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# ANTI-UNISM IN A LANDSCAPE OF UNISM: A REVIVAL OF AVANT-GARDE IN DONG YUE’S WORK “THE LOOMING STORM”<sup>1</sup>

## 0. Preamble

### 0.1. Part one

On the occasion of the participation in the International Interdisciplinary Conference “Orient Far and Near” (OFNC 2018), organized by the Centre for Oriental Law Research at the Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics, University of Wrocław, in December 2018, an evening, the author sat in a Café located in the old town of Wrocław.

Unexpectedly, all of a sudden, in a corner of the Café Lounge, a very familiar musical melody has attracted all her attention. She then let herself be guided by this music, approaching the



Fig. 1. Café in the old town of Wrocław; phot. Y. Chi

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<sup>1</sup> My great acknowledgment to colleagues at the Centre for Oriental Law Research at the Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics, University of Wrocław for offering me the opportunity to give this talk at the International Interdisciplinary Conference “Orient Far and Near” (OFNC 2018).

pianist... When the pianist finished, she greeted him in French, and said: “Amelie<sup>2</sup>, I’m the same age as her.”

The circulation of artistic ideas has never ceased, even during the Iron Curtain period... and despite the Cold War and the post-Cold War eras, artistic ideas are in circulation and have composed a rhythm of ‘Va-et-Vient.’

Above, from the author’s diary.

## 0.2. Part two

Industrial revolutions have allowed the emergence of a new art dimension, which the author would like to define as Post-Industrial Art. Post-Industrial Art was inaugurated by the advent of Impressionism, then continued its development and ended with Unism and Anti-Unism defined by Wladyslaw Strzeminski (1893–1952) (Chevrier 2018) as part of the Avant-Garde.

Post-Industrial Art has spread from one field to another, covering different artistic fields, for example, from painting to cinema. As it spreads, certain influences and reciprocal interactions actively operate among these artistic varieties. Since 1895, the year of the first film released in Lyon, which marked the invention of cinema by the Lumière brothers in France, we can observe that in their first films, cinematographic language has benefited from undeniable influence of French Impressionist paintings.

In the 1920s, French Avant-Garde (Abel, 1894) cinema arose, also called French Impressionist cinema (the First Avant-Garde or Narrative Avant-Garde), which has influenced the Chinese filmmakers of the 1930s – 1940s. As evidenced in the work of Cai Chusheng (蔡楚生 1906–1968), Fei Mu (费穆 1906–1951), there are echoes of “J’accuse” (1919) by Abel Gance (1889–1981), “La femme de nulle part” (1922) by Louis Dellu (1890–1924), and “Un chien Andalou” (1929) by Luis Buñuel (1900–1983).

“The Looming Storm” (暴雪将至, 2017) signed by Dong Yue (董越) has marked a revival of Avant-Garde in current Chinese cinematography. In



Fig. 2. Dong Yue; phot. Le Monde.

2 The protagonist of the French film “Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amélie Poulain”, signed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, released in 2001.

addition to an imagery expression almost similar to that of Andrei Tarkovski's (1932–1986) "Stalker" (1979), Dong Yue's work also coincided with the conceptions of Unism and Anti-Unism in the field of painting. Based on the historical context of the 1990s in China, a social pictorial Unist landscape referring to the social consequences of the Chinese reform of the 1980s (particularly in terms of privatization of state-owned industries) described in an Anti-Unism, the portraits of individuals: abandoned workers who have been placed outside the factories they once devoted their lives to, rural migrants who have converted to prostitution to earn a living in the city and some others involved in cases of corruption, rape and murder, etc.

"The Looming Storm" offers a pictorial landscape of Unism composed of industrial ruins, a destroyed and deformed nature. Yet this Unist landscape in a rainy atmosphere tends to be sentimental, depressing and nihilistic. Behind this Unist landscape is an anti-Unist voice that questions, through the uniformed and crushed individuals, represented by the protagonist Yu Guowei. Yu's human conditions have shown that in a clandestine professional life, he suffered from a social non-existence; hence, he was led to the obsessive search for heroic glory and the recognition by authority. Finally, it drove him into a life impasse in which the sense of humanity is erased.

Finally, almost resembling Tarkovsky's reverie, the dream reflects reality, Dong Yue's work owns a universal dimension, as he stated:

... in a limited space, I try to evoke as much as possible.

In addition, "The Looming Storm" voices of an interruption in an era of China Dreaming, its female protagonist, Yu's intimate relationship, before her suicide, claimed:

I have the impression of having lived in a dream, but now I have woken up, what about you? You are still dreaming!



