Chinese Film in the Twenty-First Century

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Chapter 10
The World and Beijing World Park

Film Tourism, Intermedia, Embodiment, and the Fake

10   *The World* and Beijing World Park

Film Tourism, Intermedia, Embodiment, and the Fake

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"Give Us A Day We'll Show You The World," states the slogan for the Beijing World Park (北京世界公园), the setting for Jia Zhangke's film *The World* (世界, 2008). This theme park, located in China's capital, offers scaled-down replicas of famous domestic and international world monuments, such as China's Wooden Pagoda, Moscow's Red Square, and Paris's Eiffel Tower, as well as sculptures including Michelangelo's *David* and Copenhagen's *The Little Mermaid*. In addition to these monuments and artworks, the park reconstructs international culture and ethnicity for the stage by choreographing simulated ethno-cultural dance, music, and fashion performances for a mainly domestic audience. Tourists come to the park to see these representations and these copies and be entertained. The focus of the film, however, is not on these visitors to the park but, rather, on those who work in it, such as the performers and the security personnel, many of whom are migrant workers and who live in company dormitories on the park grounds. Not only do they perform and work in this themed space, but they also live much of their private lives among the copies of the world's monuments: uniformed guards carry plastic water coolers past the Sphinx and the Pyramids of Giza, lovers meet in a miniaturized Stonehenge, and lunch is eaten in a replica of the Eiffel Tower, one-third size.

As an amusement park which is meant to amuse, this chapter examines the experience of the fake – both on-screen and off – and how it is experienced through the media of film, architecture, performance, and embodiment. Using textual analysis to examine the film's environment and the visitors' experience on-screen, along with the self-ethnography of my visit to the amusement park as a "film-induced tourist"—a tourist who is inspired to visit a film location (Beeton 2005, 9)—this chapter develops from the "performance turn" in tourism studies, in which "the doings of tourism are physical or corporeal and not merely visual" (Larsen and Urry 2011, 1111) and is guided by theories of intermediality—the relationship between media and how they work together to create meaning—in this instance, film, architecture, and performance. As Ágnes Pethő argues, cinema incorporates other media and thus "can initiate fusions and 'dialogues' between the distinct arts" (2011, 1), explaining that since cinema "mediates" between the arts by incorporating them, it thus "become[s] an

interface for the complex game of reflections taking place between the media"
(2011, 79). As she states, this is perceived and sensed through experience:

> Cinema has a profound experiential quality; we do not only "see" the
> film, and the world of the screen does not "communicate" a message to
> us: it reaches out and "touches" us and we cannot escape the allure of
> "touching" it, feeling it with every fibre of our being.
>
> (2011, 69)

Building on Pethő's concepts that cinema "mediates" the arts through incorpo-
rating them, and viewers' phenomenological and sensual engagement with
film, in this chapter, I connect film-induced tourism and the desire of such
tourists to "embody" the site seen on-screen, arguing that cinema not only in-
corporates other media and encourages dialogue between them, but also it has
affective draws on the film-induced tourist/pilgrim in that physically being
present in the site shifts the engagement from virtual (on-screen) to embodied
(in the site itself). This experience begins as "vicarious" participation (as expe-
rienced in one's imagination whilst watching the film), which then can lead to
"active" participation (an embodied experience of the site itself).

The film has been analysed as a metaphor for China's fast-paced globaliza-
tion, cosmopolitanism, and consumption, as well as representing its effects on
society, particularly Chinese migrant workers. Regarding globalization, it has
been called "an ominous vision of the effects of globalization on individuals
and on society" (Gaetano 2009, 30), and it has been analysed as "the material-
istic consumption of transnational commodities" (Cheah 2012, 151). Addi-
tionally, it has been posited that it "reveals the jarring discrepancy between the
professed benefits of globalization and the difficulties and harsh reality of or-
dinary workers" and is thus "a trenchant critique of neoliberalist globaliza-
tion" (Lu 2021, 23). In the academic literature, artificiality in the film has been
examined as metaphors for the lack of real relationships, mobility, future, and
hope. For instance, Jerome Silbergeld argues that its "fantasy replaces what
was once known as reality" (2009, 116), Hongbing Zhang calls the fakery in the
film "glamorous traps of ruins, fakes, and unfaithfulness" (2009, 149), arguing
that it creates "a spectral quality of being inauthentic, unfaithful, fake, ruin-
ous, and also rootless" (2009, 142), whilst Gaetano argues the film "deftly illus-
trates deterritorialization—the dislocation of "authentic" culture, identity, and
meaning from place—wrought by these global processes" (2009, 26). Addition-
ally, Jing Nie posits, "place is no longer attached to any specific piece of soil,
but assumes a more abstract, symbolic, and virtual significance," thus creating
"a spectacular global sphere at the expense of specific historical or cultural
depth" (2009, 206). Finally, it has been argued that the experience of space in
the film is akin to the experience of a Chinese garden, where one engages with
a "mobile dynamics of site-seeing, becoming a voyageur, an itinerant being
who traverses a space" (Mello 2019, 209), and its fake landscape has been

