

# Beijing Bicycle (2001, d. Wang Xiaoshuai)

“The bicycle may be only a material symbol, but it’s also a symbol of China.”

—Director Wang Xiaoshuai, on the making of *Beijing Bicycle*

According to the Beijing Municipal Statistics Bureau, one in four residents of Beijing is a migrant from the country. This rapid urbanization of China began in 1978 when the government initiated a policy of liberalized economic reforms. In 1990, the percentage of people living in rural areas in China was approximately 74%. At the end of 2007, that number had dropped to 45%. China predicts that by the year 2035, nearly 70% of its people will live in urban areas. This rapid urbanization has created challenges in the areas of housing and transportation, clean air and water, crime and corruption.

Numbers, however, don’t tell stories. Motion pictures do. In *Beijing Bicycle*, director Wang Xiaoshuai personalizes the urbanization of China by telling the story of Guei. Guei is a teenager from the country who lands a good job as a bicycle messenger on the teeming streets of modern-day Beijing. The silver mountain bike his employer allows him to use will be his once he earns 600 yuan. But just before he makes his final payment, the bicycle is stolen.

Meanwhile, a teenage schoolboy named Jian longs for a bicycle so he can ride with his friends and impress the girl he likes. Jian is not a migrant. He has grown up in the *hutongs*, or old neighborhoods, of the city. His father has promised to purchase Jian a bicycle, but seems unable to pull together the necessary money to do so. Jian steals money from his father to secretly purchase a used bicycle – the same silver mountain bike that once belonged to Guei. When the two boys confront one another, fists and feet fly.

Image is important in *Beijing Bicycle*. It is a theme that runs through the lives of both Guei and Jian. Image is something that teenagers both in China and America understand. Perhaps that is why teenagers in Shanghai recommended this film as the one they would like American teenagers to see in order to better understand youth in China.

*Beijing Bicycle* offers a rich viewing experience as it is a direct window into understanding contemporary China – through the tensions between urban residents and the vast number of workers migrating from the country, the emergence of new social classes, and generational conflict. The lessons that follow focus on the film’s narrative structure. In completing these lessons, students will also explore how film language and elements of style shape the film’s meaning.

Lesson	Activity	Activity
<b>1: Characters &amp; Conflict—What Is the Story About?</b>	Country Boys, City Folk	Parallel Storylines—Guei and Jian
<b>2: Narrative Structure—How Is the Story Told?</b>	Confrontation and Compromise	<i>Enrichment</i> —A Country Boy No More

# Lesson 1: Characters & Conflict—What Is the Story About?

## Activity A: Country Boys, City Folk

- Distribute **Handout 1: From Country Boy to Carrier Pigeon**. Ask students to compare and contrast the two movie stills, using the guided discussion questions below.

### Guided Discussion

1. Besides the fact that the top image shows a single individual and the bottom image shows multiple young men, what differences do you observe in these two still images? *Answers should focus on the difference in image the young men project. The men in the lower image are neat, tidy, and dressed in uniform. Their hair is short and they wear a cap. The young man in the top photo is more natural-looking; his hair is longer and a bit disheveled.*
  2. The man in the top photo is also in the lower photo. Which individual is he? *Since the young men appear so similar, this is little more than a guessing game but the character in the film known as Guei, seen in the top photo, is also the second from the right in the bottom photo. His appearance, of course, has changed.*
- Distribute **Screening Sheet A**. Explain that this screening activity will have two parts and that you will stop the DVD between the segments so that students can record their observations and discuss.
  - **Screen chapters 1-2 of the DVD**. Allow time for students to complete their observations of Part 1 on the screening sheet, then discuss. Recommended answers are below.