Fig. 3. Picture of the music main term of "The Looming Storm"; phot. Ding Ke.

## 1. Impressionism to Unism & Anti-Unism (Avant-Garde), the post-industrial art in motion

Industrial revolutions have allowed the emergence of a new art dimension, which is termed by the author as Post-Industrial Art.

Post-Industrial Art was inaugurated by the advent of Impressionism (19<sup>th</sup> century), then continued its development and seemed to end with ‘Unism and Anti-Unism’ defined by Katarzyna Kobro and Wladyslaw Strzeminski (1893–1952) (Chevrier, 2018) as part of the avant-garde.

“Le Pont de l’Europe” by Gustave Caillebotte, is considered as one of the representative works of French Impressionism during its inaugural phase, denouncing the power of industry and the violent transformation of Paris.

Sooner, Impressionism embodied some bourgeoisie taste, tended to be considered as conformist. The advent of Cubism in France seems to be a turning point in the Impressionist adventure. Inspired by primitive



Fig. 4. Le Pont de l’Europe (1876–1877) by Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894); phot. Musée d’Orsay.



African art, Cubism engages in a provocation and renewal by creating an aesthetic “ugliness”. Ganteführer-Trier (2015) quoted Pablo Picasso:

Every masterpiece comes into the world with a dose of ugliness in it. This ugliness is the sign of the creator’s struggle to say a new thing in a new way. When people want to learn Chinese, they think: I have to learn Chinese, right? Why do not they ever think they need to learn painting?

Cubism serves as a bridge between Impressionism and the Avant-Garde which identifies itself as revolutionary. Strzeminski’s avant-garde artistic career consisted of two stages: to be influenced by the Russian avant-garde, then to be linked to the French Avant-Garde.

Around Russian Revolution period, his studies at the Free State Art Studios in Moscow between 1918 and 1919 allowed him to discover prominent figures such as Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin. One of Strzeminski’s works of this period, was entitled “Cubism, Tension of the Material Structure”. According to Suchan & Ziebinska-Lewandowska (2018), Strzeminski’s early works revealed the important influences from Russian Avant-Garde:

It reveals Strzeminski’s absorption of the principles of Russian Cubo-Futurism with its use of fragmented letters derived from Cubist collage, combined with an emphasis on Faktura, or the inherent properties of materials, juxtaposed to create surface tension, which itself gives meaning to the work, without the need to represent anything specific.

His French connection was established around the advent of his inventive concept of ‘Unism’, from the 1920s, when the conditions for avant-garde artists deteriorated in the Soviet Union. Strzeminski and his wife, Katarzyna Kobro fled to Poland. While maintaining their contacts with the European Avant-Gardes such as Piet Mondrain, Theo van Doesburg, Georges Vantongerloo, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Jean Arp, in 1932, Strzeminski’s couple joined the Paris-based artists’ group ‘Abstraction-Création’ whose predecessor was ‘Cercle et Carré’ founded by Michel Seuphor and Joaquin Torret-Carcia.

His concept of “Unism”, which emerged in the late 1920s, was characterized by a purely aesthetic harmony representing an artistic and political utopia and a rejection of realism, historical and social context. Unism is

something beyond all these elements... Suchan & Ziebinska-Lewandowska (2018) stated:

According to the Unist theory of painting, the fact that it is a framed flat surface covered in paint determines a work's essence. Hence, everything that goes beyond these properties – movement, time, three-dimensionality, external references (mimetic, psychological, symbolic), etc. – ought to be rejected. This is the only way in which the ultimate artistic goal can be achieved, namely a work's perfect internal consistency and harmony.

His harmonious utopia, Unism, is also a de-dramatization approach, with which a painting should be a pure visual phenomenon, liberated from “all ideas alien to painting”, that is to mean, a unitary surface freed from the “dramatic tensions” that divide a composition. In this sense, Strzeminski favored Malevich over Tatlin, and further later-on, he rejected Futurist dynamism. Suchan & Ziebinska-Lewandowska (2018) averred:

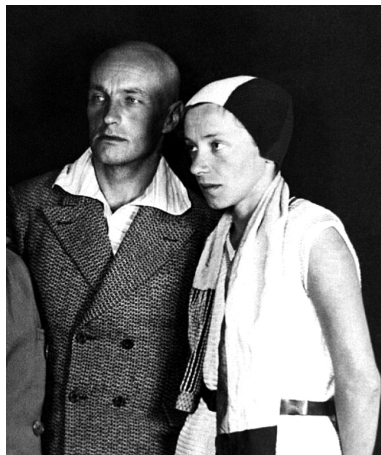


Fig. 5. Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński; phot. Archive Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, via Centre Pompidou.