interpreted as "a synecdoche of globality and an example of worldliness par excellence" (Cheah 2012, 158).

Using *The World* and The World Park as case studies, I argue in this chapter that through its multimedia artificiality, the film and the site create a Baudrillardian "hyperreality" (1994), a simulation that is more real than real—a "copy world," a simulated place that offers simulated pleasures, emphasizing a "realistic effect" rather than realism: the "real/unreal," in that it is a real object yet one in a noticeably unreal state (Schultz 2023, 9). The fake on-screen and off thus offers entertainment, and can be seen as encouraging exploration and engagement, thus adding the medium of embodiment to the experience.

Film-Induced Tourism, Pilgrimage, and Vicarious Participation

As mentioned in the introduction, my interest was sparked by the film's setting in such a fantastical space, and the motivation of the visit was to explore the site; thus, the film was a "primary travel motivator," corresponding to Sue Beeton's classification that "the film site is an attraction in its own right—strong enough to motivate visitation" (2005, 10). This phenomenon has been referred to as movie-induced tourism, film-induced tourism, teletourism, film tourism, and media tourism (Beeton 2005; Karpovich 2010; Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998). It has been argued that such film-induced tourism can be sparked by "a movie's symbolic content, a single event, a favourite performer, a location's physical features, or a theme" (Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998, 924), and it has been suggested that viewers can "form an attachment based on a combination of theme, storyline, characters, and landscape to create a sense of place" (Liu and Pratt 2019, 500).

The film was my reason for visiting the park, as well as guiding my movement within the site, as I searched for specific monuments and specific angles from which to view scenes from the film that matched my memory of the film and the screenshots that I had recorded on my phone. John Urry examines touristic practices, arguing that "places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered," which is enhanced through a variety of media, including film, that construct and reinforce that gaze (1990, 3). Additionally, I also wanted to test the "realness" of the architecture and experience the other things at the site that I saw in the film, and thus experience the site that I had viewed virtually on screen.

Since I was visiting the park because I was more than a tourist and was a fan of the film, it was what Beeton defines as a "film tourism pilgrimage"—"visiting sites of films in order to 'pay homage' to the film" (2005, 10). To examine the notion of pilgrimage further, John Urry describes the tourist as "a kind of contemporary pilgrim" (1990, 10), whilst Erik Cohen terms them "secular pilgrims," writing that they are "in search of authentic experiences, a secular surrogate of the sacred, which they hope to encounter in the course of sightseeing

trips" (Cohen 2000, 438). Similarly, Roger Aden proffers the notion of "symbolic pilgrimages," which "feature individuals ritualistically revisiting powerful places that are symbolically envisioned through the interaction of story and individual imagination" (1999, 10), and describes them as "those purposeful, playful, repeated journeys in which we imagine ourselves leaving the material world of habitus to enter the symbolic worlds of promised lands" (1999, 10).

Furthermore, this pilgrimage was also because, as a fan of Jia Zhangke's films, I endeavoured to visit other locations featured in his films, such as Pingyao (the site of Jia Zhangke's *Platform* (站台, 2000) and *A Touch of Sin* (天注定, 2013)), thus connecting to Matt Hills's notion of "cult geographies," which are "dietetic and pro-filmic spaces (and 'real' spaces associated with cult icons) which cult fans take as the basis for material, touristic practices"; thus, "the cult fan's affective experience is quite literally mapped onto spatial relations … [that] produces a 'sacred' place which can serve to anchor and legitimate the cult fan's attachments" (2002, 110).

