



# The World

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# Outline

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# Introduction

# Director Jia Zhangke

- Born in Shanxi
- a Chinese film director and screenwriter
- 1997 *Xiao Wu* 1998 *Platform* / 2002 *Unknown Pleasures* → collectively as an informal trilogy of China's transition into modernity
- regarded as a leading figure of the "Sixth Generation" movement of Chinese cinema
- 2004 *The World*, official approval
- *Still Life* (Venice Film Festival's top award Golden Lion) 2006





# Historical Context

- Director was born in 1970, the late period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)
- Deng Xiaoping: (1) market economy (2) urban reform
- Jia had lived in Beijing for several years in 2000
- 2004 *The World*, impression of the world city
- North Drift: people who make a living in Beijing, the capital of China

# Main Argument

China strove to keep pace and designed an **artificial world** for people from around the world to experience through the shortening of time and space, creating a compressed and superficial reality, and bringing with it employees who are **disconnected** from their original places resulting in the **loss of identity** with the undercurrents of **uneven power relations** among employees.



# The World Park

Vivian H.

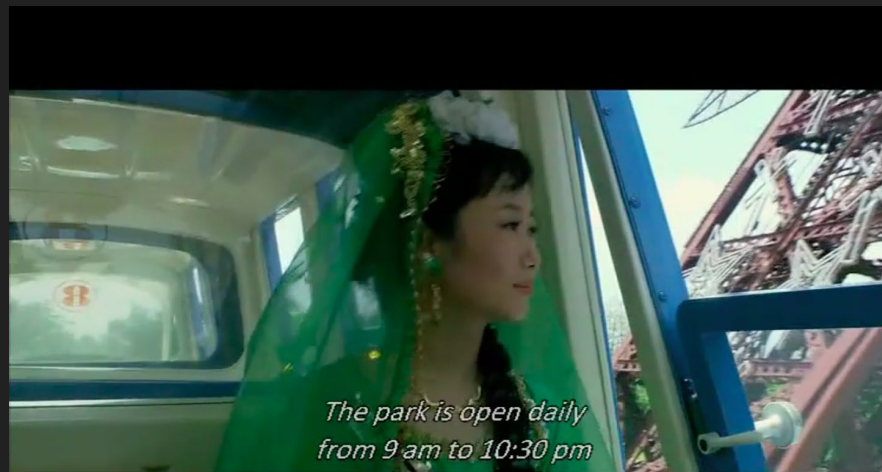
# The World Pa





# The World Park

- **Concept:** 不出北京、走遍世界 (See the world without ever leaving Beijing)
- “Opens Daily from 9 am-10:30 pm”
- “Presents famous sites from five continents for your pleasure”



# The World Park Locations

- **Europe:** Paris, France (Eiffel Tower, The Arc de Triomphe), London, England (Stonehenge, Big Ben, Tower Bridge, St. Paul's Cathedral), Italy (The Tower of Pisa, Vatican)
- **Africa:** Egypt (pyramid, sphinx)
- **North America:** NYC (Manhattan, Twin Towers)
- **Asia:** India (Taj Mahal)



# The World Parkations

- Slogan: “Give us a day, we’ll show you the world”
- (Time/Space) Compressed world: **stripped of culture and boundaries**
- Eiffel Tower → Egypt/ Taj Mahal → Tower of Pisa → **compressed space**



# The World Parkations

- Compressed World
- close placement of “places in the world”
- → invokes feeling of **absurdity**



# The World Parkations

- Even though the places are close → **no interaction** or **connection** can be seen to tie the places together → shows how the **fast advancement of the economy** has people chasing the feeling/image of **prosperity** resulting in the occurrence and building of “World Park”



# The World Paradox: Duplication

- “Duplication” doesn’t only occur in the places
- See duplication in “tourists” and “employees”



# The World P-Duplication

- **Tourists:** duplication of poses and way of taking pictures in front of cloned monuments from “the World” (same scene, same pose)
- **Employees:** replaceable/expendable → i.e.- When Taisheng was trying to find Tao → dancers continue rehearsing for next show → indicate the show can still go on



# People in World Parks and Employees

- World Park attracts tourists → flock to Beijing to take pictures with copies of world monuments → promote economic growth → **Capitalism**
- World Park, introduced in the age of State Capitalism in China → **internal/external migration** → **“Beijing Drifters”**