In its pure, static form, painting should achieve Cubism's essence (the essence of life), in opposition to its naturalist avatars. Strzeminski formulated this position as early as 1922 in a famous text on Russian art in which he favored Malevich over Tatlin.

Whereas Malevich envisaged dynamic, aerial forms, Strzeminski imagined a universe at rest, animated by a pure, inner movement...

In proclaiming the autonomy of a de-dramatized pictorial space, Unism turned a painting into the ideal locus of a contemplative experience all of from chronological, historical and biographical concerns.

Yet, in the full development of the Unist concept during the 1920s and 1930s, Strzeminski started to take into account of historical conditioned consciousness, which has formed his post-Unist concept. Suchan & Ziebinska-Lewandowska (2018) uttered:

In his post-Unist paintings, Strzeminski tried not so much to convey an objective image that would be independent of the viewer, but to represent the very mechanism of seeing. For him, this mechanism was modified by impulses that came from the body as well as our historically conditioned consciousness.

While Unism was seeking to become a fugue of history, as Unism's theorist claimed to produce painting removed from history, Unism was convulsed by history: Strzeminski had suffered terribly during the I World War. Then, with the II World War, Unism was no longer an ideal of pictorial space but a distant utopia, which the Unist's artist finally recognized. Suchan & Ziebinska-Lewandowska (2018) clarified:

Strzeminski's painting thus logically moved closer to Surrealism, that is to say to a poetics based on subverting the surrounding reality through hallucinatory inventiveness. This hallucinatory transformation of the unitary field of painting represents the Anti-Unist path of Unism... Anti-Unism had become a mandatory development – the (historic) condition of Unism. Anti-Unism played out the drama denied (disclaimed) by Unism.



Figs 6. From the left: Unistic Composition 9 (1931) and Unemployed (Figures) (1934) by Strzeminski; phot. Archive Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz, via Centre Pompidou.

Pure harmony has evolved into more pronounced forms. In the context of this transformation from Unism to Anti-Unism, it constituted in fact a turning point from collectivism to individualism, the awakening of the artist's social consciousness.

## 2. From Impressionist painting to Impressionist cinema (Avant-Garde Cinema)

Post-Industrial Art has spread from one field to another, covering different artistic fields, for example, from painting to cinema. As it spreads, certain influences and reciprocal interactions actively operate among these artistic varieties.

Since 1895, the year of the first film released in Lyon, which marked the invention of cinema by the Lumière brothers in France, we can observe that in their first films, cinematographic language has benefited from undeniable influence of Impressionist painting.



Figs 7. On the left: *The Leopard* (1963), by Luchino Visconti (1906–1976); phot. [film.avclub.com](http://film.avclub.com). On the right: *Danse à Bougival*, a work of Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919); phot. [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org).

Lumière brothers nourished quite close relationship with some French Impressionist figures, such as Renoir etc. In Lumière's early documentary cinematographic works, especially the family life sceneries, the aesthetic tastes were

inspired by that of Impressionism. This European tradition was also perused by Luchino Visconti (1906–1976) in his “The Leopard” released in 1963.

With regard to Avant-Garde painting and cinema, the Polish artist Mieczysław Szczuka (1898–1927) conceived in the 1920s a varied combination of typographic signs filmed in close-up for the movie entitled “He killed, you killed, I kill”. Strzeminski commented:

Movement as a change of place: arriving or diminishing the unchanging geometric forms.

De Haas (2018) added:

Szczuka was one of the few artists of the Polish inter-war avant-garde interested in the issues of the film. Perhaps he sensed in him the potential that he expressed in the slogan: “inseparability of art and social issues.” Art, according to this artist, would be closely related to shaping social awareness and creating a better society.

Avant-garde painting and avant-garde cinema nourished osmotic relationships.

