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▼ Thursday, December 9

Taiwan: Birth of a New Cinema

**DAUGHTER OF THE
NILE**

(NI LO HE DE NU ER)

1987, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Taiwan,
93 min.

With Yang Lin, Kao Chieh

6:00

Turning to the city of Taipei with its neon-lit streets, Western influences, and fast-paced, hard-edged youth culture, Hou Hsiao-hsien diverges from the often-rural sensibility of his other films. The title comes from a popular comic strip, "Daughter of the Nile," about a time-traveling heroine, followed religiously by Shao Yang, a young waitress trying hard to fill the shoes of her dead mother in the life of her brother Fang, who's running wild. Fang, a small-time burglar, aspires to be a mover and shaker in the underworld, and already owns a share in a trendy watering hole where male hookers cater to a wealthy female clientele. Yang works in a fast food restaurant and goes to school at night, all the while hoping that Fang's handsome best friend will finally notice her, although he's embroiled in a dangerous affair with a mobster's mistress. Hou's camera takes in the quietness and sense of expectation fostered in the interiors of the home Yang makes for her brother, and the colorful chaos of street and club life in all the tawdry glory of its obsessive con-

sumerism. As is characteristic of Hou's work, the meaning of the fates of brother and sister is constructed less in the actual narrative than through the entire fabric of life in all its nuances as experienced by his exquisitely sensitive camera. (BS)