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Sunday

Eric Rohmer's Chlœe in the Afternoon (1972), from his screenplay, with Bernard Verley, Zouzou, Françoise Verley, and Daniel Ceccaldi, is the last and, in some ways, the least of Rohmer's "Six Moral Tales." Nonetheless, the authentic Rohmer hallmarks of ironic distancing, subtle wit, and wide-eyed observation run throughout this ~~first-person tale of a tired businessman~~ who is wildly attracted to the bohemian Chlœe, but who flees back to his wife—choosing official morality over private impulse and using home as a passionless alibi for his cowardice. In keeping with the quintessentially middle-class mentality of the protagonist, a prude to the point of parody, the film is broader than Rohmer's previous Tales. The moral primness of the hero provides the film with its humor, but also its aridity, and his spiritual parsimony, in the face of two glorious women, becomes almost sadistic. Gradually, the picture he paints of his marriage, his honor, and his commitment begins to look increasingly cheap and out of focus. There is no lack of clarity, however, in Nestor Almendros's rapturously attentive camerawork on the streets of Paris, with extraordinary footage of Parisians walking by the camera. *Chlœe* caps the Moral Tales as one of the great film oeuvres of the century. (Co-feature: Joseph Losey's *La Truite*) **Thalia: 2:30, 6:20, 10:05.**