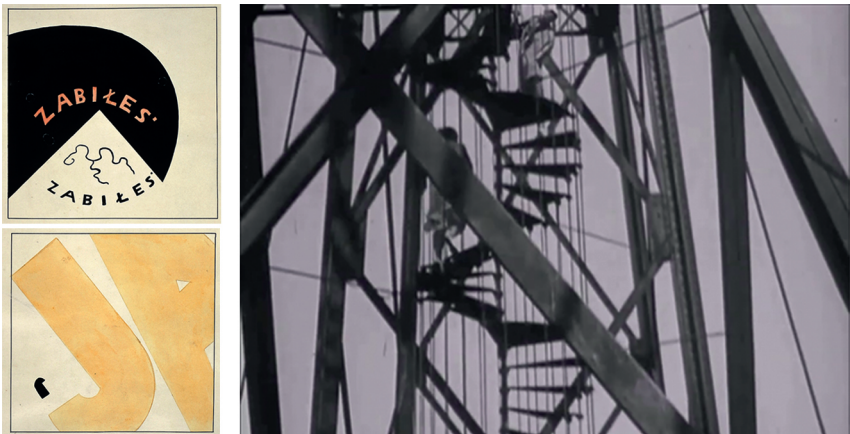


Fig. 8. On the left: Mieczysław Szczuka’s design for two stills dedicated to the movie *He Killed, You Killed, I Killed*; phot. [zasoby.msl.org.pl/arts/view/280](http://zasoby.msl.org.pl/arts/view/280). On the right: frame from László Moholy-Nagy’s film *Marseille vieux port*; phot. P. De Haas, *Cinéma absolu : Avant-garde 1920–1930*, Editions Macula 2018.



### 3. Avant-Garde Cinema (France, China)

In the course of the development of French cinema, during 1920s, French Avant-Garde cinema arose, which is also called French Impressionist Cinema (the First Avant-Garde or Narrative Avant-Garde). It is a movement that groups around the critic and director Louis Delluc, filmmakers Germaine Dulac, Marcel L'Herbier, Abel Gance, Jean Epstein, René Clair. The artists of the group were keen to make cinema a radically new art, moving away from theater and literature. In reaction against the abuse of literary adaptations, they want scenarios specially written for the screen. According to the historian Noureddine Ghali, the term of "Avant-Garde Cinema" appeared near the end of the World-War I (1918), is linked to the film signed by Louis Delluc, entitled "La Femme de Nulle Part" (Woman from nowhere), and it was declared, as Ghali (1995) cited:

Avant-garde directors, enjoy this beautiful summer to attach yourself to truly French landscapes. Your scenarios will gain in style, elegance and homogeneity.

It should be noted that Avant-Garde cinema was in osmosis with Avant-Garde movement in general, but also in contact with the Russian avant-garde of the time, such as futurism and its figure Vladimir Mayakovsky.

As for the cinema in China, which emerged in 1920s, Chi (2019) claimed:

The center of cinematographic creation in China was Shanghai, an international city with foreign concessions, new industrial bourgeois, working



Fig. 9. On the left: *La femme de nulle part* (1922) by Louis Delluc; phot. en.wikipedia.org. On the right: *Spring in a Small Town* (1948) by Fei Mu; phot. *Spring in a Small Town* (1948) – trailer, youtube.com.

classes being exploited, etc. Left-Wing cinema gained popularity during its advent. It was clearly influenced by European Avant-Garde that could come directly from Europe, especially from France, but also from Russia (which later became the Soviet Union).

More so, a figure of the non-left-artists, Fei Mu (费穆 1906–1951) was also influenced by Avant-Garde cinema.

In regards to the early period of China's cinema, from 1920s to 1940s, Chi (2019) clarified:

Those social concerns were manifested in the works of the Left-Wing, whereas existential questions and individualities were especially claimed and expressed by the Non-Left-Wing in their works. While the former attempted a commitment for social and human equality, the second were seeking the depth of human soul and were embodied in a spirit of Romanticism...

Left-Wing stream in China concurred in a conviction of social-equality that the Chinese progressists sought to claim for the most vulnerable social strata, which corresponded to the principle of Avant-Garde "se veut l'opposé exact de l'académisme".

As evidenced in the works of Cai Chusheng (蔡楚生 1906–1968) and Fei Mu, there are echoes of "J'accuse" (1919) by Abel Gance (1889–1981), "La femme de nulle part" (1922) by Louis Dellu (1890–1924), and "Un chien Andalou" (1929) by Luis Buñuel (1900–1983).

## 4. A revival of Avant-Garde in Dong Yue's cinematographic work

### 4.1. "The Looming Storm" situated in China's cinematography history

China's cinema from 1950s to 1970s, all along Mao's period almost silenced in regards of individual personal expressions, nevertheless several films of 1950s attempted to free their expression, which immediately suffered from interdiction. The cinema manufacturing was mainly destined for political propaganda.

