



April 13, 2007

EVERYTHING'S GONE GREEN

Rated: R

For movie details, please [click here](#).

There is a real, crisply anarchic writer's voice in *Everything's Gone Green*, belonging to Douglas Coupland (*Generation X*), and thank God for it! His sharp observations blithely propel this tale of Ryan (a wonderfully winning Paulo Costanzo) a decent, bike-riding Canadian twenty-something who is dumped from both job and relationship in one day, and finds work as a writer for a magazine about recent lottery winners. This provides fertile material for pungent statements about the newly rich and often clueless in a world Coupland perceives as ever more materialistically scamming. Everyone, from Ryan's wheeler-dealer real-estate broker brother to his down-sized dad who decides to grow marijuana, to an ever-hustling romantic rival, Bryce (JR Bourne), has some seriously sketchy moneymaking ploy leading to vaunted and flaunted "success." "Whatever happened to just being real?" Ryan wonders. "Why aren't we content with just being middle-class?"

The object of Ryan's new romantic interest is a Chinese girl, Ming (Steph Song). She's a movie set dresser and, for the first time, the satirical possibilities of Vancouver's endless standing-in for America are hilariously addressed here. Otherwise, Song's input is perhaps the film's weak link. Her acting is a little too tentative, too sweet, and the scenes involving her feisty non-English-speaking grandmother (Chiu-Lin Tam) veer into icky-cartoonish. Coupland obviously takes a lot from life, and this falters only in Steph's rather weak justification for Asian women dating non-Asian men as a "way of escaping our macho, overbearing fathers," which smacks of some personal, less than convincing actual interchange he may have experienced. Yet how salutary it is that Coupland even recognizes the extreme racial diversity existing in Vancouver, as opposed to the heinous, same-old shenanigans of commercial American fare like those recent MTV "reality" series set in Hawaii, which would have you believe that Maui is populated by nothing but blue-eyed blondes.

Through it all, Coupland's razor-edged dialogue keeps things happily percolating, from Ryan's ex-girlfriend's initial withering putdown of him ("You need to find your warrior within") to a hilariously apt description of those dreaded company cruises, right down to details of bacon-wrapped shrimp swimming in grease, which drive drunken, ship-bound-to-nowhere employees to further madness. Paul Fox's direction has a deft ease and comic apprehension which serves the material beautifully, as well as the cast. Bourne makes an amusingly slick shitheel and Aidan Devine has a funny, misplaced weightiness as Ryan's new boss at the lottery rag. Susan Hogan and Tom Butler draw well-earned laughs as Ryan's parents, never more so than when they tear the house apart looking for their own supposed winning lottery ticket. A bright, apt music score studded with songs by Canadian rockers Fembots and Sloan provides tangy counterpoint.

Critic: David Noh