# Brief Introduction of the Characters

Chris Sun

# Tao

- from Shanxi (山西)
- an employee at the World Park
- Taisheng's girlfriend





# Taisheng

- from Shanxi (山西)
- a security guard at the World Park
- Tao's boyfriend
- cheats on Tao



# Liangzi

- from Shanxi (山西)
- Tao's ex-boyfriend
- headed to Mongolia



# Erxiao (二小)

- from Shanxi (山西)
- Taisheng's cousin
- a security guard at the World Park
- steals money and is expelled from the park



# Anna

- from Russia
- Tao's colleague at the World Park
- a married woman with two children
- trying to save money to visit her sister,  
who is in Ulan Bator



# Niu

- an employee at the World Park
- Wei's boyfriend
- a control freak



# Wei

- an employee at the World Park
- Niu's girlfriend





# Little Sister (二姑娘)

- from Shanxi (山西)
- dropped out of school to work to pay his debt
- died in an accident at the construction site



## Liao (Qun)

- from Wenzhou (温州)
- a married woman whose husband is in France
- has an affair with Taisheng
- leaves for Paris at the end



# Youyou

- an employee at the World Park
- in a relationship with the director  
of the park
- gets promoted to troupe  
supervisor





# The Director of the World Park (Director Mu)



# Fei

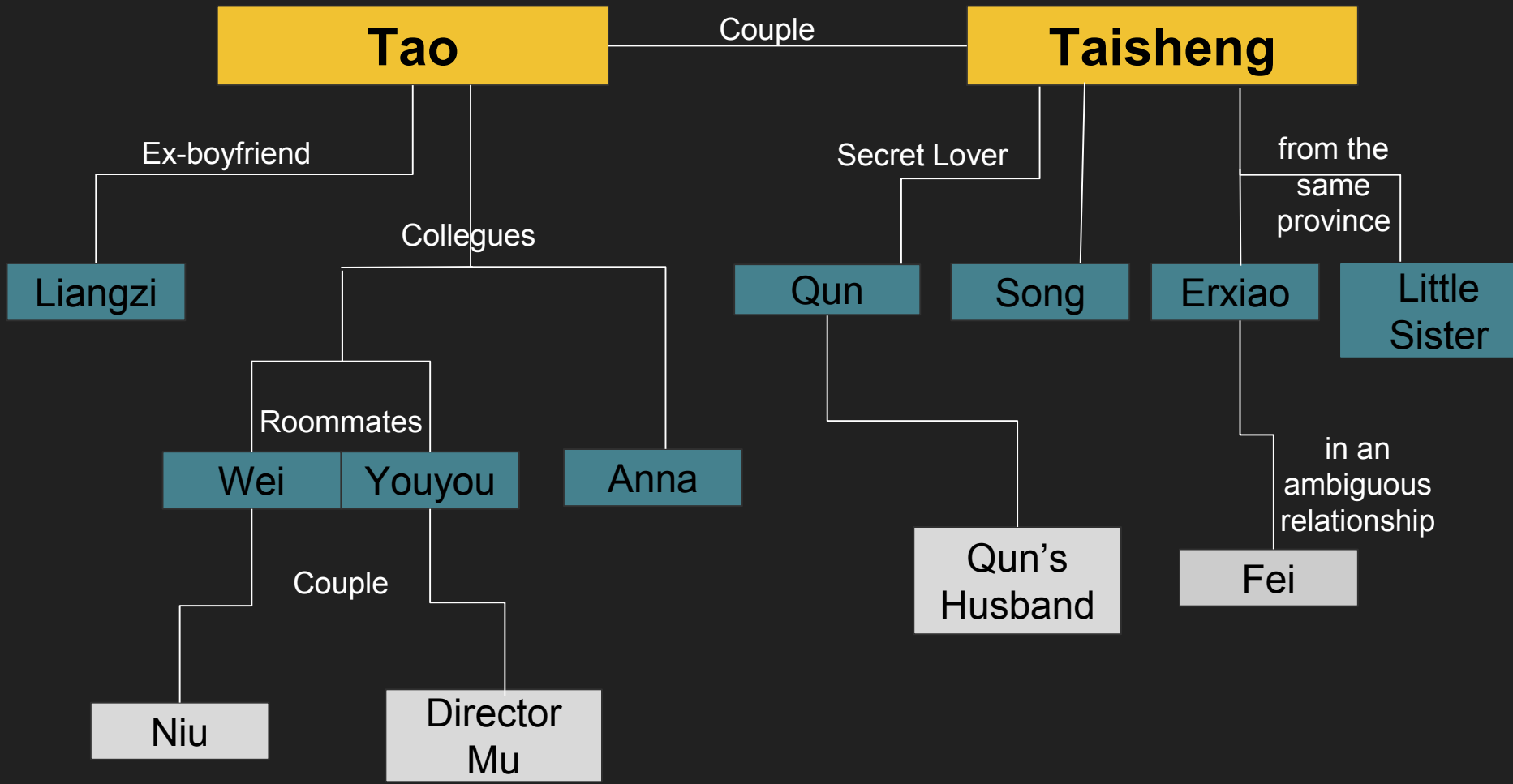
- an employee at the World Park
- has a thing for Erxiao



