

Document Citation

Title	Banned film in S.F. festival bitter, good
Author(s)	Theresa Loeb Cone
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	1961
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Viridiana, Buñuel, Luis, 1961

Banned Film In S.F. Festival Bitter, Good

"Viridiana," which was introduced as the film without a country at the San Francisco Film Festival, is one of the few this year that is actually expected to be shown commercially in the U.S. within a short time.

Made on the outskirts of Madrid by Spanish-born Luis Bunuel, who has been making movies in Mexico in recent years, "Viridiana" is now supposedly banned from being shown in Spain.

According to the word we have, the film is considered blasphemous by Spain's Catholic hierarchy, although the director himself said on several occasions that anyone who interpreted the story to be anti-Christian is a fool.

GOOD VS. EVIL

Dealing in somewhat the same subject matter as Bergman has been using recently—the fight of good against evil and the individual's seeking for an answer to the meaning of existence—Bunuel bitterly exhibits none of the Swedish director's spirituality or compassion but revels in the macabre and brutal aspects of life.

"Viridiana" is a prudish, beautiful young woman about to take her vows as a nun. However, while visiting a wealthy uncle—a recluse who mourns the death of his wife whom she happens to resemble—she becomes involved in an eerie situation.

Her uncle commits suicide when she refuses to marry him after what was to her a particularly unpleasant incident. He leaves his large estate jointly to a son he never saw and the novice.

STARTS REFUGE

The young man comes with his mistress to take up residence and to bring the benefits of scientific farming as well as electric light to the estate. Viridiana turns her portion into a refuge for unfortunates.

A more scurrilous lot would be hard to imagine. There's a blind, lecherous beggar; several crones; a toothless, self-styled comedian; a syphilitic treated like a leper; a knife-toting, foul-tongued itinerant who tries to rape Viridiana.

Misguided charity brings chaos in a scene outstanding for its lusty, Hogarthian qualities which prove director-writer Bunuel a master of his craft and a serious award contender.

Unfortunately, his picture will probably be advertised in this country to highlight the attempted rape, a mere incident in an obvious attempt to make a meaningful comment on the world.

—Theresa Loeb Cone