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Lacanian Perspectives on Cinematic Representation and Adolescent Consciousness in the Netflix Series *Adolescences*

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Abstract
This research focuses on the Netflix series Adolescences. The research analyzes how the special filming style of long, single-take episodes shows the continuous and unbroken flow of adolescent thoughts, similar to the stream-of-consciousness writing style used by authors such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. For this purpose, psychoanalytic criminology is used as the main theoretical framework to understand how hidden desires, inner conflicts, and social pressures may lead to troubled or criminal behavior among young people. Moreover, the research also examines how the series presents the struggles of teenagers who face family problems, peer pressure, and social expectations, which often bring them into conflict with authority and social rules. Additionally, the uninterrupted camera movement is taken as a reflection of how thoughts, feelings, and memories flow without pause in the minds of adolescents. By using both the narrative and the filming style (cinematography) as text, this research provides a criminology-based reading of Adolescences that connects cinematic style with the challenges of youth and crime. By combining criminological theory with the concept of stream of consciousness, this research contributes to the fields of criminology, media studies, and literature by offering insights into how adolescence and society are represented on screen.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic Criminology, Stream of Consciousness, Adolescence, Cinematography, Youth and Crime

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical stage of life where identity, emotions, and social behavior are formed. Young people often struggle with peer pressure, family expectations, and exposure to harmful social influences, which sometimes result in conflict or crime. In today's world, violent acts by teenagers, especially boys against girls, appear frequently in the news and raise urgent concerns. The Netflix series Adolescences is released at a time when such issues are highly permeated in society. Inspired by the tragic real-life stabbings of Ava White in 2021 and Elianne Andam in 2023, actor Stephen Graham and writer Jack Thorne have created the series to shed light on teenage violence, toxic masculinity, and online radicalization. The drama follows the Miller family after 13-year-old Jamie is arrested for murdering his classmate, Katie. In doing so, it examines themes such as knife crime, cyberbullying, male rage, misogyny, and the hidden dangers of online spaces where parents often believe their children are safe.

What makes Adolescences unique is not only its subject matter but also its cinematic form. Every episode is filmed in a single continuous take, which gives the story an intense realism while also mimicking the restless flow of adolescent thought. This technique mirrors the literary style of

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"stream of consciousness," employed by writers like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. In literature, stream of consciousness allows readers to experience characters' minds in an unbroken flow of thoughts, perceptions, and feelings. In Adolescences, the camera performs a similar function: it moves seamlessly through spaces, events, and emotions, presenting teenage life as a continuous inner struggle without pause or escape. This connection between literature and cinema is central to the research, as it allows the analysis of how visual storytelling can capture the same depth of consciousness as modernist writing.

The research applies psychoanalytic criminology to examine how unconscious desires, repression, and social pressures influence adolescent behavior as shown in the series. At the same time, it incorporates the concept of "stream of consciousness" to explain how the continuous-take technique represents the fragmented yet unbroken experience of teenage minds. Together, these two approaches provide a framework to understand how Adolescences reflects both the psychological conflicts of teenagers and the wider social conditions that shape their actions.

Statement of the Problem

Although adolescence has been widely studied in Psychology, Sociology, and Education, little attention has been given to how media narratives represent teenage struggles through both "criminological" and "literary" frameworks. While Adolescences deals with urgent social issues such as knife crime, toxic masculinity, and the impact of digital culture, there is limited research conducted on it, particularly on how its "cinematic style of stream of consciousness" interacts with criminology to portray adolescence. The problem is that the representation of adolescence as both an inner psychological flow and a criminological condition remains underexplored.

Research Objectives

The research incorporates the following objectives:

1. To analyze how the Netflix series Adolescences presents continuous-take cinematography to reflect the flow of adolescent consciousness.
2. To apply the theoretical lens of psychoanalytic criminology to explain the behaviors, conflicts, and deviant actions shown in the series.
3. To explore how combining stream of consciousness with criminology offers deeper insights into the representation of adolescence on screen.