In the 1980s, the advent of the 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Cinema of China has gained international renown and also fostered the emergence of the independent cinema with the 6<sup>th</sup> Generation during 1990s. After the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, China's independent cinema started to encounter more difficulties in its existence, restrictions on artistic creations have been tightened in China.

Nevertheless, a channel remains open between independent filmmakers of China and the cinema sphere of France, partly due to the French 'Art et Essai' system. Hence, the birth of Dong Yue's "The Looming Storm" is linked to this Sino-French artistic connection. Dong Yue elucidated during his interview with a journalist from Le Monde newspaper on July 25, 2018:

The film was aided by the foundation supporting young Chinese cinema created by filmmaker Wu Tianming (吴天明 1939–2014). The foundation organized a meeting forum at the Cannes Film Festival. Five projects, including mine, were selected. When I returned to China, investors came closer to me...<sup>3</sup>

"The Looming Storm" (暴雪将至, 2017) signed by Dong Yue (董越) has marked a revival of Avant-Garde in today's Chinese cinematography.

The "Looming Storm" is based on the veracious story of a murder committed between 1988 and 2002 in Baiyin (白银), northwestern China. However, the scenario of the film is not rooted from the angle of the murder, but his inspector, Yu Guowei (余国伟), whose name could be interpreted as 'A superfluous of a great country'.

The film was shot at Hengyang (衡阳) in the south of China. Shortly before the retrocession of Hong Kong to China in 1997, a series of murders were committed against young women in an industrial city. As police does not advance efficiently on the investigation, Yu Guowei, security chief of a state factory, whose status was outside the official regime, began to investigate by himself, until he got into the obsession.

Throughout the film's narratives, we followed Yu Guowei's obsession. In fact, behind his attempt to seize the criminal was his desperate attempt to be formally enrolled in the public collective system, to become a civil servant in order to benefit from social recognition and a stable income.

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3 J.-F. Rauger (2018). *Dong Yue: « Plus personne ne parle de ces destins brisés par ce changement économique »*. "Journal Le Monde", 25 juillet, Paris.

## 4.2. Neo-Avant-Garde features in Dong Yue's cinematographic work

“The Looming Storm” manifests a clear pursuit in pictorial narratives and metaphors, engages itself in social issues, is characterized a rival of Avant-Garde, thus, a neo-Avant-Garde work.

### 4.2.1. Between Unism and Anti-Unism

The film took place in a post-industrial environment, in a thriller narrative, a wet, gray and nihilistic emotional atmosphere was created. This reminds us of “Stalker” (1979) by Andrei Tarkovski (1932–1986): in a ruined landscape of realism where the human being is crushed, an illusory landscape was hidden, with which the human being tries to probe his existence.

In addition to an imagery expression almost similar to that of Andrei Tarkovski's (1932–1986) “Stalker” (1979), Dong Yue's work also coincides with the conceptions of Unism and Anti-Unism in the field of painting.

“The Looming Storm” offers a pictorial landscape of Unism composed of industrial ruins, a destroyed and deformed nature. Yet this Unist landscape in a rainy atmosphere tends to be sentimental, depressing and nihilistic.



Fig. 10. On the left: blue-ray cover for *Stalker*; phot. [www.amazon.fr](http://www.amazon.fr). On the right: poster for *The Looming Storm*; phot. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



Based on the historical context of the 1990s in China, a social landscape was insinuated in a pictorial landscape of Unism. This Unist landscape, both environmental and social, was imbued with a humid rainy atmosphere, monotonous and gloomy colors: gigantic factories, overwhelming postindustrial city and uniformed crowds, the workers.

However, in this Unist form, the film differs from Strzemiński's original Unism. It is not a question of cherishing social harmony, but of uncovering the social consequences occurred in 1990s, which had been provoked by China's



Fig. 11. Scenes from *The Looming Storm*; phot. frame captures from *The Looming Storm*, dir. Yue Dong, Blu-ray, Wild Side Video 2017



economic reform since the 1980s. It was a transition period for China to step from “planned economy” and “economic collectivism”, and to move to “market economy” and “privatization” of public enterprises. Following the policy of the privatization of public enterprises, many of workers were finally abandoned.

#### 4.2.2. Between Collectivism and Individualism

From Unism to Anti-Unism, it is the conceptual transformation from Collectivism to Individualism carried out in the social-artistic engagement of Strzeminski. However, in Dong Yue’s “the Looming Storm”, it is the struggles between Collectivism and Individualism that the artist has to face.