# Song

- the head of some kind of illegal organization
- orders Taisheng to escort Liao to Taiyuan





# The Relationship among Characters

1. Friendship
2. Romantic Relationship

Angel H.



# Friendship

Tao & Anna

-Different nationalities

-Language barrier / Mutual understanding



Little sister & Taisheng

-Came from the same hometown

-Brotherhood: Taisheng takes care of Little s



# Romantic Relationship

Tao & Taisheng

Niu & Wei

-Came to Beijing together to fulfill their dreams

Toxic relationship

-Views Taisheng as the only beautiful thing in life

Niu being overly controlling/ Wei being ob



# Romantic Relationship

Liao & Taisheng

- Need emotional/ physical belonging
- Differ from Tao newness



Liao & her husband

- Had lost touch for years
- Seeking sense of belonging → go to Paris



# Romantic Relationship

YouYou & The boss of the World Park

-Fall in love vs Conditional love

Erxiao & Fei

-Developed love



# The Power Relatio

1. Person vs Person
2. System vs People

Angel H.

# Person vs Person

## Tao vs You You

- Tension: competitors / witness
- Power: order Tao to play African



## Taisheng vs Song

- Came from the same hometown
- Earn extra money: produce fake ID



# Person vs Person

Tao vs Taisheng: emotional / physical

-Eiffel tower: colleague monitor Tao's

-Sex, Physical contacts as commitment

hotel → sex / airplane → caress

-Before having Tao's first time

"If you cheat on me, I will kill you"



# System vs People

Eiffel Tower “歡迎您來到艾菲爾鐵塔，請按順時針瀏覽，謝謝合作”

-Kind reminder, regulation

-The World (system) secretly control how the tourists take in the sights





# System vs People

Exploitation of labor:

Ann's passport is taken by the employer

Passport → loss of freedom

Expendation of labor:

Little sister's death

Funeral expenses → vain attempt to consult the family





# Comparison & Contr

on locations

Mackenzie W.

# Front Stage vs. Backstage



## **Front Stage**

- Artificial world
- Ever-changing identity, glorious appearance
- No "self", throw away "identity"  
→ Loss of identity
- The applause, envying sight, excited cheers

## **Backstage**

- Shabby, small environment, deadly white light
- Showing the true self
- Back to the low class worker



# Performing Stage vs. KTV



## **KTV**

- Drink(perform) for guests, with physical contacts
- Use Anna's own identity/body to amuse her guest

Both are entertainment venues

## **Performing Stage**

- Performs on stage, no physical contacts
- Play other characters to entertain the audience (loss of identity)