Research Questions

1. How does Adolescences portray the continuous and unbroken flow of adolescent thought and perception through its filming style?
2. In what ways does psychoanalytic criminology explain the conflicts, deviant behaviors, and social struggles represented in the series?
3. How does linking stream of consciousness with criminology provide new understandings of adolescence in media narratives?

Significance of the Research

This research is significant because it brings together criminology, literature, and media studies to examine the urgent question of how adolescence is represented in popular culture. By applying theoretical insights of psychoanalytic criminology to Adolescences, the research shows how unconscious drives and social pressures can lead teenagers toward crime or deviant behavior. At the same time, the use of stream of consciousness as a lens explains how the unique cinematic

style mirrors the lived reality of adolescent minds, where thoughts and emotions flow without pause. This makes the research valuable for understanding not only what teenagers do but also how they think and feel in moments of crisis.

The research also carries social relevance. It highlights how toxic online spaces, misogyny, and digital radicalization shape young people's worldviews, while also stressing the role of family and parental engagement. The father-son relationship in the series, marked by guilt and grief, underlines the deep emotional consequences of youth violence on families.

Finally, the research contributes to academic fields by expanding criminology into cultural and media studies, connecting modernist literary techniques with visual storytelling, and raising awareness about adolescence as both a psychological journey and a social concern. It also offers practical insights for educators, parents, and policymakers seeking to understand and address the challenges facing today's youth.

Literature Review

The Netflix series Adolescences, written by Jack Thorne, starring Stephen Graham and Owen Cooper, and directed by Philip Barantini along with the series' direction team, is one of the most discussed visual narratives of 2025. Critics and researchers have highlighted various aspects of the series, including plot, characters, and cinematography. This chapter reviews existing literature to examine the narrative, thematic, and aesthetic dimensions of the series, while also identifying gaps for further research. The review integrates studies on the series' production and reception with theoretical frameworks—Lacan's psychoanalytic concepts and psychoanalytic criminology—to provide a foundation for the present research.

According to Cinemablend (2025), Adolescences is groundbreaking not only for its intense storyline, featuring a teenager, Jamie, accused of murdering a schoolmate, but also as Netflix's first series filmed entirely in single-take episodes. This innovative filming style intensifies emotional realism and immerses viewers in unfolding events, reflecting the characters' inner thoughts and psychological experiences, similar to stream of consciousness in literature. The series' approach has contributed to its critical acclaim, including 13 Primetime Emmy nominations and three Gotham Television Awards, highlighting its cultural and industry significance (Taylor, 2025; Netflix Tudum, 2025; The Hollywood Reporter, 2025).

Kang (2025) notes that Adolescences functions less as a traditional "whodunit" and more as a "whydunnit," emphasizing the psychological and social pressures surrounding adolescents, particularly online influence and peer dynamics. St. Félix (2025) observes that the series often privileges adult perspectives—parents, detectives, and therapists—over teenagers' internal experiences, creating narrative tension that invites psychoanalytic exploration. Mangan (2025) praises the immersive storytelling enabled by the single-take format, while Duggins (2025) highlights the series' record-breaking viewership in the UK.

Furthermore, the series prompts public debate and educational discussions. Hogan (2025) emphasizes its role in highlighting online misogyny and toxic masculinity, while Henley (2025) reports its use in schools to teach media literacy and adolescent vulnerability. Vanden Heuvel (2025) stresses that the series raises ethical questions about social media regulation, youth radicalization, and parental responsibility. Heritage (2025) points to the series' emotional realism, particularly in the father-son relationship, which enhances the depiction of adolescent psychological struggles.

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The next section of the literature review presents the theoretical framework applied in this research, drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic criminology to analyze adolescent cognition, behavior, and identity formation in Adolescences. Lacan's Mirror Stage provides insight into the formation of ego-identity and misrecognition, showing how an individual initially identifies with a coherent external image to construct the "Ideal-I," which later influences rivalry, desire, and anxiety (Mambrol, 2016). The Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real registers further explain how adolescent subjectivity is structured: the Imaginary represents illusions of unity, the Symbolic embodies social and linguistic norms, and the Real refers to what resists symbolization (The Collector, 2023; Hendrix, n.d.; ResearchGate, 2019). In the context of the series, these concepts illuminate Jamie's evolving sense of self and his interactions with peers, authority figures, and social expectations.