Finally, my visit was also a kind of "vicarious participation." Comparing photographs taken by tourists re-enacting scenes from the South Korean TV series *Winter Sonata* with stills from the series, Sangkyun Kim argues that this activity "produced new touristic spaces" (2010, 59), creating personal memories as well as an attachment to the filming location. As he writes, "the symbolically contextualised meanings behind this particular space provoked audiences to build a strong attachment with the place," explaining "people transmit ideals and reproduce memory by mapping them on to symbolic and familiar spaces" (2010, 67). Thus, he argues that viewing the TV series and the TV sites' "visualised signifiers" that are associated with the characters, actors, and narratives therefore provide "a means of preparation, aid, documentation and vicarious participation when visiting screen tourism locations" (2010, 71). Such vicarious participation begins in the viewer's imagination and then becomes an embodied, "active" participation through visiting the site. Kim argues that these performances "provide authentic ways in which the screen tourists can create reflexive and authentic touristic experiences associated with the filming locations," and the screen tourists thus "appear to attach an emotional bond or link between themselves and screen tourism locations and to recall what they were touched by during the previous viewing experiences and its meanings" (2010, 71).

The World and Beijing World Park: Site and Sight

From the Beijing Foreign Affairs Office:

> World Park features 106 of the most famous sites from 14 countries and regions the world over. The park, encompassing 46.7 hectares (115.4 acres), consists of two parts: the scenic area in miniature displayed according to the position of its country on the map, and a shopping, dining and entertainment area…. The park includes most of the recognized

spots of interest on the globe…. Great efforts were made to build the structures out of the same materials as the real ones. Marble and granite surfaces, together with copper and gilded sculptures, help produce a realistic effect. For instance, the Great Pyramid is made up of 200,000 white marble bricks, each as large as a bar of soap.

<div style="text-align: right">(The World Press Kit 2004)</div>

The park's motto is "See the World Without Ever Leaving Beijing." Here, the international world is portrayed as a commodity to be purchased and devoured, one that is mediated by domestic entertainers who sing and dance, and produce both the images and the spectacle for the viewer's consumption. "Beijing World Park" is one of several such internationally themed parks in China, such as the "Window of the World" in Shenzhen and "World Park" in Chengdu. Such parks are referred to by Brenda Yeoh and Peggy Teo as "themed playgrounds" that use spectacle and simulation to "offer 'real-life' experiences of a certain verisimilitude but in the context of pleasure, amusement and effortless fun, without the burden and blandness of quotidian routine and responsibilities" (1996, 29). Hai Ren writes that hundreds of theme parks have been built in China over the past twenty years and that the most economically successful parks have focused on cultural themes, of which the "world" has been a major subject (2007, 100). Regarding his research on the "Chinese Ethnic Culture Park" in Beijing, he states that the majority of the tourists are domestic middle-class and "leisure-class" visitors, the small but growing bourgeoisie who can afford the price tag of such entertainment (Ren 2007, 102). Such sites serve a pedagogical function, as well as catering to domestic Chinese tourists and their desire to learn of foreign cultures (Zhang 2010; Barabantseva 2009), but ultimately, they are sites of entertainment; as Barabantseva states: "The world presented in the park caters to Chinese consumers, who come to rest, relax, and effortlessly take in a picture of the world" (2009, 148).

Beijing World Park provides "global" tourism for a domestic-bound audience, many of whom do not have the means to leave the borders of the nation. As Jia declared in an interview,

You can visit different countries without a passport or a visa. It gives the impression that the whole world has become a global village. A lot of Chinese people think that way nowadays—they believe that China has really become a part of the international community. But that's not really a true reflection of the lives of everyday people in China … in reality, foreign travel is just a dream.

<div style="text-align: right">(Havis 2005, 59)</div>

In the park, the world has been shrunk and famous international monuments have been created in mimesis; a stroll from the Egyptian pyramids to the Eiffel Tower takes minutes yet crosses continents and millennia. This exoticism creates a fantasy, the setting for a fairy tale, a place to be transcribed by visitors'

dreams, expectations, and desires. Regarding artificiality in the film's site, in an interview, Jia stated: "They're not real, but still they can satisfy people's longing for the world. They reflect the very strong curiosity of people in this country, and the interest they have in becoming a part of international culture" (Jaffee 2004). But he also notes, "every time I went to one of the parks for the shooting, I saw all the tourists and how overjoyed they were to be there, and for me it was all very sad" (Jaffee 2004). Finally, in the documentary *Jia Zhangke, A Guy From Fenyang* (directed by Walter Salles, 2014), there is a scene in which Jia visits the park, stating that "it's like a theatre stage," and later remarking, "I think that this world is a virtual one, it is imaginary … to some extent The World Park is the same as the online world, it gives people another illusion of existence, a kind of freedom," but cautions that the "illusion of freedom" of the park enhances the sense of loneliness.