### Answer Key for Screening Sheet A, Part 1—Country Boys

1. The first shots of this film are close-ups of young men. Describe their appearance. Specifically, how are they different from one another? *Although all the characters are young men, they have different hair, different eyes and differently-shaped faces. They are individuals.*
2. In these opening shots, a voice off-screen asks the young men questions. Who is this person and what do these questions suggest about the young men and what is happening? *The person is never identified but it is a female voice. She seems to be interviewing the young men. The type of questions suggests that the men are new to this place, having come from the country to the city. You might wish to share with students that Shanxi and Hebei (two of the places the young men say are their homes) are provinces northwest of Beijing.*
3. In these opening shots, the camera's focus is on the young men's faces as they answer questions. What movement is in the background? *There is a constant stream of traffic moving on the street beyond the building.*
4. As the film progresses, the scene—and the young men's appearance—changes. How and why? *The delivery company that hired the men has cut their hair and issued them uniforms. They look very much alike now. The camera no longer focuses on their faces but has pulled back to show them standing in a line. The audience can see that they have changed and are more alike now than different. Some students may also note that the bikes, too, are lined up in a row and they are all alike; the delivery bags are lined up on a counter one after the other and they are all alike.*
5. What does the manager of the delivery company tell the young men about image? *They are to fit in with the city society and represent the image the company wishes to project in order to be competitive.*

6. During the final scenes of this segment, the camera follows one of the “carrier pigeons” as he makes his first delivery. This is Guei. How do you know that Guei is new to the city? *Answers will vary but likely will include Guei’s difficulty in getting through the revolving door of the office building.*

- **Screen chapters 4-6 of the DVD.** Allow time for students to record their observations of part 2, then discuss.

### Answer Key for Screening Sheet A, Part 2—City Folk

1. These opening scenes provide the audience with a filmscape of modern-day Beijing. List the various sights and sounds the director captures in filming this sequence of Guei making his first ride through the city. *Answers may include the following: traffic lights; bicycle icon in the traffic light; highway under and over passes; skyscrapers; city streets; vehicles such as buses, cars and other bicycles. Emphasize, too, the soundtrack that provides a steady tempo as well as car honks, bike bells, exhaust from buses, and the faint music being played inside the hotel.*
2. The opening scenes communicate much more than just what modern-day Beijing looks like, however. The scenes suggest a contrast in the lives of those who live in this city. How does Guei’s friend make a living? How does his place of employment differ from the other buildings shown in these opening scenes? *Guei’s friend runs a small neighborhood grocery shop. His shop is located in an alleyway. This is contrasted with the modern high-rise office and apartment buildings in the city. This contrast in architecture reflects a contrast in lives.*
3. What does Guei’s friend tell him about city girls? How does his friend react to the girl in the apartment window? *They have many beautiful clothes and are wasteful. Still, he is fascinated by the girl. Although he tells Guei to stop staring, he himself continues to spy on her through the crack in the wall.*
4. Why does Guei think his employer’s secretary has cheated him? *He has kept careful records of his deliveries in a tablet and his numbers indicate that the bicycle is now his. The secretary tells him his numbers “don’t add up.” Guei wants to speak with the manager but the secretary stops him.*
5. Why do you think the director included a scene with Guei’s friend brushing his teeth and then giving the toothbrush to Guei? What is Guei’s friend telling him? *Brushing one’s teeth is an act of cleanliness, but the real significance of the scene comes when the friend tells Guei to brush his teeth. He’s not necessarily telling him he is dirty but he is encouraging him to improve his image, to adjust to city life.*

- Conclude this activity by sharing with students the following information:

*Beijing is the capital of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). In recent decades, Beijing, along with other cities in China, has seen increasing numbers of people migrating from the country to find work and live in the city. Recent studies have shown that urban Chinese earn more than three times as much as those in rural areas.*

*Ask: How do the opening scenes in this film reflect the real-world migration of people from the country to the city?*

## Activity B: Parallel Storylines—Guei and Jian

- Write the phrase *status symbol* on the chalkboard or overhead projector. Ask students to explain what a status symbol might be. Encourage them to explore what objects children in America consider to be status symbols. Some responses may include various toys or clothing with designer labels.
- Move the discussion toward bicycles. Ask students to comment on how important—or unimportant—bicycles are for children in America. Do most kids long for a bicycle? If so, why? Encourage students to share personal stories about learning how to ride a bike, or about adventures or disappointments associated with childhood bicycles. What might a bicycle symbolize for a child of 8? A teenager of 15? A teenager of 19? Likely the symbolic meaning or status of the bicycle will change as the child ages.
- Distribute **Handout 2: The Bicycle as Status Symbol**. Read the passage, then discuss using the questions provided below.