Psychoanalytic criminology complements this theoretical framework by exploring how unconscious drives, social pressures, and repression contribute to deviant or criminal behavior. Jamie's involvement in violent acts can be interpreted through these lenses, reflecting internal conflicts shaped by peer influence, toxic online content, and family dynamics. By integrating Lacanian theory with psychoanalytic criminology, this research connects the internal psychological experience of adolescence with external societal forces, offering a nuanced reading of the character's development.

Furthermore, the series' single-take filming style mirrors the stream of consciousness technique in literature, portraying adolescent thought as continuous and immersive. As with literary works by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, the camera movement in Adolescences captures Jamie's perception, emotions, and psychological tension in real time, providing a visual representation of internal consciousness and subjective experience (Cinemablend, 2025; Entertainment Weekly, 2025). This alignment of cinematic technique with literary theory enables a detailed examination of adolescent psychology and social reality as represented in the series.

While existing literature evaluates Adolescences in terms of style, critical reception, and social impact, no scholarly research has yet incorporated Lacanian psychoanalysis, stream of consciousness, and psychoanalytic criminology to analyze the adolescent experience in the series. Existing research also lacks a detailed theoretical approach that integrates psychoanalytic criminology with literary techniques like stream of consciousness to examine adolescents' internal conflicts, ego formation, and social pressures. The present research addresses this gap by investigating how psychological tension, identity development, and societal influences are represented through both narrative and cinematic form, offering new insights into contemporary adolescence.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to analyze Netflix's Season *Adolescences*. Textual analysis was used as the primary method, with the script serving as the main source of data. The theoretical framework of the study was built on divergent but interconnected perspectives, combining Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, the literary idea of stream-of-consciousness, and insights from psychoanalytic criminology. Lacan's concepts of the Mirror Stage and the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real provided a framework for understanding unconscious motivations, identity formation, and relational dynamics of the characters. The literary concept of stream-of-consciousness, as used by writers such as Virginia Woolf and James

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Joyce, was applied to analyze the series' single-take cinematographic style, in which each episode was filmed in one continuous shot. This continuous visual flow mirrored the uninterrupted inner thoughts and emotions of the characters, making the single-take technique a cinematic representation of literary stream-of-consciousness.

The integration of criminological ideas within this framework allowed the study to explore how unconscious drives, ego formation, identification, and social pressures central to Lacanian theory and criminology informed human behavior, conflict, and interactions portrayed in the series. In this sense, the series not only represented the inner psychological experience but also reflected how drives, frustrations, and social pressures shaped the characters' actions and decisions.

For data collection, the study explored the script, dialogues, and visual elements of the series. The actors' facial expressions, body gestures, and dialogue delivery were analyzed to study the visual application of stream of consciousness, reflecting the continuous inner experience of the characters. Behind-the-scenes material was incorporated to understand how the single-take filming technique contributed to narrative flow, emotional intensity, and character development. The sampling strategy ensured a comprehensive approach, covering both narrative and cinematic aspects.

The tools and techniques employed in the study included textual analysis to examine dialogues, character interactions, and narrative structure; visual analysis to study facial expressions, gestures, camera movement, lighting, and scene composition; and psychoanalytic interpretation using Lacanian concepts to analyze unconscious motivations, ego formation, and relational dynamics. The literary stream-of-consciousness framework was applied to interpret the single-take filming as a visual representation of uninterrupted inner thoughts and emotions, while psychoanalytic criminology was used to explore how social pressures, frustrations, and unconscious drives influenced character behavior, aggression, and decision-making.

Moreover, data analysis was conducted through a combination of thematic and content analysis alongside psychoanalytic interpretation, focusing on how characters' actions, gestures, and dialogues revealed unconscious motivations and desires, how single-take cinematography embodied stream-of-consciousness and internal psychological states, and how technical elements such as lighting, camera angles, settings, and climactic sequences supported psychological and narrative development. Gender representation both feminine and masculine was examined through the lens of Lacanian psychoanalysis, exploring how identity, desire, and relational dynamics were constructed on screen.