People and Performance: Floating Workers in a Simulacrum World

Besides the fact that the monuments (or rather their copies) have been displaced from their original locations, the workers at the park have been displaced as well. The film's main characters are migrant labourers, many of whom live in the park's dormitories and do not have permanent homes in the city, and who service the wealthier visitors to the park. In 2005, the admission price to "Beijing World Park" was 65 Yuan, approximately 10 USD; to put this in perspective, a security guard in the film states that he earns "more than 200" Yuan per month, a salary that is only about four times more than a single entrance ticket (China Internet Information Center 2005). The bulk of these Chinese workers, sometimes referred to as the "floating population," make up the marginalized underclass of the modern Chinese economy, workers from China's rural areas who have migrated into the coastal cities in search of economic opportunities. For added realism, Jia used real migrant workers as extras on the set—migrant workers playing migrant workers in an amusement park simulating the world, adding yet another layer of the surreal.

The subjects of this film, although they are positioned "in the world" (or, at least, in a copy of it), are these displaced persons and migrant workers. There is Tao, the homeless dancer moving between dormitory and hotel and apartment-sitting; Taisheng, her boyfriend, a migrant worker from the country who has followed her to Beijing and is working as a security guard at the park; Anna, the Russian entertainer-turned-sex worker who negotiates legal and illegal employment options in order to support her children back in Russia, as well as to earn money to visit her long-unseen sister in Mongolia; and Qun, the Beijing-based entrepreneur from southern China's manufacturing mecca of Wenzhou, who runs a sweatshop specializing in counterfeit designer clothing and who hopes to someday join her husband in France. These characters are all migrant workers who have come to Beijing for employment and other such opportunities. Some, such as the security guards and the construction workers who labour on local building sites, are rural-to-urban migrant workers whose

remittances from manual labour in the cities support families back home, whilst others, such as businesswoman Qun, come with skills that are better reimbursed.

The park and the film play on concepts of the simulacra; the park is a simulacrum of the international world, whilst the movie is a fictional narrative—a simulacrum of reality. In addition to the re-created monuments, the park offers a cosmopolitanism mediated by bodies, a place of fantasy, of simulation of other cultures, where ethnicity can be performed for the benefit of the visitors and perhaps even for the performers themselves. The park's replicas of international monuments have been sanitized, Sinicized, and shrunk, condensed through space and time and repackaged for the viewer's pleasure, which is similar to the entertainment spectacles enacted for the tourists that are meant to be multicultural performances but, because they feature scantily clad women, are actually more erotic than they are ethnographic. The park produces dance and musical productions, spectacles that are meant to simulate traditional cultural performances from around the world. In her analysis of the spectacle of the film, Tonglin Lu writes:

> This uncanny encounter between fantasy and the Real leads to the short-circuit of desire: on the one hand, the spectacles these workers stage remain forever inaccessible in their daily lives. On the other hand, they have become their externalized desires, the realization of which is presented as the only possible road to happiness.
>
> (2008, 177)

The park offers an "international" experience but one that is mediated by the mostly Chinese performers "playing" cosmopolitan ethnicities that have been Sinicized for domestic consumption. The bodies of the performers, who are mostly female in the film, mediate this cosmopolitanism by performing ethnicity for consumption by the tourists. In these performances, women are the erotic objects, and they are displayed for the audience's visual consumption.

In one scene in the film, the dancers glide forward on the stage, arms held to the side and partially outstretched in order to show off their costumes, making them appear almost like mannequins. They are meant to symbolize the nations that they portray and have multiple identities, the majority of them fake. For instance, when they reach the edge of the stage, they rotate slowly; any further motions are stiff and posed, and then they glide away, oddly like marionettes. In another scene, a Thai-themed performance complete with elephant and swaying dancers with Buddhist parasols also incorporates what appear to be plumed Vegas-style showgirls who strut at the forefront of the stage. The result is not so much a "cultural-performance" as it is a "cultural-esque" performance, a pastiche of exotic elements combined into a mass of "foreign-ness" for the audience's entertainment and pleasure. Tao, like the other performers, adopts the external signifiers of multiple ethnicities throughout the film, "performing ethnicity" for the stage, enacting other nationalities in simulated

nations. For example, she appears in the film dressed in a brilliant green sari and a matching veil, complete with bangles, bindi, and nose ring, and then morphs into a bride in a white Western wedding dress, and later is wearing a red Japanese kimono. At the end of the film, she is informed that she will be playing an African woman for the park's publicity photos the next day. These performances highlight the artificiality of the park—not only its enjoyable qualities but also its falseness and its simulacra—via the medium of costume and performance.

