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A Confucian Confusion

Du Li Shi Dai

TAIWAN 1994, 125 min.

DIR/SCR Edward Yang

PROD David Sun **CAM** Arthur Wong, Zhang Zhan, Li Longyu, Hong Wuxiu **ED** Chen Bowen **CAST** Chen Xiangqi, Ni Sujun, Wang Weiming **PRINT SOURCE** Atom Films

As the Pacific Rim becomes a regional boomtown and Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Straits astound the world with their "economic miracle," it is often overlooked that 4,000 years of Confucian culture is undergoing an unprecedented meltdown. Battered by militantly anti-traditionalist politics in both China and Taiwan, Chinese now find themselves facing a black hole of an identity crisis. In chronicling a group of contemporary Taipei yuppies as they wheel, deal and betray each other, **A Confucian Confusion** gives one a sense of a society adrift in a world that, although it is still filled with token symbols of Chineseness, is actually defoliated of any real traditional values or culture. Edward Yang (*A Brighter Summer Day*, SFIFF 1992) presents us with one of the first films to hold a critical mirror to the new Chinese commercial culture that is sweeping from Singapore to Hong Kong, and from Taipei to Beijing. It is a bleak world where consumerism and self-interest have replaced healthy human relationships, leaving people confused, angry and lost. Few Chinese filmmakers have probed the heart of this contemporary darkness with such relentlessness.

Orville Schell

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