To ensure credibility and strengthen the theoretical framework, the research referenced scholarly works and critical analyses from reliable sources. Ethical considerations were followed by using official Netflix materials, giving proper credit, and analyzing the content without reproducing copyrighted material, maintaining academic integrity. The integration of Lacanian psychoanalysis, literary stream-of-consciousness, and criminological insights provided a multidimensional approach to understanding the psychological, social, and symbolic layers of the series, with the single-take filming technique serving as a visual embodiment of stream-of-consciousness, showing how cinematic methods represented continuous inner thoughts, emotions, and unconscious drives effectively.

4. Data Analysis

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The Netflix series Adolescences explores the single-shot technique across its four episodes. This technique is examined through the literary concept of stream of consciousness, while the on-screen performances of characters are analyzed through the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, particularly the ideas of the mirror stage and the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. These concepts provide valuable insights into unconscious motivations, identity formation, relational dynamics, and also connect with perspectives from psychoanalytic criminology.

The series begins with a group of police officers positioned outside a house, preparing to arrest a boy named Jamie Miller, the protagonist under suspicion of murder:

> Bascombe: Okay. Jamie Miller. The time is 6:15 am, and I'm arresting you on suspicion of murder. You don't have to say ….. You don't have to say anything but it may harm your defense if you mention something you rely on. Anything you say may be given in evidence. You understand? Do you understand? Do you understand?
>
> Jamie: Dad, I haven't done anything … Alright I understand.



Figure 1: Depicts the shifting angles of the camera, capturing a continuous stream of consciousness without any breaks in the visual narrative technique.

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In the first episode, the single-camera, no-retake style immediately establishes the technique of stream of consciousness. The audience follows the police officers as they move from outside the house to entering it, searching the rooms, confronting the parents who desperately plead for their son, and eventually arresting Jamie, a 13-year-old boy, before escorting him into the police van. Each moment flows directly into the next without interruption. There are no breaks or cuts; instead, one scene emerges seamlessly after another. This unbroken continuity reflects the very essence of stream of consciousness, where thoughts, events, and perceptions are presented in an uninterrupted flow.

The technique is not merely stylistic it plays a vital role in shaping the narrative of the series. By adopting the single-shot method, the story visually demonstrates how consciousness unfolds, moment by moment, in both internal and external realities. The viewer's experience not just the unfolding of events, but also the immediacy and fluidity of perception. This cinematic method closely parallels James Joyce's use of stream of consciousness in Ulysses, where he sought to achieve objectivity by allowing thoughts and experiences to flow naturally. Similarly, in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Joyce emphasizes the impersonal role of the writer, showing that this technique is not used for its own sake but to capture the drama of the human mind. In Adolescences, the lens of the camera serves the same purpose: it captures the uncountable layers of experience both the characters' inner tensions and the surrounding environment without interruption. In doing so, the narrative achieves a modernist effect where life appears to move forward seamlessly, just as consciousness itself does.

In Episode 2, the same single-shot technique is used, where the entire one-hour episode is filmed without any breaks. This episode takes place in the school, where police officers investigate in search of the murder weapon, the knife. The camera flows continuously like a stream of consciousness, moving through classrooms, hallways, and students, and eventually transitioning to the location where the murder occurred. The director uses innovative camerawork—at times handheld, with the cameraman running through the school, and then shifting seamlessly to a drone shot as the narrative follows the investigation outside. The transition from handheld to drone and back again at the end of the episode is, in itself, an artful display of cinematic storytelling.

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Figure 2 captures how the camera moves through the school space without interruption, from outside the school to the crime scene, imitating the unbroken flow of thought and perception in consciousness.