Place: Simulacra in *The World*

The World is imaged as a land of simulacra, copies that have been shrunk and placed in this space of entertainment. The monuments appear to be constructed out of "realistic" materials for this "realistic effect," but some do not use the same materials as the original. For example, the park's Great Pyramid is not made out of limestone, like the original in Egypt, but out of white marble—perhaps seen as a more "fitting" material for such a great monument. But something always seems "wrong" about the simulacrum, and they do not seem to "fit"; as Jia explained, "[Y]ou can copy the buildings, but you cannot copy the traditions, the system or the lifestyle" (Wu 2005, 35). In an interview, Jia detailed that he wanted to film a "feeling of falsity" (假的感觉), in order to create such an "abstract feeling" (表现一种抽感觉) (Wu 2005, 35). Additionally, regarding this hyper-realistic quality of the amusement park, Jia has also stated, "[M]ore and more, I get the feeling that the surreal has become reality in Beijing" (*The World* Press Kit 2004). By re-creating a pastiche of these international monuments and producing culturally themed performances, the park presents a post-modern universe, a Debordian "separate pseudo world," one without the boundaries and barriers of space and time, all possible through the simulacra of some of the earth's major architectural monuments (Debord 1983, 7).

    However, this does not mean that the fake does not have emotional and affective qualities. In her analysis of the *Portugal dos Pequenitos* theme park in Coimbra, Portugal, which includes miniature replicas of famous buildings in Portugal and Portugal's former overseas colonies, Paula Mota Santos writes that it was designed for Portuguese children to learn about the nation (2018, 193). She examines "the power of space as a materiality that is able to both convey meaning and elicit emotion through narrative," arguing that the park's use of a "miniaturised but realistic mode of architectural representation" creates what Umberto Eco describes as "hyperreal" (195). She argues that, although the site is an obvious "real historical fake," it has transformed into a "real historical place" in the minds of the visitors (194), which is "heightened when a place is turned into heritage" (206). To examine this further, the fake is often interpreted as a lie or a manipulation "and is pejoratively used and moralistically dismissed" (Schultz 2022, 836), and as Andrea Mecacci writes, the "inauthentic" is seen as "a devaluation that was initially aesthetic and then

became a moral condemnation" (2016, 61). However, it has also been argued that the fake can produce "real" emotions, "regardless whether their source is real or fake" (Schultz 2016, 266)—in this case, not as heritage but of the pleasure that the fake creates as a space of entertainment and enjoyment.

As stated in the introduction, my visit was motivated by the film's fantastical setting. During the time of my visit in the summer of 2016, the park was located at the end of the metro line in an area that was not as developed as Beijing's core. On approaching the site's entrance, it resembled a fairy-tale castle, with turrets similar to Walt Disney World Resort's Magic Kingdom, and a line of international flags at the entrance promoting "the world." To briefly describe the site, the miniaturized architectural monuments include St. Stephen's Cathedral, Red Square, Neuschwanstein Castle, Stonehenge, the Statue of Liberty, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, El Tajin's pyramid, Big Ben, the Temple of Karnak, the Pyramids of Giza, the Sydney Opera House, Angkor Watt, the Taj Mahal, Ishtar Gate, and the Lighthouse of Alexandria. There are also Chinese sites, including the Pagoda of Fogong Temple, the Great Wall, and the Qingyinjing garden. These sites would not be confused with the "originals"—they are smaller (most 1:8 to 1:25 size)—and other sites serve other functions; the Golden Gate Bridge and London's Tower Bridge serve as pedestrian bridges to other sections of the park, the Temple of Giza has a "maze" play area inside (additional ticket required), and the miniature Grand Canyon, surprisingly, has a waterfall attraction. The sites are accompanied by display signs that give information about the objects/buildings and the country of origin. In addition to the replica monuments, there is also statuary, such as marble statuary in the "Italy garden," including reproductions such as Hercules, the Discus thrower, Copenhagen's *Little Mermaid*, the stone statues of Easter Island, and a copy of the Trojan Horse.