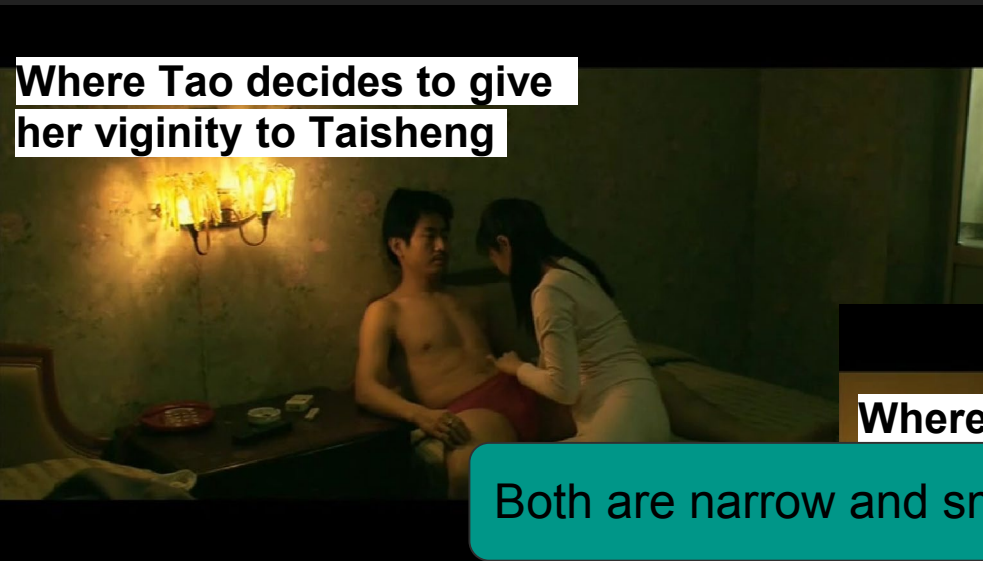


# KTV



# The Hotel vs. The “Home”

Where Tao decides to give her virginity to Taisheng



## *Wei's Place*

- A shelter after knowing the fact
- A place where the most likely to be a “home”, but they died here

Where their lives ended

Both are narrow and small places



## *The hotel*

- The perfect illusion
- Not a home, but she chose here to commit to the relationship

# World Park vs. Real world



您给我一天，我给您一个世界！

"Give us a day,  
we'll show you the world."

# World Park vs. Real world

Manhattan



Egypt's pyramids



<https://daily.jstor.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/pyramids.jpg>

<https://i2-prod.loughboroughecho.net/incoming/article14135601.ece/ALTERNATES/s615/TRMRMGLPICT000020992519.jpg>



# World Park vs. Real world



<https://i2-prod.loughboroughecho.net/incoming/article14135601.ece/ALTERNATES/s615/TRMRMGLPICT000020992519.jpg>

## *The World Park*

- An artificial world (empty shell)
- No connection with the place

## *Real World*

- Authentic (full of **history**)
- Build connection through the place

# Comparison & Contr

on characters

Mackenzie W.

# Constraint of the Relationship

Taisheng & Tao

Niu & W ei

Couple(T&T) vs. Couple(N&W )

# Constraint of the Relationship

Taisheng vs. Tao → Three Stages

- **Early**                                    **Insecure vs. Indecisive**
- Middle                                    Cheat vs. Explores possibilities
- Ending                                    Wants remedy vs. Seek shelter



# Constraint of the Relationship

## Taisheng vs. Tao → Three Stages

- Early Insecure vs. Indecisive
- **Middle** **Cheat vs. Explores possibilities**
- Ending Wants remedy vs. Seek shelter



# Constraint of the Relationship

## Taisheng vs. Tao → Three Stages

- Early Insecure vs. Indecisive
- Middle Cheat vs. Explores possibilities
- **Ending Wants remedy vs. Seek shelter**



# Constraint of the Relationship

## Niu & Wei → Three Stages

*Early Stage*

Wants “freedom” vs. A total control freak



# Constraint of the Relationship

## Niu & Wei → Three Stages

*Middle Stage*

Wants to break up vs. Suicidal action





# Constraint of the Relationship

## Niu & Wei → Three Stages

*Final Stage*

End up marrying to each other



# Constraint of the Relationship

## Couple vs. Couple



Taisheng & Tao  
Seems stable



Niu & Wei  
Constant conflicts

# Constraint of the Relationship

## Couple vs. Couple



Taisheng & Tao  
Silent



Niu & Wei  
Confrontational

# Constraint of the Relationship

## Couple vs. Couple



Taisheng & Tao  
Together in death



Niu & Wei  
Together in this life

# Symbols

Titles

# Paris in Beijing Suburb “Hopeful and Idealistic”

- The shortest part in the film
- People are immersed in the spectacles in the world



# Ulan Bator Night

--“Feeling Trapped, Disconnected and Discontent”



- The longest part in the film
- “Ulan Bator” as a representation of dreams.