In Episode 3, the focus narrows to an intimate, one-hour-long conversation between Jamie Miller and Briony Ariston, a forensic psychologist. Once again, the entire episode is captured in a single take, without cuts or retakes, creating a sense of immediacy and authenticity. This episode is less

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about physical movement and more about the flow of emotions and ideas. The single camera frames Jamie and Briony as they exchange questions, answers, and silences moments that resemble the stream of consciousness technique, where thoughts and feelings surface without censorship. The actors perform beautifully, responding to the continuity of the moment, almost as if performing in live theater.



Figure 3 illustrates how the camera angles remain tightly focused on their dialogue, reinforcing the uninterrupted rhythm of their exchange and the continuous unfolding of consciousness.

Finally, in Episode 4, the focus shifts to Jamie's family, who attempt to maintain normalcy while coping with trauma and social stigma. The episode moves from the family home to their journey outside, filmed once again in a single, unbroken shot. The camera follows them closely, capturing both their spoken words and the silences that communicate their grief. This approach reflects the stream of consciousness technique not as fragmented cinematic cuts but as a continuous unfolding of everyday life, much like how modernist writers depicted consciousness in literature. The director's innovation lies in treating the series less like cinema, where cuts and retakes dominate, and more like theater, where each act flows directly into the next without pause

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Figure 4 illustrates this theatrical quality, where life is captured as fragmented yet continuous, mirroring how consciousness itself operates.

The series thus demonstrates how stream of consciousness, originally a literary technique, has been adapted into a visual form. William James first described consciousness as an "unbroken flow of thoughts" (as cited in Beach, n.d.), and this definition resonates with how the camera in Adolescences flows seamlessly through space and time. Dorothy Richardson, credited as the originator of the technique, described fiction as "a means to discovering the truth about one's own thoughts and beliefs" (Richardson, as cited in Preface to Pilgrimage). Similarly, Virginia Woolf insisted that life is "a luminous halo" surrounding us, and that the role of the novelist is to communicate this halo (Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, The Waves). In Adolescences, the director brings this "luminous halo" to the screen by refusing cinematic interruption and allowing the audience to experience the raw, unfiltered movement of life and consciousness.

4.2 Lacanian psychoanalysis

Lacanian psychoanalysis, particularly the concept of the mirror stage, can also be observed in Episode 1 of the series. This is evident in the conversation between Jamie Miller and his father:

> Mr. Miller: Look at me. Look at me. I'm gonna ask you once. Okay. And no matter what's happened, no matter what you have or haven't done, I want you to tell me the truth. Did you do it?
> Jamie: No.
> Mr. Miller: Promise?
> Jamie: I promise.

In this exchange, Jamie insists to his father that he has not committed any crime. This moment illustrates what can be called the mirror stage of innocence. Jamie attempts to mirror back to his father the image that the father wishes to see — the image of the innocent and trustworthy son.

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According to Lacan, in the mirror stage the subject identifies with an idealized image of itself, even if that image does not correspond to reality. In this case, Jamie identifies with the "innocent boy," an image that reassures his father but will later be contradicted by evidence. As Lacan explains:

> "This form would… have to be called the 'ideal-I'… in the sense that it will also be the rootstock of secondary identifications… situates the agency known as the ego… in a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual" (Lacan, 1949/2006, p. 76).

Here, Jamie's "promise" represents his effort to stabilize his ego within the Imaginary order of father–son trust, rather than within the Symbolic order of law and truth. Lacan emphasizes that the mirror stage is always a form of misrecognition: the subject identifies with an image that conceals its fragmented reality. Jamie's claim of innocence is precisely such a misrecognition. He projects an identity that does not align with the Symbolic reality, where the law and material evidence (police investigation, CCTV footage) will eventually reveal his guilt. As Lacan notes:

> "The function of the mirror stage thus turns out, in my view, to be… the function of misrecognition that characterizes the ego in all the defensive structures" (Lacan, 1949/2006, p. 80).

In this sense, Jamie's innocence is not truth but a performance of the Imaginary self. His father, by demanding a "promise," acts as a mirror, compelling Jamie to reflect back the identity of the "good son." Jamie complies, but this compliance belongs to the Imaginary order a protective illusion rather than the Symbolic truth governed by evidence and law.