The park's copies of selected international monuments have been sanitized and shrunk, removed of any meaning beyond their appearance, and they have been decontextualized and transposed, stripped of their memory, and have been assembled into a place of amusement and pleasure. Consider, for instance, the park's smaller copy of St. Peter's Basilica; it has been stripped of both its architectural "bulk" and its religious significance as the centre of the Roman Catholic Church and is simply presented as yet another photo op. The park's "Manhattan," a city which is considered by some in contemporary China to be "the ultimate symbol of America and the West, themselves symbols of wealth and success" (Dai 2002, 195), is a miniature recreation, pre-2001. In the film, when Taisheng, a security guard at the park, excitedly shows a friend his work environment, he proudly tells him: "The Twin Towers were bombed on September 11th. We still have them!" Although the Twin Towers in Manhattan are no longer in existence (except perhaps in memory), their simulacra still live on in the economic powerhouse that is China, inheritor of this capitalist symbol of wealth and success. Similarly, in the film, when Qun tells Taisheng that she has applied for a French visa and plans to go abroad, he tells her that, if she is not successful, she should come to the park; they have the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triumph, "all

that French stuff." In this context, the fabrications of the park are the preferred surrogates for the outside world. Although the Beijing World Park does contain copies of Chinese monuments, such as the Great Wall and the Fogong Temple Pagoda, these are not featured in the film; rather, it emphasizes international monuments, not domestic ones. "China" is only viewed when the characters leave the park—to local cafés, KTV bars, and building sites in the area. However, although the park is located in Beijing, the viewer sees no evidence of this; there are no scenes of Beijing's tourist sites or commercial areas, and even the streets surrounding the park are thinly populated. The park could exist anywhere.

Andrew Jones writes that monuments are not solely physical structures, since "their meaning is always constructed in relation to other structures. Monuments, in order to do their ideological work, must circulate as architectural images" (2010, 602). Thus, only when such images were mass-produced via photography and distributed through media channels were they therefore able to circulate in the larger visual realms and increase their "monumentality." As Charles Jencks writes: "Any middle-class urbanite in any large city from Teheran to Tokyo is bound to have a well-stocked, indeed over-stocked 'image-bank' that is continually restuffed by travel and magazines" (1984, 127). To illustrate this point, when Tao points out the park's Eiffel Tower to her ex-boyfriend and tells him that it is one-third of the size of the original, he replies that the park's version looks just like it. When asked if he has been to France and seen the original, he replies that he has not; his entire assessment of the authenticity of the replica is based on the images that he has seen of the original, images that themselves are copies that have circulated via the media and communication technologies that globalization has introduced to the world. These monuments are iconic because the international circulation of their images has made them so, and without the global flow of media and the mechanisms that facilitate their spread, they would lose this status.

Although the monuments are recognizable, they are obviously fake. In one long take that emphasizes the park's surreal state, the camera follows uniformed guards carrying water cooler bottles as they walk single file past the Sphinx on sand-coloured cement, a surreal scene that is recorded with this documentary-like cinematic observation. Long takes generally emphasize the "reality" of the scene, but these long takes offer sustained mediations on scenes that serve to heighten the bizarre qualities of the site. Another example is found when a security guard on his night rounds discovers that two replica statues of Emperor Qin's terracotta warriors have been moved to one of the European-themed buildings. Shocked by their presence, the guard shines his flashlight on the statues, which stare blankly back at him. These copies have been moved through space and time, from their conception in circa 210 BCE to their erection in a modern-day simulation of a Renaissance-era structure in Beijing. No reasons as to why the statues have been moved there are given—they are just one more bizarre development in this increasingly surreal environment.

As the film progresses, layer upon layer of simulacra is added, enhancing the surreal quality of the film and stretching the realistic aesthetic until the bizarre

has become the quotidian. In one scene, Tao rides the elevator in the copy of the Eiffel Tower; the loudspeaker plays a Muzak version (both copied and altered) of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Don't Cry for Me Argentina," whilst a recorded female voice says, "We hope that this panoramic view will heighten your view of the world." In this scene, Jia offers the viewer a simulacra matryoshka, a wooden Russian doll of smaller copies nestled within larger ones. The park is a trompe- l'oeil, an illusion of the "real" world, but through this simulacrum, the disembodied speaker states that the visitor's experience at the top of a (copied) monument, a vantage point to survey the other copied monuments down below, will in some way educate the visitor on the reality of the authentic world, not "The World Park." In a world constructed of morphed copies, of shifting representations and fantasies, the park's dislocation from reality and authenticity become increasingly pronounced.

