

400 blows- french film



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The French film, *The 400 Blows*, directed by Francois Truffaut, is about a troubled young boy named Antoine Doinel, who attempts to find meaning in his life because he has not been given the acceptance and respect for who he really is, which would enable him to become his real self. Antoine gains a sense of mistrust of his mother when he sees her kissing another man, cheating on Antoine's stepfather, which compromises their relationship.

Antoine's main motive in the film is to find true value in his life, but he loses his desire to strive for a career as a writer after his teacher humiliates him for plagiarizing Balzac, and he realizes that his mother's offer to give him 1,000 francs if he gets a good grade on his paper is merely a bribe to keep him from telling his stepfather about her affair. In the film, Antoine is shown as a troubled boy who is not being raised well by his mother.

Since Antoine was born to an uncaring mother, he cannot be blamed for the choices he makes. Antoine's mother doesn't accept who Antoine is because she never wanted Antoine to exist in the first place, which is why she has no respect for Antoine from the start. When Antoine's mother is introduced in the film, she treats Antoine as if he was nothing more than an inferior child and a mistake.

Antoine's mother doesn't play her role as an accepting mother because she doesn't give Antoine any guidance; therefore she prevents Antoine from becoming the person he wants to be. In the scene where Antoine and Rene skip school, Antoine sees his mother making out with another man; therefore he gets the impression that his mother is not true to the family. It triggers Antoine's mistrust for his mother. Afterwards, his mother decides to be

deceptive toward Antoine by bribing and act kind towards him in order to get him not to talk about her affair.

Although his mother is nice to Antoine for the first time in the film, giving Antoine noble advice, Antoine isn't surprised by the mother's new behavior because he knows what his mother is trying to do, as we can see by the look of his eyes when she is talking to him. Antoine, feeling that he has to do well on the essay, decides to read a story by Balzac and for the first time he is motivated by what he's reading about. For Antoine, it was a way for him to discover who he really is by reading one of Balzac's works.

Antoine is inspired by Balzac's line, "Eureka, I've found it," so he decides to place a picture of Balzac in a cabinet and light a candle by the picture, suggesting his admiration for Balzac. In class, Antoine has an assigned essay to write about and he chooses to copy Balzac's work, which he believed offered him a chance to succeed as a writer and possibly live a better life since he was concentrating on his school work for once like his mother expected him to, after the deal they made.

Later, while Antoine was having dinner with his parents, they discovered that the cabinet where Antoine placed the candle under the picture of Balzac was on fire. The cabinet going on fire signified Antoine's ability to be "blindsided" because his stepfather questioned why he would light the cabinet on fire. At class the teacher decides to embarrass Antoine for plagiarizing Balzac's work, which tarnishes all of Antoine's hard work, even his will to succeed. Furthermore, since Antoine couldn't get a good grade on his essay like he agreed with his mother, his path to criminal behavior began.

From there, Antoine knew that his parents would now want his future to be in the military because his life wasn't going anywhere. All Antoine wanted was just to see the ocean, he tells Rene. The ocean is symbolic of life. Now that there was no turning back for Antoine, his increasing criminal behavior leads him to the Observation Center, where his path to success fades. Antoine accepting the bribe and the humiliation he received in class prevented him from becoming a better person and shaping his own character.

Antoine loses what he wants to achieve because of his mother trying to bribe him and his teacher for degrading Antoine's character. Although he did plagiarize Balzac's work, he still made an attempt to focus on his schoolwork even though he didn't do well on his essay. Antoine's opportunity to self-actualize fails because of his mistreatment he receives from his mother and his teacher. If only his mother supported Antoine's work, he would've had the confidence to stay strong and succeed.