

**“Death of a Cyclist” starring Lucia Bosé, Alberto Closas, Bruna Corrà,  
1955, NR, 88 minutes**

### **Major themes:**

- Guilt
- Selfishness
- Hiding
- Infidelity
- Blackmail
- Paranoia
- Responsibility
- Confession
- Restitution

### **Major characters:**

- Miguel Castro (thinner V-shaped mustache)
- María José de Castro
- Juan Fernández Soler (thicker mustache, part in his hair)
- Rafael (Rafa) Sandoval
- Carmina
- Doña Maria
- Matilde Luque Carvajal

## Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

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### Background info:

- This film won the International Federation of Film Critics' Award at the 1955 Cannes Film Festival.
- Film director Juan Antonio Bardem, a Communist party member, chose to remain in Spain after military dictator Francisco Franco came into power. Franco, a ruthless ruler, was notorious for the numerous politically-motivated violent acts he instigated, mostly against political and ideological enemies. He is believed to have caused an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 deaths during his 36 year long rule. Film became one of the most powerful instruments of the Spanish propaganda. Bardem was one of several film makers who stayed and made political and social class statements through the stories they presented. This film is considered one of the most important films from the post-Spanish Civil War period.
- The automobile seen near the beginning of the film is a 1952 Fiat 1400.
- In mathematics, a toroid is a surface of revolution with a hole in the middle, like a doughnut, forming a solid body. The axis of revolution passes through the hole and so does not intersect the surface.

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### Scriptures:

Proverbs 21:8 (NLT) – *“The guilty walk a crooked path; the innocent travel a straight road.”*

James 3:13-14 (NLT) – *“If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying.”*

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) – *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Proverbs 18:1 (NLT) – *“Unfriendly people care only about themselves; they lash out at common sense.”*

Galatians 5:19-21a (The Message) – *“It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.”*

Galatians 5:22-23 (The Message) – *“But what happens when we live God’s way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.”*

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### Discussion points:

1. Discuss the significance of a character's statement that he was going "*on a journey back to myself.*"
2. William Shakespeare said in "*Henry VI*": "*Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind.*" When someone has a guilty conscience, how does that change their perceptions of what others mean by what they say and do?
3. Just as life can be messy, there are messy situations in this film. What did you notice? In which kind of messy life situation do you find it most difficult to love others well?
4. What do you think each character feared losing the most?
5. The fascist Spanish government of the time forced the director to create the ending of this film, against his wishes, in order to pass the censors. What kind of ending would you have expected to see?
6. As one character walked near a confessional in a church, a priest asked, "*Did you want something?*" What is the significance of the response, "*No, it's late*"?
7. One character said, "*The war is very convenient. You can blame everything on it.*" What circumstances in our current time and place tends to get blamed for all kinds of things?