During my visit to the site, there was a general atmosphere of amusement and merriment— couples were having their wedding photos taken, there was a horse-drawn carriage decorated with roses for photos and a special place to have romantic pictures taken with pigeons, presumably re-creating scenes from the squares in Europe. Simply put, there was joy in the false. I soon discovered that the site was not as exactly represented in the film, or even in some of the tourist material about the park, perhaps because of the artistic licence taken or because the site had adapted to changing tourist and commercial demands or because some scenes in the film had been shot not at the World Park but at Shenzhen's Window of the World (Lim 2005, 48). For instance, the Explorer map at the site indicated that there was a stave church, but either I could not find it or it had lost its recognizable qualities after being converted into a restaurant. Similarly, Brussels's Atomium building (which was listed on the English map but not the Chinese map) could also not be found. The Eiffel Tower was there, but, unlike the film, visitors could not enter it. Thinking about scenes from the film, there was no monorail, and I could not find the desert—they were actually part of Window of the World in Shenzhen. I was, however, able to enter the plane featured in the film, which I learnt was the actual plane Deng Xiaoping flew to attend a UN meeting in 1974 (which visitors can enter, for a fee), and the film's Japanese tea garden (located in the park's copy of Katsura Imperial Villa).

Although it was a place of pleasure due to its fakery, I also endeavoured to find what was "real" in the film's representation of the park, what was embellished, and what was missing. Much of the site was in a general state of disrepair; paint was fading, chipping, and peeling, monuments were crumbling, and some sections damaged, most needing restoration in various ways. As Daniel Boorstin writes:

> Much of our interest comes from our curiosity about whether our impression resembles the images found in the newspapers, in movies and on television…. We go not to test the image by the reality, but to test reality by the image.
>
> (1992, 116)

With this discovery, the image I had in my mind was "tested" by the site's reality. This, of course, was one of the reasons for the visit; as Cara Aitchison, Nicola MacLeod, and Stephen Shaw write about the tourist who does not passively consume images but instead "derives pleasure from comparing image with reality" (2000, 49), this activity was a part of my bodily engagement with the site, and the attraction of the artificial.

Cinematography, Photography, and Tourism

Jia Zhangke's films regularly use pans and long takes to slowly record the environment and action that are unfurling, to such an extent that these cinematic techniques have become one of his films' identifying visual motifs. In *The World*, the camera floats in and out of the narrative's setting; it glides in front of Tao in the film's opening sequence, filming her search for a Band-Aid; it follows security guards as they walk their rounds; it watches the characters as they hurry to their next performance, then rises to survey the landscape and provide a panoramic view of the park and its monuments below. The camera is a drifting, watching eye, wandering unhindered through the plot, recording the dramatic as well as the quotidian events that unfold. In some instances, these long takes give the film the aesthetic of a documentary, such as when it records the dancers rehearsing or the pre-show preparations and accompanying jitters that occur backstage. Other examples include the long takes of the tourists as they watch the dance performances, resulting in the somewhat uncanny situation whereby the film audience watches the theatrical audience watch. As Pethő writes about the medium of film, "it is through the intrinsic multimediality and intermediality of cinema that cinema's various possibilities of relations are activated with other art forms" (2011, 60). These cinematic explorations of space inject a quality of realness, not only because they are cinematic tropes associated with documentary but also because they transform the space, architecture, and figures in the film; thus, they explore the falseness and the theatricality of the performance and the site but in a way that is very documentary, therefore emphasizing the "real" in the "fake."

In the film, visitors to the park are entertained by the fakery. In one scene, a group of tourists pose for a photograph in front of the shrunken St. Peter's Basilica. Continuing on the camera's leftward pan, the camera captures a group of female flight attendants who are daring each other to put their hands in the park's copy of Rome's Bocca della Verità. They laugh and run to the right; the camera pans back, watching one of the flight attendants as she takes a photograph of the basilica.

In one long shot lasting about 1.5 minutes, the camera observes several tourists attempting to position themselves between a photographer's camera and the model of the Leaning Tower of Pisa so that it appears that they are holding up the tower, a pose that, repeated ad nauseam in Pisa, has apparently has been exported to this theme park as well (Figure 10.1)—a reaction of "the real" to "the fake." In this scene, they are "performing" for a person (presumably a family member or friend who is taking their photo) and are engaging with the site.

Figure 10.1 Tourists posing for snapshots at the Tower of Pisa at Beijing World Park.

