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Spain Past and Present

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### Reflection of "Bicycles Are For The Summer"

For this reflective assignment, I chose to watch the movie "Bicycles Are For The Summer". The movie is in Spanish and was made in Spain; it is classified as a Drama/Historical Drama. It was directed by Jaime Chávarri and released in 1984. The main actors in this movie are Gabino Diego (Luisito), Augustín Gonzales (Don Luis), Amparo Soler Leal (Doña Dolores), and Victoria Abril (Manolita). It takes place in Madrid in the summer of 1936, right before the Spanish Civil War. The movie focuses on the Lopez family and their journey as the Civil War began to impact their everyday life.

The movie begins with happiness and joy. The family is pictured to be going through their everyday lives. It is the end of the school year for Luisito, and he is dreaming of a new bicycle that his father promised him if he passed his exams. He, unfortunately, is not able to take the exams and does not end up receiving the bicycle. He pushes his father a bit to get it, but it does not end up happening. The beginning of the movie has a sense of happiness and joy, nothing to be worried about, but things change.

Moving forward into the summer, a war breaks out. A military coup is staged against the Spanish Republic, and fighting breaks out. The family that once enjoyed their daily lives is now under siege with widespread fighting and violence. The Lopez family feels trapped within the city; not only can they not leave, but they feel like the

violence will never end. What was once a happy, joyous, and optimistic family now fears for their lives and whether there will be another summer for them to enjoy. Throughout this time, the family begins to lose their joy with the many things that begin happening to them. Their family wine business gets seized. Don Luis feels demoralized because he's lost his business and, in his own way, his dignity. Don Luisa becomes increasingly more protective of her children during this time. Luisito is forced to become an adult. He begins to hide away from his now conservative parents to continue his studies. He wants to continue his life as an adolescent while having to struggle with fear and a lack of food for the family.

As their fears increase, so does the war. The city that they love is bombed, and conditions get worse. The food rations decrease, and the living conditions do too. Propaganda floods the households, causing mass mistrust of the radio and anyone spreading information. There becomes not only does political unrest, but social unrest as well. Military and religious leaders are assassinated, which causes paranoia not just for the future but also within household relationships.

Time continues, the hunger gets worse, and the emotional connection with the characters becomes more prevalent. The characters begin to look more and more worn down, like nothing can revive them. The simplest necessities become pleasures to them. As the movie comes to an end, the family that was once a joyful and optimistic family is now broken and insecure. At the end of the movie, Luisito no longer has his childhood sense of optimism or wonder. He is forced to work for the people who took everything from their family, and his family loses their status as well. They were at one point well-off, and now they had to depend on those who took everything away. He

never gets his bicycle, which ultimately represents that he never gets to live his childhood.

Overall, the movie gives a distinct representation of the Spanish Civil War. It provides historical events like assassinations of influential people during the war, as well as the propaganda being spread throughout the country, causing mistrust. Typically, when hearing about the Civil War, we get a general account of the events. This movie provided evidence of what living during the period truly looked like. It is well known that it was a time of struggle, but it can often be overlooked by the countless historical events of the war. The movie depicts the true struggle and emotional toll that the war imposed on families alike throughout the country. The movie relates to our course by analyzing the struggles and outcomes of the Civil War. It highlights the positivity and optimism shown during the period before and the tragedy during and after. We learned that the Civil War was a turning point in Spanish history, and this movie represents not only how it affected the country, but also the individuals living in it. I found that the symbolism shown by the bicycle was a good representation not only of Luisito but of the country as well. The country saw the time before the civil war as a time of growth and building, looking forward to getting their bicycle and being successful. Following the Civil War, Luisito and Spain both end up struggling and having to struggle to stay alive, instead of getting to live their adolescent years and truly grow.