FILM 2332 — Understanding Film, Discussion 4

https://iniyanjoseph.com | iniyanijoseph@gmail.com

Commentary

In the film *Blow-Up* (1966) , directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, Thomas is almost godlike. Despite many unfavorable actions, such as photographing Jane without her consent and raping two women in his photography studio, he is not punished. More so, he feels justified for his unsolicited photography, having discovered the corpse. This gives him immense power within his world, but as a character, this makes him unlikable. The audience has no reason to support or even understand Thomas's actions in the film. This separation between him and the audience makes him seem distant and difficult to understand, further cementing his image as godlike. In *Blow Up*, the distinction between the real and the imaginary is constantly blurred. While the film is not in a surrealist style, the narration of events makes the audience repeatedly question the validity of the past story. As we follow Thomas on his misadventure, his actions are often not well reasoned, and he acts seemingly randomly, such as when he buys the propeller from the antique shop. We do not understand why he photographs Jane, why he does not report the corpse, and why he takes the guitar neck. These actions are indeed abnormal, and make the audience question if they missed something. The movie is hard to follow because there is a lack of strong causality throughout the film. This almost-surreal quality makes the audience question if the movie's events occurred within the movie's universe.

Question

Blow Up feels drained of color throughout the film. Black and white films are even more extreme, with no color at all. To what extent can contrast be meaningfully employed in black and white films without special dyeing and highlighting?