

Document Citation

Title	Nilouhe nuer
Author(s)	David Stratton
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1988 Mar 09
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	11
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Nilouhe nuer (Daughter of the Nile), Hou Hsiao-Hsien,, 1987

Nilouhe Nuer
(Daughter Of The Nile)
(TAIWANESE)

A Fu Film production. Produced by Lu Wen-jen, Ts'ai Sung-lin, Wang lin-jui. Directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien. Screenplay, Chu T'ien-wen; camera (color), Ch'en Huai-en; editor, Liao Ch'ing-sung; music, Ch'en Cih-yuan, Chang Hung-yi; production design, Liu Chih-hua, Lin Chu; sound, Hsin Chiang-sheng, Tu Tu-chih, Yang Ta-ch'ing; assistant director, Chiang Pao-te. Reviewed at Berlin Film Fest (market), Feb. 19, 1988. Running time: **91 MIN.**

Lin Hsiao-yang.....Yang Lin
Lin Hsiao-fang (brother).....Kao Jai
Ah-sang.....Yang Fan
Grandfather.....Li T'ien-lu
Father.....Ts'ui Fu-sheng

Also with: Hsing Shu-fen, Yu An-shun, Wu Nien-chen, Huang Ch'iung-yao, Ch'en Chien-wen, Yang Tzu-t'ei, Lin Chu, Ch'en Shu-fang.

Berlin — The latest film from Hou Hsiao-hsien ("A Summer At Grandpa's," "Dust In The Wind") is one of the best from this gifted filmmaker, and marks a change in pace. Unlike his earlier, mainly non-urban family dramas, this one's set in the city, has more plot, and is more tightly constructed. A major fest outing this summer is indicated, followed by international arthouse release.

The central character is Hsiao-yang, a teenage schoolgirl who's an avid reader of the popular comic strip "Daughter Of The Nile." Since her mother died of cancer, she's cared for her father, grandfather, older brother and younger sister, doing cooking and housework as well as working in a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet after school. Still, she has time for her daydreams.

The brother is a petty criminal who, together with his charming friend Ah-sang, runs a trendy restaurant. He still commits the occasional burglary, and his sister has to bind his wounds after one such incident. Gang warfare erupts for unspecified reasons, and after one shooting Ah-sang comes to borrow money from Hsiao-yang before taking off. The police catch him, and he's gunned down. Later, the brother meets a similar fate.

There's trouble at school too, with the class teacher forced to resign because he's been branded "a red" by a student. Hsiao-yang has little time for normal teenage pursuits, and regrets the fact that time passes so quickly.

Hou's film often looks more like the work of his equally talented compatriot Edward Yang, indicating quite a change in style for him. The seemingly effortless directing style is distinctively Hou's, together with the perfect compositions of this beautifully photographed film. Repeated establishing shots of the interior of the family home, the exterior of the restaurant and the fast food outlet are reminiscent of Japanese master Yasujiro Ozu.

Lead actress Yang Lin, a popular singer in Taiwan, is tops as the put-upon teenager who never complains about the way she's casually exploited by everyone around her. Kao Jai, in real life a Taipei fashion boutique owner, makes an impression as the doomed brother, while another pop star, Yang Fan, also is good as his partner. Li Ti'en-lu as the cheerful old grandfather is charming as another of Hou's lovable old people (e.g., the grandmother in "Dust In The Wind").

The comic strip allusions, which will be taken for granted in Asia, where the comic is well known, comes across as tenuous, but it doesn't matter. The fact that the film moves much more briskly than Hou's earlier efforts should bring him a whole new audience. —Strat.

Jenny Gago joins Jane Fonda in "Old Gringo."