As we move into Episode 2, the narrative shifts to the school setting, shown entirely through the single-shot camera that immerses the audience in the everyday life of Gen Z students. Here, we see how student life is structured almost like a code every gesture, word, and interaction is layered with symbolic meaning. The language of the students is markedly different from conventional adult communication, and social media plays a central role in their identity formation and social dynamics.

In this episode, it becomes clear that Jamie was bullied on social media by Katie. Her bullying was not direct but encoded in symbols and emojis posted under Jamie's Instagram updates. These seemingly harmless images carried deeper meanings in the Gen Z context, becoming a powerful trigger that contributed to Jamie's eventual crime.

This is made clear in the following exchange:

Student: You're not reading what they're doing. What's happening.
Bascombe: What are you talking about?
Student: Insta. You've been looking at Insta, right?
Bascombe: Yeah.
Student: Uh, okay. So you've, um … You have seen what she wrote?
Bascombe: I have.
Student: Okay. Looks like she's being nice, right?
Bascombe: Isn't she? Hmm?
Student: The dynamite. What do you think that means?
Bascombe: Uhh… I don't know…

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Student: An exploding red pill. The blue pills mean you see the world as it wants you to …. Or she's saying he's an incel…
Bascombe: This is bullying… I mean, it's a bit of a stretch, Ad but…

Here, Lacan's three registers the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real provide a useful interpretive framework. The emojis function within the Imaginary order as playful images, but for the students, they are more than illusions: they are signs of identity, coded forms of aggression, and tools of exclusion. As TheCollector (2023) explains, "The Imaginary refers to the images and illusions of unity" (para. 4). Katie's emojis create a false "unity" of meaning, where Jamie is fixed in the role of the mocked "incel," regardless of his actual self.

Finally, the Real emerges as the unbearable impact of these signs on Jamie's psyche. The Real is what resists full symbolization, what cannot be reduced to language or image. For Jamie, the Real is the trauma of humiliation that cannot be fully expressed but erupts violently in his later actions. Thus, what appears to be harmless online play reveals itself as a destructive force when filtered through the intertwined pressures of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real.

Episode 3 is the turning point of the series. Here we begin to understand the truth behind the murder through Jamie's meeting with Briony Ariston, a forensic psychologist. Seven months after the incident, Briony visits Jamie in a youth detention center. Her task is not to decide guilt but to prepare a report about his mental capacity.

From the start, Jamie plays mind games with her. He shifts between being polite and aggressive, trying to appear both a victim and someone in control. Briony asks him about masculinity, women, and his own self-image. Jamie remembers how he and his friends were bullied at school. He also tells her about Katie sending a topless photo to a boy she liked. When the photo spread without her consent, Katie was shamed. Jamie admits he asked her out at that time, thinking she would say yes because she felt vulnerable. But when Katie rejected him, she began making cruel remarks on his Instagram posts.

During the interview, Jamie's mood changes quickly. At times, he is friendly, but then he suddenly turns hostile. He even confesses that during their last meeting, he felt tempted to grope Katie and that he had borrowed a knife to threaten her. Jamie tries to present himself as a "good boy," doing small things like forcing himself to eat a sandwich he dislikes just to look agreeable in Briony's eyes. But when Briony tells him this is their last session, Jamie suddenly demands to know whether she personally likes him. When she refuses to answer, he explodes in anger and must be taken away by guards, leaving Briony unsettled.

The complexity of Jamie's performance is captured in his own words:
Jamie: She just smile and said, Okay and walked away.
Briony: And you never thought to tell anyone?
Jamie: It's a bit late for that now.
Briony: That just have hurt.
Jamie: I didn't kill her. You think I did because you've seen the video. You can't trust videos anymore. It's all fake news.
Briony: I'm not here to judge.
Jamie: I didn't kill her. She was a bitch. Even you can see that. I should've killed her, but I didn't. I just…All…All I did…All I did was…Look at ya. All hopeful, like I'm gonna say something important. All I did ask her out…after the photo…

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This episode shows how Jamie's crime cannot be seen as a simple act but must be understood through symbols, language, and deeper psychological forces. As Lacan (1996) explains, "we are thus not even able to grasp the concrete reality of crime without referring it to a symbolism whose positive forms are coordinated in society but which is inscribed in the radical structures that language unconsciously transmits" (p. 14). Jamie's mixed statements—denying guilt while admitting violent urges show how crime is linked with unconscious structures of language and society.