### Guided Discussion

1. In China’s recent past, what status did a bicycle have? *The bicycle was a part of everyday life and a desired object to own. Some viewed it as a means for dating. Others remember it in association with a time when the bicycle made even a large city seem like a neighborhood.*
  2. How has bicycle use changed in China’s cities and why? *Cars have replaced bicycles as status symbols. Many feel cars are simply more convenient, but also the status of the bicycle itself has changed. Some Chinese associate it now with poverty, or at least with someone who is less well-to-do.*
  3. What benefits—aside from status—does Wang Fenghe identify for using a bicycle in China? *It is healthy, affordable, energy-efficient and produces no air pollution.*
- Distribute **Screening Sheet B, Part 1—Guei’s Bicycle**. Complete the pre-screening discussion, using the guided discussion questions below.
  - **Screen chapters 8 and 9 of the DVD**. Allow time for students to record their observations.

### Answer Key for Screening Sheet B, Part 1—Guei’s Bicycle

1. What complication has arisen for Guei and how does he react? *As he emerges from a building, he discovers his bike is missing. He seems confused, wandering up and down the street. The next shot shows him sitting on the curb at night in the same place. The inference is that he has not gone anywhere else but has waited, as if the bike might reappear.*
2. The secretary tells Guei to “stop crying” and that this experience will be “a lesson for you.” What does this tell you about Guei, the country boy? What does it suggest about city folk? *She is not sympathetic to Guei. She does not comfort him. She seems to accept that this happens in the city and that he is being childish.*
3. What reason does the manager of the delivery service give for firing Guei? *He is less concerned about the bicycle—because, as he tells Guei, it was almost his anyway—and more concerned that Guei failed to deliver the package.*

4. What is the manager's opinion of Guei? Is this based on his knowledge of Guei personally or on something else? *Answers will vary but should focus on the main idea that he views Guei as naïve in the ways of the city and lacking in common sense.*
5. How does Guei persuade the manager to give him a second chance? *He refuses to leave and says he is certain he can find the bike.*
6. Why is Guei's determination to find a stolen bicycle in Beijing naïve? *There are millions of bicycles in the city and the city itself is quite large. Some students may see it as Guei does—he made a mark on it. Still, the challenge of examining every silver mountain bike is enormous.*
7. This segment ends with a sequence of shots of Guei searching for his bicycle. Comment on how the filmmaker captures the overwhelming challenge Guei faces in order to accomplish this. *The director shows Guei walking along city streets. But he also shows close-up shots of bicycles and more bicycles—tires, pedals. At times these shots seem to blur as if to say that any one bike is like another.*

- Introduce the second segment for screening. Explain that in this segment, they will meet a new character, Jian. His storyline will—for a short time—parallel Guei's. In this scene also is a young girl named Xiao.
- **Screen chapter 10 of the DVD.** Allow time for students to record their observations.

### Answer Key for Screening Sheet B, Part 2—Jian's Bicycle

1. The audience first sees Jian leaving school with his friends, then again at night at home with his family. Describe Jian's behavior in these different situations. What characteristics does Jian reveal when he is with Xiao (the schoolgirl)? With his family? Alone at night in the alley? *Answers will vary. Jian says practically nothing throughout these scenes. With Xiao, some students may say that Jian is shy. His body language (downcast eyes, almost afraid to look at her) suggests this. With his father, he seems aloof, indifferent, even inattentive. Emphasize the difference between shyness and aloofness—the latter indicates detachment and that is not how Jian is acting when with Xiao. Riding home from his "date" with Xiao, Jian expresses happiness and joy through his smile and his outstretched arms. Alone in the alley, he seems more daring as he practices his stunts.*
2. One purpose for dialogue in a scene is to reveal character. There is very little dialogue in the first scene. What does this lack of dialogue suggest about the relationship between Xiao and Jian? *Both are shy with one another and perhaps this is the first time they have been alone together. Encourage students to question why Xiao happened to be in the very alley where Jian was. Had her bike chain really broken or was this an "accidentally on purpose" meeting?*
3. The dialogue spoken by both Jian's friends and later his father reveals important information about Jian's new bicycle. What is that information, and what does this suggest about how Jian got his bicycle? *The very first line spoken as this chapter begins is Jian's friend talking about his bike—that his father finally broke down and bought him one. A friend teases him*

*that he stole it. Later, in the scene with his father, the audience learns that Jian's father did not buy him a bike. The suggestion here is that Jian has stolen it.*