# Tokyo Story “Is the World Better?”

- Focus on people’s relationships
- The unreliability of love, friendship, and the world





# Ever Changing World World is Not Better.”



- Dreams shatter
- Lost in “The World”



# Symbols

Animation

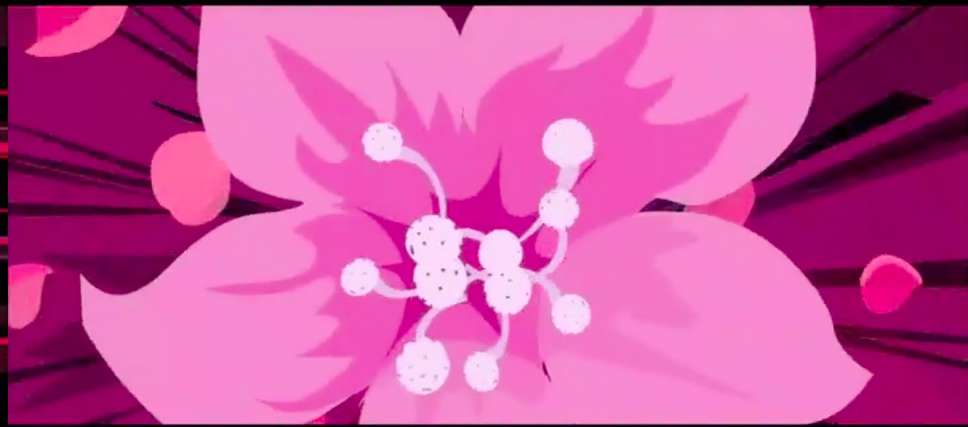
# Connection between People - Cell Phone Messages





# Characters' Inner Feelings - Dreams & Desire



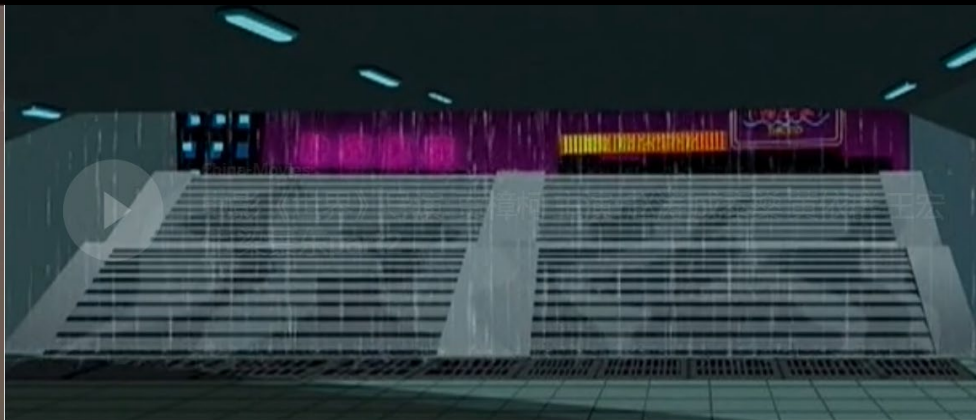


## Characters' Inner Feelings - Dreams & Desire





## Characters' Inner Feelings - Escape & Another Trap





# Characters' Inner Feelings - Betrayal



# Film Techniques

Shelly Yang



# Extreme Long Shot



# Long Shot



# Bird's-eye shot



# Tracking Shot



# Music

Shelly Yang

## 劉若英-為愛癡狂

想要問問你敢不敢  
像你說過那樣的愛我  
想要問問你敢不敢  
像我這樣為愛癡狂  
到底你會怎麼想



# Mongolian Folk Music - 烏蘭巴托的夜

Nostalgia

烏蘭巴托的夜啊／那麼靜 那麼靜  
／連風都不知道我 不知道  
／烏蘭巴托的夜啊／那麼  
靜 那麼靜／連雲都不知道我  
不知道



# Ending Scene

Shelly Yang



A dark, low-angle shot of people's legs and feet on a light-colored floor. The image is dimly lit, with a blueish-green tint. In the foreground, two people are lying face down on the floor. In the background, the lower legs and feet of several other people are visible, standing on the floor. The overall atmosphere is somber and mysterious.

Taisheng: Are we dead?

Tao: No this is just the beginning.

# Discussion Questions

# Discussion Questions

1. Tao and Taisheng's death: the beginning or the end of their lives? Why?
2. What's the symbolic meaning of the white raincoat for Tao?
3. What do the passports and Ulan Bator represent?

# Thank you

No, thank you, bye.