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In *Chloe in the Afternoon*, the sixth and last in a series of "moral tales" by Eric Rohmer (others have included *My Night at Maud's* and *Claire's Knee*), Frédéric, a married, bourgeois Parisian businessman of thirty or so, is hung up on Victorian sexual morality, just as the trio in *Two English Girls* is. But Frédéric is a contemporary, and so his attitudes toward extramarital sex seem to us to be not only anachronistic but also highly unlikely, especially for a Frenchman who has a good deal of time on his hands in the middle of Paris afternoons. In a voice-over commentary at the beginning of the picture, Frédéric tells us that he is deeply in love with his wife, yet he seems to spend most of his time yearningly ogling every attractive woman he chances to spy. Then back into his life comes Chloe, an acquaintance from his bachelor days. A spirited and sexy Bohemian wanderer, she simply turns up one afternoon in Frédéric's office and pretty much offers herself to him. Frédéric is blandly handsome in a male-model sort of way, but he is also something of a sap; as a result it is difficult to understand why anyone as wild and unconventional as Chloe should be attracted to him. Anyway, she is, and most of the rest of the picture is taken up with Chloe's attempts to break down Frédéric's moral scruples and get him into bed. Will he or won't he? This is the semiludicrous question that causes the picture to become, as Rohmer intended, increasingly funny—a kind of Gallic *Pillow Talk* in reverse, though *Chloe in the Afternoon* exhibits, of course, a great deal more wit, charm, and intelligence than that Rock Hudson-Doris Day chastity chase.

Perhaps the best thing about the picture is Zouzou, as Chloe, who first appears on the screen looking shopworn, scruffy, and dog-faced, but who, in each succeeding scene, becomes almost magically more attractive and desirable. Before the film has ended, even the most bourgeois American male will, I suspect, readily empathize with Frédéric's increasing temptation to leap into bed with Chloe. □

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