4. Describe the music during the shot where Jian and Xiao are riding along the river and then again as Jian is riding home alone. How does the music suggest what Jian is feeling? *Answers will vary but should focus on the main idea that the piano music is soft, slow, tender, and some might say romantic. When Jian is riding home alone after this "date," the melody changes. It is still rather slow-paced but a bit louder and more energetic. The music combined with the image of Jian rolling effortlessly along the river suggests his happiness.*
5. Why do you think the director included a scene where Jian searches for and finds a hiding place for his bicycle? What do you think the director is suggesting? When does this scene occur—before or after Jian works on his electronics? *The courtyard has other bikes, which indicates that other people use the courtyard, so hiding the bike could suggest that Jian doesn't want his bike stolen. But in the next scene, we understand that he doesn't want his family to know he has the bike.*
6. Why do you think the director showed Jian awake in bed before showing him practicing stunts on the bike in the alley at night? What does this sequence suggest? *This sequence communicates that Jian has a secret. If we just saw him outside without seeing him sneaking out of his bed, then the audience might assume that his family approved of him being out at night. This sequence suggests he is being sly, devious.*
7. Why do you think the director decided to include a scene with Guei and his friend on the street at night? What does this suggest about the bicycle? *By juxtaposing the image of Jian practicing stunts with that of Guei sitting on the curb, the director reinforces the idea planted in the audience's mind that Jian's bicycle was, in fact, Guei's.*

- Ask students to compare and contrast what the bicycle means for both Guei and for Jian. Focus discussion on Guei's job—without his bicycle, he cannot earn a living—and on Jian's self-esteem with his peers. For Jian, the bicycle represents romance, freedom, and being one of the boys. Although Guei and Jian seem to be about the same age, they have different needs and uses for this bicycle which each believes belongs to him.
- Conclude this activity by asking students to predict how the two storylines will come together and with what consequences.

## Lesson 2: Narrative Structure—How Is the Story Told?

### Activity C: Confrontation and Compromise

---

- Review, if necessary, with students the three-act structure that most—but not all—films follow.

#### Act 1

The opening scenes of a film introduce the characters as well as the time and place of the story. Act 1 also includes an *inciting incident*, or event, around which the plot develops. This incident creates a sort of domino-like effect, setting in motion the action that will occur later in the film.

#### Act 2

The second act presents the *rising action*. Rising suggests that events follow one after the other, creating complications for the characters and building suspense as to how characters will solve their problem(s).

#### Act 3

The final act includes both *falling action* and *resolution*.

- Explain that the scenes they saw in Lesson 1 would be considered the first act of the story. If so, what event in those scenes was the *inciting incident*? Emphasize that if Guei's bicycle had not been stolen, the story could not develop, at least not along the lines it currently does. The inciting incident therefore is the theft. Guei's determination to find the bicycle and all the complications he'll encounter along the way will comprise the second act of the story, the rising action.
- Distribute **Handout 3: Beijing's Hutongs**. Read and discuss the passage, using the questions below.

#### Guided Discussion

1. What is a *hutong*—a house, an alleyway, or a neighborhood? *Hutongs are neighborhoods that include narrow alleys and houses linked one to another.*
2. How have Beijing's hutongs changed in recent years? *They have not changed so much as they have been torn down and replaced by modern high-rise housing.*
3. Why is a journey through Beijing's hutongs considered a journey into the city's past? *The hutongs illustrate how many Chinese families once lived in them and, while many families still live in hutongs, there are fewer and fewer of them.*

- Introduce the screening activity. Indicate that in this sequence of images, the lives of Guei and Jian will cross. The crossing of their paths will change the audience's understanding of both characters and the meaning or significance of the bicycle. This sequence of scenes also takes the viewer through the narrow alleyways of Jian's neighborhood, one of Beijing's hutongs.
- Distribute **Screening Sheet C—The Bicycle Thief**. Allow time for students to complete the questions following the screening. Recommended answers are below.
- **Screen chapters 12-15 of the DVD.** Allow time for students to record their observations.

#### Answer Key for Screening Sheet C—The Bicycle Thief

1. Guei's determination has paid off. Still, even after a collision with a truck and a near brawl in the alleyway, he does not have his bike. How does the filmmaker suggest that he is not going to give up? *Guei follows Jian and his friends to the arcade and spies on them. Students should note the image of the bicycles in the foreground as Guei looks through the arcade*

window. He also follows Jian home and peers into the alleyway where we in the audience know Jian hides his bicycle each night.