Jonas Larsen examines how tourist photography is "performed" by tourists, arguing that it is "a choreographed and experimental performance connecting the representational and nonrepresentational," which is constituted of "corporeal, expressive actors; scripts and choreographies; staged and enacted 'imaginative geographies'" (2005, 416-417). This is seen in the visitors' reactions, their smiles for the cameras (presumably held by friends or family), and is also apparent in the poses they strike; as Larson writes,

in performances of posing, the body is brought into play as a culturally coded sign—of happiness, politeness, attractiveness, intimacy, and so on. Photography is as much a "way of directing" and a "way of acting" as a "way of seeing," and it often involves *intimate* relations between observers and the observed.

(2005, 425)

Furthermore, Larsen states that "in addition to looking at places, tourists enact them corporeally. They step into the 'landscape picture' and engage bodily, sensuously, and expressively with their materiality" (2005, 425). This is found in the tourists' movements at the site, their attempts to position themselves as if supporting the tower, and their smiles for the camera that produce the familial "intimacy" of snapshot photographs in a family album (Schultz 2014). Thus, tourist places are "produced places," and tourists, as "performers," are also the "coproducers" of the tourist site, and these places "become alive and transformed each time that new plays begin and face-to-face proximities are established and new objects are drawn in" (Larsen 2005, 422).

During my "pilgrimage," I was not simply endeavouring to find the settings of specific scenes and take "selfies" proving that I was there but rather locating the specific angles and compositions that the cinematography recorded. Thus, I did not perform re-enactments of the people on screen, per se, but undertook

a different type of embodiment at the site and endeavoured to find the position of the camera in order to reconstruct the point of view from the film, using my body/eyes as a camera and thus becoming a bodily presence in a previously virtual space (an activity I later undertook in Pingyao, the location for one of the final scenes in *A Touch of Sin*). My focus was thus not on the other tourists at the park but rather on my own behaviour. Using screenshots from the film on my phone, I tried to position my body as the camera; this required a "flexible" embodiment in the space, bending, moving, and adjusting in order to find the exact view. Such behaviour calls to mind Larsen's ethnographic analysis of tourists and their photography practices, when he wrote that

> In both words and actions, people express their eagerness and passion in making pictures, making experiments with composition, depth, choice of motif, directing, staging, clicking, moving on. Bodies erecting, kneeling, bending sideways, forward and backward, leaning on ruins, lying on the ground—all of these were registered.
>
> (2005, 426)

As this scene records the engagement of the tourists with the space, it caused me to reflect on my own engagement of the site—how I was attempting to find the real and the fake by locating the composition and angles of the filmic image with my own camera and reflect on my embodied positioning in the site: squatting, crouching, moving my body in contorted in angles in order to "match" the film's cinematography. I was, therefore, not taking snapshots by simply clicking the shutter button and moving to the next attraction and was not moving through the site to compare it to the film; thus, like the tourists on screen, it required much more effort. Pethő writes of the "embodied spectator," stating that "phenomenology does not see images as representations or signs; it sees them foremost as events and corporeal experiences" (2011, 70). Examining my corporeal experience further, it was not simply to frame a photograph that copied the point of view of the film; rather, referencing Chris Berry's notion of Jia's "on-the-spot" aesthetics that "simultaneously invoke the 'you are here' feeling of in-the-now" on-screen through the use of cinematography (2009, 114), in this instance, it was these "on-the-spot" aesthetics that literally brought me on the spot; not in the film's use of cinematography such as the POV shot that "positions the viewer *on* the spot, but also *in* the spot (Schultz 2018, 68) but rather embodied in the spot in corporeal form, sharing the same space of the film—the experience of being in not only the general space but also the exact same "spot," and therefore adding the medium of embodiment to the intermedial nexus of film, architecture, and performance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how the fake is experienced through the media of film, architecture, and performance by analysing the case studies of *The*

World and Beijing World Park. I have argued that the fake, both on-screen and on-site, can offer entertainment and can also encourage further examination, by firstly grabbing our attention through pleasure, and then inspiring us to examine reality further through incorporating the medium of our own bodily forms into the physical space. Thus, by considering the self-ethnographic phenomenological and embodied experience of the film-induced tourist/pilgrim, I have argued that this experience shifts from a virtual on-screen engagement to one embodied in the site itself, therefore offering new ways of considering the medium of embodiment in theories of film tourism as well as intermediality.

Acknowledgements

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