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| Viridiana (1961) |
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| Along with *L’Âge d’or* [*Age of Gold*] (1930), *Viridiana* is a noteworthy work in the filmography of director Luis Buñuel — it was the film that the director felt he enjoyed the most freedom of production, and the first film he made in Spain after going into exile in 1939. A dark tale of sexual drive and death, the film centres on Viridiana, a novice about to take her holy vows, who must leave her convent to visit her uncle Don Jaime (who paid for her studies). During her visit, Don Jaime tries to convince her to leave the convent permanently. Failing to do so, he commits suicide, causing Viridiana to resign. She stays at the mansion to practice Christian charity, accepting a group of beggars into the estate. Eventually Jorge, Don Jaime’s natural son, arrives and alters her fate. The script uses a **recognisable logic** interspersed with scenes of surrealistic dark humour. For example, Viridiana — at Don Jaime’s request — wears his dead wife’s wedding dress; in another scene, the beggars sit around the table in the same arrangement as Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper* (1495-1498) accompanied by music from Handel’s *Messiah* (1741). These scenes are often considered as Deleuzeian *impulse-images*, which prompt an existential shift in Viridiana from God to mankind (a point reflected in Buñuel’s modernist and irreverent manner in which he treats Catholicism). It was the first Spanish film to win the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival. |
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| Further reading:  (Faulkner)  (Gutiérrez-Albilla)  (Jones)  (Poyato)  (Sundt) |