At the same time, Lacan (1996) reminds us that "in de-essentializing crime, psychoanalysis does not dehumanize the criminal" (p. 18). Jamie's actions may be disturbing, but they also reveal his desperate need for recognition and validation, even from Briony. This is why he breaks down when she withholds her approval. Lacan (1996) also notes that "psychoanalysis gives an opening into the imaginary world of the criminal that can be for him or her the door open onto the real" (p. 18). Jamie's performance in front of Briony reflects this: his imaginary self-image collapses, exposing the painful real beneath it.

Thus, Episode 3 highlights how Jamie's case embodies Lacan's three categories the Imaginary (how he sees himself), the Symbolic (the language and laws shaping him), and the Real (the trauma and violent impulses that cannot be fully explained).

Furthermore, Episode 4 shifts the focus from Jamie's crime to his family life, showing how his parents and sister struggle with the shame, confusion, and emotional damage after his arrest. The episode captures everyday conversations and silences in the Miller household, again filmed in a continuous single-shot style. This uninterrupted flow mirrors the stream of consciousness technique, allowing the audience to experience the raw emotions of the family without cuts or interruptions.

From a Lacanian perspective, the family becomes part of the Symbolic order, where law, guilt, and social judgment shape their identities. Jamie's parents try to hold onto the Imaginary image of a "normal" family, but this clashes with the Real the undeniable trauma of having a son accused of murder. As Lacan (1949/2006) reminds us, the mirror stage is always a misrecognition: the image we hold of ourselves rarely matches reality. The Millers, too, misrecognize themselves as a united, innocent family, while society views them through suspicion and stigma.

This final episode ties the series together by showing how individual identity (Jamie's), language and law (the Symbolic order of police, school, and court), and unspoken trauma (the Real) all shape not only Jamie's life but also the lives of those around him. In this way, the series demonstrates how stream of consciousness and Lacanian psychoanalysis together reveal the hidden layers of human experience thoughts, images, and unconscious desires that shape both crime and family life.

5. Recommendations and conclusion

The study explored that the Netflix series Adolescences effectively portrays adolescent psychological and social experiences through its unique combination of narrative, cinematic style, and thematic focus. The single-take filming technique mirrored the stream-of-consciousness literary method, allowing viewers to experience Jamie's inner thoughts, emotions, and psychological tension continuously. The application of Lacanian psychoanalysis revealed how ego formation, identity development, and misrecognition shape adolescent behavior and

relational dynamics, while psychoanalytic criminology highlighted the influence of unconscious drives, peer pressure, and social environments on deviant actions. The series demonstrated the interplay between internal psychological states and external societal pressures, offering a significant representation of contemporary adolescence.

The study found that existing literature primarily focuses on critical reception, cinematic style, and social impact, leaving a gap in theoretical analysis that integrates psychoanalytic and criminological perspectives with literary techniques. By addressing this gap, the research provided a multidimensional understanding of adolescent cognition, emotional experience, and social interaction, emphasizing the significance of narrative and cinematic strategies in representing complex psychological processes.

Based on the findings, future research can expand in several directions. First, scholars should explore other visual narratives that employ continuous or experimental filming techniques to examine adolescent consciousness and psychological depth. Second, comparative studies can be conducted to analyze how different cultural contexts shape representations of adolescence, identity, and deviance on screen. Third, integrating additional theoretical frameworks—such as feminist theory, digital media studies, or developmental psychology can provide further insights into gender dynamics, online influence, and the societal pressures affecting adolescents. Finally, research on audience reception can examine how viewers interpret and relate to adolescent experiences depicted through innovative cinematic techniques, contributing to a broader understanding of media impact on perceptions of youth, morality, and social responsibility.

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