

LUIS BUÑUEL: SOME FACTS AND TRIVIA

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0046675/>

Generally, Buñuel's films present the violence and brutality of life. By using shocking images in realistic settings, he seeks to make audiences aware of the nature of the world. He explained that the unknown and the strange attracted him and that he perceived situations from a sadistic point of view.

Luis Buñuel, in collaboration with Pierre Unik, wrote the first draft of a screenplay based on Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* in 1931. They were unable to find financing. The movie was made over 20 years later.

Producer Óscar Dancigers would only finance *Wuthering Heights* if Buñuel used actors Dancigers had under contract for a musical comedy. Buñuel confessed later, "Really, I was no longer interested in making the film, and I didn't try any innovations. It remains the film I conceived in 1930, a 24-year-old film, but I think it's faithful to the spirit of Emily Brontë. It's a very harsh film, without concessions, and it respects the novel's attitude toward love."

Buñuel used Producer Oscar Dancigers' actors but was unhappy with their acting. He complained, "Irasema Dilian, with her Polish accent, and Mistral with his Spanish accent... introduced an element of undesirable—because uncontrollable—unreality."

Buñuel was also dissatisfied with the music which the composer added throughout the film: "I intended to use Wagner just at the end, in order to give the film a romantic aura, precisely the characteristic sick imagination of Wagner."

In the mid-1940s, Buñuel and fellow-Surrealist Man Ray planned a movie, *The Sewer of Los Angeles*, which was set on a mountain of excrement close to a highway and a dust desert.

Los Olvidados, for which Buñuel won a Palm d'or at the 1951 Cannes Film Festival for directing, ended a twenty year absence from filmmaking. This was the first time a director successfully emerged from so long a silence. This film broke with his Surrealist past; it was a dramatic film with a traditional story line, a type of movie that he had condemned in his Surrealist days. The movie was a critical success.

He produced most of his greatest films in the two decades after his sixtieth birthday.

In 1961, General Franco invited Buñuel, who had opposed Franco during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), to Spain to shed luster on the Spanish cinema internationally. Ironically, Buñuel made *Viridiana*, which won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and was banned in Spain for blasphemy and denounced by the Vatican. (The film is an attack on Spanish Catholicism and Fascism.) In one shot which imitates "The Last Supper," the apostles are replaced with beggars, thieves, and morons.

Though Buñuel found his work banned in his native land once again, the director went on to make such remarkable works as *Exterminating Angel* (1962), *Belle de Jour* (1966), and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972), each film distinguished by Buñuel's elegant decadence.

During the Spanish Civil War, he compiled newsreel material into a documentary about the war, *Espana Leal en Armas* (1937), for the Republican side

Buñuel's *Tristana* (1970), *Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972), and *Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) won Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film; *Obscure Object of Desire* also won an Oscar for Best Adapted

Screenplay. Habitually outrageous, he said, “Nothing would disgust me more morally than winning an Oscar.”

A life-long atheist, Buñuel was educated by Jesuits. In his typical outrageous fashion, he stated, “Thank God, I’m an atheist” and “Sex without religion is like cooking an egg without salt. Sin gives more chances to desire.”

His social satire consistently focused on the Catholic Church, bourgeois culture, and Fascism.

Buñuel joined the Surrealist movement in France in 1928; by 1932 he had left it.

The Surrealist film *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), made with Salvador Dali, starts with the shocking image of an eyelid being sliced by a razor. This sixteen-minute film continues to shock viewers.

Las Hurdes: Tierra Sin Pan (1932), a documentary, was financed with money won in a lottery and shot with a borrowed camera.

Alfred Hitchcock praised him as the best director ever.

According to Buñuel, he made movies to “show that this is not the best of all possible worlds.”

He liked to alternate scenes portraying the unexpected with scenes of ordinary life. He said, “I like the moments when nothing is happening; a man who says ‘Give me a match.’ This kind of thing interests me a lot.... ‘What do you want to eat?’ ‘What time is it?’”

Of 32 films made by Buñuel, 19 are adaptations of literary texts.

Buñuel adapted a second classic English novel, Daniel Defoe’s *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1953). Dan O’Herlihy was nominated for an Academy Award for his role as Crusoe.

Born in Spain, he became a Mexican citizen in 1948. After *Viridiana* (1961), Buñuel worked mostly in France.

In 1980 Buñuel collaborated with Jean-Claude Carrière, his screenwriter since 1964, on his autobiography, *My Last Sigh*.