

Film students and The Bicycle Thief

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The current generation of young people grew up in a very different world from us older folks. There has always been an Internet. Everybody is accessible by mobile phone. Cars have always had power windows. (Which reminds me of a story of a friend of mine who has an older-model car and was giving a ride to an eight-year-old relative. The youngster pointed at the window crank and asked, “What’s this?” Upon learning its purpose, the young passenger spent the remainder of the trip opening and closing the window, giggling with glee. “You know, most people pay extra so they don’t have to do that.”) But it’s not just elementary school children whose views of the world are different.

Some time ago, I was at a dinner where another guest was a film professor at the local university. In one class, they were discussing the classic movie *Ladri di Biciclette* (*The Bicycle Thief* in the United States), the story of a poor man in post-war Italy searching for his stolen bicycle, the bicycle he needs for his job. One student asked, “Why doesn’t he just buy another bicycle?”

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