2. What is the meaning or significance of the scene between Jian and Xiao in the arcade? How does this change your understanding of Jian's character? *Answers will vary. In the scene along the river, she seems to encourage Jian's affections. After the attempted theft of Jian's bicycle and the brawl in the alley, Jian seems to ignore her. Some students may suggest that Jian is not as interested in Xiao as they at first thought, while others might indicate that Jian simply doesn't understand how his behavior with his friends excludes her. He seems genuinely surprised that she left.*
3. What is the meaning or significance of the scene between Jian and his father? How does this change your understanding of Jian's character? *Emphasize this key point—the father believes he has misplaced some money. Reluctantly he asks Jian if he took it. Jian doesn't hesitate in answering no. And yet, Jian's behavior afterward suggests that perhaps he has.*
4. In the classroom after school, Xiao tries to comfort Jian by telling him "It's just a bike" and that he can "buy another." What does the audience suspect that Xiao does not? *For Jian, the bicycle has greater meaning than just transportation, which Xiao seems not to understand. Xiao also seems to not understand Jian's family's economic situation. Remind students that she lives in a different part of town—this was indicated in chapter 10 in Lesson 1. Jian had to steal the money to purchase the first bike. Some students may also suggest that Jian feels guilty about taking his father's money.*
5. How has Xiao insulted Jian, though perhaps not on purpose? *She offers to take him home. She quickly tries to correct herself and says that he could take her home.*
6. What does Jian's reaction to Xiao in the classroom suggest about what he is thinking or feeling? *Answers will vary. Some students may suggest that Jian is shy and can't communicate with Xiao about how he is really feeling or what has really happened. And so he lashes out at her, in a sense taking out his anger—and shame?—on her.*
7. In this sequence of scenes, Jian's sister appears twice. Why do you think the filmmaker included the sister in these scenes? What might the filmmaker be suggesting about the brother-sister relationship? *Answers will vary. Remind students, if necessary, of an earlier scene in Jian's home where his father explained why he could not buy Jian a bicycle—he needed the money so his sister could go to a good school. Clearly there is tension between Jian and his sister. In the first instance where she appears, she is sitting on the steps reading and once Jian arrives, she gets up without a word and leaves. In the second instance, she is standing in the alleyway and has seen Jian searching for his bicycle. Again, she leaves without either speaking to one another. Jian may blame his sister for his troubles. She may suspect that Jian has stolen the money to purchase the bicycle.*

- Conclude this activity by exploring with students the moral implications of this plot. To whom does the bicycle belong—Guei who has earned it? Or Jian who has purchased it, albeit perhaps with money stolen from his father. Ask students to predict what additional complications might occur so that the action continues to rise to a climax.

## Activity D: *Enrichment—A Country Boy No More*

- Define *depiction*. A depiction is a way of presenting information about a person, place, thing, or idea. Depictions are often *based on* fact but they *are not* fact. A depiction is one person's or one group's interpretation of reality. Emphasize that film depictions can be positive or negative or neutral.
- Before viewing the remainder of the film (running time is approximately 60:00), review with students the cinematic techniques filmmakers use to create *film depictions*.

### Film Depictions

Moving images are also depictions, or representations of reality. The filmmaker creates a depiction with an intended message or intended audience reaction in mind. The visual tools the filmmaker uses to create depictions include the following:

*Costumes and make-up.* These help to create a character's physical appearance, which can trigger a reaction in the audience.

*Acting and dialogue.* An actor's performance is much more than what is spoken. *How* an actor delivers lines, including the use of body language and facial expression, conveys meaning.

*Lighting, sound, camera angles, visual symbols.* These elements of composition influence not only what the audience sees but how.

*Reaction shots.* These focus on how one character reacts to a situation or to another character. Showing the reaction of others is another way a filmmaker can create a positive or negative (or neutral) impression of the subject.

- Introduce the final screening activity. In these scenes, the action continues to rise and builds to a climax, or turning point. After viewing these scenes, students should be prepared to link cause and effect events that build to the climax and to identify the event that is the turning point.
- **Screen chapters 16 – 28 of the DVD.** Teachers, please note: There is no screening sheet for this activity. Instead, guided discussion questions are provided below.

