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Summarized, Luis Bunuel's *Belle de Jour* sounds lurid even in this supposedly enlightened sexual age. Severine, a beautiful bourgeois housewife played by Catherine Deneuve, becomes a part-time whore either in fact or in her fantasy. She then enjoys, even revels in the following delights: a whipping at the hands of her husband and his manservants; a ripping, tearing screw from a whorehouse customer; an afternoon of necrophilia with an

aristocrat who pays her to play the corpse; and finally an obsessive love affair with a Parisian hood whose total devotion to her totally destroys him. Yet none of this is played so much for its cruelty as for its charm. And that's as it should be, at least if you are Bunuel and have been doing battle with the bourgeoisie since you started making films. For Bunuel is teaching us to see the evil behind elegance, the chaos behind conformity, and he knows how much we love these lessons. They are consistent with what we have been told we know by artists and moralists of every age and every persuasion. But what he would further teach us is this: Severine and her little libido, so full of promise and quiver, suffer from a lack of reach, and this we also love. All her abnormality and all her sin are only and always designed to drive her further into bondage and further away from freedom. Severine chooses to be close to the horror in the closet but never the horror in the heart. Which is why Bunuel keeps on making films. Either you are crazy like Severine and the rest of civilized humanity or you are sane and healthy like Bunuel; and *Belle de Jour* is yet another sample of the sort of sanity Bunuel would persuade us all to have. (GV)