

## Document Citation

Title **Spain's film genius ends his self-exile**

Author(s)

Source *Publisher name not available*

Date

Type article

Language English

Pagination

No. of Pages 1

Subjects Buñuel, Luis (1900-1983), Calanda, Spain

Film Subjects Tristana, Buñuel, Luis, 1970

# Spain's Film Genius Ends His Self-Exile

## Toledo, Spain

The celebrated film director Luis Bunuel has returned from self-imposed exile in Mexico to make his first movie in his native Spain since Spanish officials banned his anti-Catholic epic "Viridiana" eight years ago.

His new film "Tristana" is based on the works of the 19th century Spanish writer Benito Perez Galdos and is an examination of the Spanish middle classes.

It is claimed that "Tristana" will be less grotesque than earlier works. But in one scene French actress, Catherine Deneuve, sits huddled in a wheelchair eating empty ice-cream cones and pushed along by a crazy-eyed deaf-mute, while from a bench a woman watches as she breast-feeds her baby.

## INVITATION

Eight years ago, at the invitation of Spanish government officials and with a generous state budget, Bunuel shot "Viridiana."

But it was so biting anti-Catholic that it was banned from Spain and withdrawn as the official entry at the Cannes film festival of 1961,

where it had already won the Golden Palm top prize.

Now Bunuel, 69, has returned to Spain armed only with a permit to film in the warren of courts, alleys and churches which make up the imperial city of Toledo. It seems old scores are at least forgotten — even if they will never be entirely forgiven.

Two Bunuel films, "El Nazarin" (The Nazarine), made in 1958, and "El Angel Exterminador" (The Exterminating Angel), 1962, had their Madrid premieres within the last year.

The main roles in "Tristana" are played by Miss Deneuve, Fernando Grey — a Spaniard once described by Orson Welles as the best actor in Europe — and the Italian actor Franco Nero.

## TILT

"Tristana" will include more than a passing tilt at Bunuel's old religious windmill, and there are hints of the grotesque surrealism, black humor and erotic fantasy frequently associated with his work.

Bunuel himself shuffles painfully round the set, grunting in his heavy Ara-

gonese accent, nudging camera and players alike until they are lined up to his satisfaction. He is very deaf and wears a hearing aid.

His reluctance to talk to journalists is proverbial.

## LECTURE

One foreign correspondent, exasperated after several days of fruitlessly hanging around the set, buttonholed the film director and lectured him in no uncertain terms on the subject of public relations.

Only when the force of his tirade was spent did he notice that the old man had unplugged his hearing aid and had not heard a single word.

But for actors, Bunuel remains a genius. Nero said with enthusiasm "He is the easiest director I have ever worked for. He tells you exactly what to do, makes lots of jokes. He is very human — he has great humility."

*Reuters*