statement. This contrasts sharply with the partial view of Cairo, whose face remains mostly obscured, symbolizing her inner turmoil and the emotional barrier Mr. Miller is attempting to erect. The warm light filtering through the background windows suggests a setting of learning and growth, yet this is juxtaposed with the coldness of Mr. Miller's words and the emotional breakdown Cairo experiences. The close framing and muted colors amplify the scene's intensity, trapping the characters within the moment and forcing the audience to confront the emotional complexity of their interaction.

This moment serves as a turning point in the narrative, showcasing how Cairo's obsessive attachment to Mr. Miller spirals into an act of vengeance, ultimately altering both their lives irrevocably. The scene is a powerful depiction of the fragile boundaries in a teacher-student relationship and the devastating consequences when those boundaries are tested and breached.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, psychoanalytic theory proves to be an effective framework for examining literary and cinematic works, including Jade Halley Bartlett's *Miller's Girl* (2024). The application of Freud's concepts allows for a deeper understanding of the characters' psychological complexity, particularly their patterns of obsessive behavior. The film's central characters, Cairo and Mr. Miller, demonstrate actions and decisions shaped by intense emotional fixations, revealing unresolved internal conflicts that drive much of the narrative tension.

The characters' ways of confronting and managing their obsessive tendencies also correspond closely with psychoanalytic principles, especially the use of defense mechanisms. Mechanisms such as rationalization, denial, and projection function as psychological strategies that enable the characters to justify or obscure their emotional vulnerabilities. These findings underscore how psychoanalytic theory illuminates the motivations, anxieties, and emotional turmoil embedded within character behavior.

Overall, this study demonstrates that psychoanalytic analysis not only enriches the interpretation of *Miller's Girl* but also affirms the broader relevance of psychoanalysis in exploring human behavior within creative works. The theory provides a valuable lens through which to understand how emotional needs, psychological disturbances, and unconscious motivations are represented in contemporary film narratives. This research therefore contributes to the field of literary psychology by showing how psychoanalytic approaches continue to offer meaningful insights into character development and thematic depth in modern storytelling.

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