

Julio Cortázar



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Blow Up: Book Written by Julio Cortazar Published in 1959, 'Las Babas Del Diablo Droolings of the Devil') by Argentinian writer, Julio Cortázar, was published. It was later renamed 'Blow Up' to ride in on the popularity of Michelangelo Antonioni's film, 'Blow Up' (Huddleston).

In "Las Babas Del Diablo", Cortazar's protagonist Michel Roberto is a part-time translator and photographer who photographs a teenage boy and a young, attractive woman in Seine square. Startled, the boy runs away. Roberto develops the film, enlarges the photo, and suddenly sees or imagines that the woman was actually seducing the boy and leading him to a suspicious man in a car (Bittini).

The picture that evokes several meanings in Roberto's mind becomes an obsession. Roberto becomes confused, he said, "Nobody really knows who is telling it, if I am I or what actually occurred or what I'm seeing... or if, simply I'm telling a truth which is only my truth" (Liukkonen). Cortazar's 'Las Babas Del Diablo' discovers the uncertain difference between realism and its representation, illustrating to his readers that the two are merely the mind's perception of the experience (Coupe).

Blow Up: Film Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni

The 1966 movie 'Blow Up' by Michelangelo Antonioni, stirred worldwide curiosity when shocking sex scenes and smoking-pot vistas were featured (Waldman). The successful movie creatively questions reality and imagination. Thomas (David Hemmings) blows up the photo of the lady (Vanessa Redgrave) and the middle-aged lover in the park and finally discovers or perceives that the lover was actually lying dead on the ground and not so far away was a man in the shadows, holding a gun. Thomas believes that he actually witnessed a

murder. He is able to expose pieces of reality, however, he resists searching for the truth (Waldman).

Antonioni made it clear in this film that reality is non-existent if perceived objectively. Viewers have to find out for themselves the strength of their personal understanding of the film. The movie ends with scenes wherein Thomas chooses to be with the team illusionists instead of lingering in his secluded reality (Jardine).

#### Comparison of Cortázar's Blow Up and Antonioni's Blow Up

The extensive gap between the movie and the short story ranges from the theme, the setting, the protagonist's profession, to the message (Huddleston). Cortázar's story which happens in Paris, tags on phantasm and passion, whereas Antonioni's film which takes place in London, speaks of the superficial façade versus realism and build around it a puzzling story of murder which is left unsolved and open to the viewer's own conclusion. Reality transpires into fantasy (Liukkonen).

Both Cortázar's story and Antonioni's movie depict of the "male gaze", with the photographic performance and its socio-emotional outcomes. Although Antonioni is not very meticulous as Cortázar on the issue of the "male gaze", he is more apprehensive of the shifting humanity; youth and pleasures; society's awareness; and class consciousness and a broken examination on the changing nature of social relations (Bittini).

One more distinctive factor between the story and the film is that Roberto has

two jobs as a translator and photographer, using mediums of verbal communication and photography. Thomas, on the other hand, is a photographer whose main focus is solely on photography. One other

distinction is seen in the way Thomas seems confidently relaxed with his media, while the problematic Roberto, from the start, faces challenges (Bittini).

Another powerful twist is from seduction to murder. Roberto believes that what he witnessed was purely seduction which influenced the morality of the story. Antonioni's film is more of a detective story that creates confusions and disappointment in the audience when the film ends without the problem being resolved. Both *Blow Up* versions of Cortázar and Antonioni demonstrate collapse of reality which, in actuality, is what the viewers and the readers search for (Bittini).

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