Cleo From 5 to 7 (1962)

Directed by Agnès Varda
Written by Agnès Varda
Italy/France, 1962
Music by Michel Legrand
French with English subtitles, color & b&w, 90 min.

Cast:
Corinnee Marchand ... Florence ‘Cléo’ Victoire
Antoine Bourseiller ... Antoine
Dominique Davray ... Angèle
Dorotheé Blanck ... Dorotheé
Michel Legrand ... Bob, the pianist
José Luis de Vilalonga ... José, Cléo’s lover
Loye Payen ... Irma, the fortune teller
Renée Duchateau ... the hat seller
Lucieene Marchand ... the taxi driver
Serge Korber ... Maurice, dit ‘plumitif’
Robert Postec ... Doctor Valineau
Jean-Luc Godard ... The man with black glasses / Actor in silent film
Anna Karina ... Actress in silent film
Emilienne Caille ... Actress in silent film
Eddie Constantine ... Actor in silent film

Cleo From 5 to 7 is the story of a pop star in the midst of personal crisis, as she waits to hear the results of a medical test. At the same time, the film offers up a picture of a bustling Paris in the midst of les trentes glorieuses, a portrait of a quest for identity in an age of consumption, and a search for authenticity in the days of the Algerian War. Cleo was a breakthrough film for Agnès Varda (1928-2019), a pioneering filmmaker of the French New Wave.
Some questions for discussion:

What does the film seem to think of Cleo? Are we supposed to like her? To sympathize with her? What do you think of her?

What picture of Paris comes across here?

What picture of politics?

What does Varda seem to think of this consumer society?

How does the Algerian War come into the film?

This film has been described as a meditation on Existentialism (the postwar philosophical tradition that “existence precedes essence,” that life is a search for meaning)? How might that be the case?

Is this a feminist film? Why or why not?