### Guided Discussion

1. A new character, Da Huan, is introduced. Describe his appearance and behavior in comparison to Jian and Guei. *Da Huan's appearance is quite different from both Jian and Guei. He does not wear the neat school uniform that Jian does nor does he have a job that we can determine (for example, he is not wearing the uniform of a delivery boy). He is a third type—not a schoolboy, not a country boy, but rather a tough city guy. He is also a show-off, performing stunts for the others.*
2. Why might Xiao be attracted to Da Huan? *Answers will vary. Some may suggest she is trying to make Jian jealous. Others may say she finds him more mature than Jian who is moody and more interested in playing at the arcade or arguing with his friends.*
3. How does Jian react when his friends accuse him of being a bicycle thief? How does he react when his father calls him a thief? *In both instances he gets angry. He attempts to fight his friend. He argues with his father.*
4. What moral dilemma does the bicycle pose for the teenagers? *Guei refuses to give up the bicycle. Jian argues—or rather his friends argue for him—that since he purchased the bike, it now belongs to him. Jian's friends want Guei to pay Jian for the bicycle. Guei, however, refuses. He has no money and besides, he earned the bicycle.*

5. During the negotiation scene, what names do the city teenagers call Guei? *Stupid, stubborn, dumb.*
6. What compromise do the teenagers agree to? *Both boys will share ownership, swapping the bicycle every other day.*
7. Guei's friend gets him a replacement bicycle that he can use on his "off days." Describe this bicycle and explain why Guei abandons it on a bridge. *The bicycle is old, the chain is rusty and comes off. The pedals and seat are broken. Some students may suggest Guei abandons it because it is useless. He'd rather run. Others might suggest he doesn't want it because of the impoverished image it suggests.*
8. The "girl in the window" (the character's name is Qin) proves to be someone she isn't. What is her true identity? *She is a country girl who wore her boss's clothing. She had successfully changed her country "image" so as to have fooled Guei's friend, who had thought all along that he wasn't good enough for her.*
9. Da Huan confronts Jian. In what way is his behavior intended to humiliate Jian? *Da Huan does not threaten Jian with words. Instead, his behavior is intimidating. He asks Jian for a light and when Jian can't produce one, Da Huan scoffs and produces a lighter at once. He didn't need a light. He just wanted Jian to light the cigarette for him, as a way of putting Jian in his place. He mocks Jian's bike, and then puts the cigarette in Jian's mouth, taps his cheek and rides off with Xiao.*
10. What is Jian's revenge against Da Huan? *He silently follows him and Xiao, and then ambushes him, striking him on the back of the head with a brick.*
11. Why does Jian tell Guei to keep the bike? *He says he no longer needs it. This suggests that the bike did not give Jian what he was after—pride in himself. Some students may suggest he is giving up the bike because Xiao has rejected him.*
12. At the point where it seems, finally, that Guei will have the bike he has earned, the turning point of the story occurs. What is the film's climax? *Da Huan and his gang attack Jian and Guei. They destroy Guei's bicycle. Guei, who has not defended himself -- that is, has not physically fought with anyone throughout the film so far -- at this point picks up a brick and strikes the boy who is mangling his bicycle.*
13. Explain the meaning of the final shots of the film. *Answers will vary but should focus on the image of Guei carrying the broken bicycle away. Whether the bicycle can be repaired seems doubtful but Guei, who has not lost his sense of what's rightfully his will not abandon it as he did the broken-down bike his friend gave him.*
14. How does the director depict teenagers in this scene? What specific visual or sound details suggest this? *Some students may suggest words like reckless, bullies, tough, arrogant, brash. Encourage students to consider costumes and make-up, and what these reveal about the teenagers. Whereas Jian is in his school clothes and Guei wears his carrier uniform, the teens pursuing them wear casual clothing—colorful T-shirts and jeans. This clothing is a visual symbol that suggests the pursuers do not go to school or work. It also suggests a class difference.*

- Ask students: *How has Guei changed? What has caused him to change—Da Huan and his gang? Jian? Or the city itself?* Encourage discussion by exploring again with students how the bicycle symbolizes different things to different people. The bicycle is Guei's. At one point during the negotiations, he clung to it and the teenagers could not separate him from it. At the end of the film, the bicycle is mangled, bent, broken. So, too, is Guei. He has lost his innocence. He is no longer a country boy.
- Conclude this lesson by asking students to write a short paper, commenting on what they learned about Beijing and/or Beijing's urban teens that they did not know or realize prior to viewing the selected scenes from this film. In writing their responses, students should consider how China's urban teens are both similar and yet also different from American teens.