In these tenebrous Unist’s landscapes (both physic and social), the portraits of individuals appear: abandoned workers (unemployment) who have been placed outside the factories they once devoted their lives to, rural migrants who have converted to prostitution to earn a living in the city and some others involved in cases of corruption, rape and murder, etc.

Behind this Unist landscape, an Anti-Unist voice questioned, through the uniformed and crushed individuals, represented by the protagonist Yu Guowei. “The Looming Storm” focused on its protagonist who was a security chief turned clandestine detective, decided by himself to trace the criminal, but finally killed an innocent suspect. Yu Guowei’s human conditions showed that in this clandestine professional life, he suffered from a social non-existence; consequently, he was led to the obsessive search for heroic glory and recognition by a collective authority.

The crushing (demolished and demolished) industrial landscape of Unism indicates that “Collectivism” (notably “Economic Collectivism”, “Industrial Collectivism”) was demolished and collapsed in the 1990s as a result of the privatization of State-owned enterprises. Anti-Unism allowed the description of individuals, such as Yu Guowei, was eager to become a member of the system of the public industrial community; the dancer Yanzi who dreamed of settling in Hong Kong, the world elsewhere, a cliché and a utopia on her part towards a world of liberalism. Yu’s assistant who was only loyal to Yu Guowei, the policeman who wanted to retire as soon as possible, to no longer see the horror of the crime, to enjoy his intimate family life. Each individual described in the film had his (her) own utopia of life.

Hence, “Individuality” and “Individualism” are brought on sight. Nonetheless, this barely perceived “Individuality” has immediately been replaced by a fierce Individualism, Yu Guowei heroic quest into obsession testifies it vividly.

It should be noted that at a time when Economic Collectivism transformed a traditional “collectivism” based on the Confucian family piety into Industrial Collectivism, a collective social structure was nevertheless ensured. Nevertheless, when it collapsed, it dislocated the social collective structure and destroyed traditional and industrial collectivism, leading some individuals into radical “individualism”.

Dreaming of becoming a hero of collectivism, Yu Guowei engaged himself in a drift of individualism and provoked human dramas: the death of his assistant following the accident that occurred when Yu did not take him immediately in the hospital, because Yu was obsessed with the desire to catch a suspected criminal; the suicide of Yanzi, an intimate relationship of Yu, who had love for Yu and discovered that she was being used as bait to lure the serial killer and, it had been premeditated by Yu. Yu Guowei was drawn into an impasse in which the sense of humanity was erased.

### 4.3 Universal dimension of Dong Yue’s “The Looming Storm”

In a Neo-Avant-Garde narrative, Dong Yue’s *The Looming Storm* evokes philosophical-politic reflections. Dong Yue stated:

(...) in a limited space, I try to evoke as much as possible... I was so marked by the ruined industrial landscape of the 1990s, the period when so many workers were abandoned...<sup>4</sup>

In Dong Yue’s film, Yu Guowei’s heroic vocation is an obsession and an illusion, as suggested by the scene where he was decorated as a “hero” in a collective meeting and, suddenly, under the applause of the crowds of workers, artificial snowflakes suddenly fell from the top, onto his shoulders... It was in fact his illusory dream. This illusion ended only after Yanzi’s suicide. Before throwing herself into the void from a bridge, Yanzi questioned him:

I have the impression of having lived in a dream, but now I have woken up, how about you? You are still dreaming!

Yu Guowei was so much devoted to that glorified “collectivism” and yet, undoubtedly, he was also a victim of “collectivism”, he was finally one of the

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4 *Une Pluie sans fin BONUS VO „Le réalisateur“*, interview with Dong Yue, [http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=19579516&cfilm=263303.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19579516&cfilm=263303.html).



Fig. 12. Scene from *The Looming Storm*, Yu Guowei's heroic illusion in a "Collectivism"; phot. frame capture from *The Looming Storm*, dir. Yue Dong, Blu-ray, Wild Side Video 2017

dismissed employees of the factory where he served as a security chief and became one of the abandoned, just as once he introduced himself by mentioning his name: "Yu (my name) means superfluous."

Arendt (1972) uttered:

Totalitarianism does not tend towards a despotic reign over men, but toward a system in which men are superfluous... unlike the nihilist doxa that allows everything to the individual, it is rather a question here of transforming the whole reality of human lives and societies into a material of power, so that the totalitarian movement can give an ideological form to the reality.

In China's transition phase from "planned economy", "economic collectivism" to "market economy" and "privatization" of state-owned enterprises, Chinese society was undergoing a mutation from industrial Collectivism to Individuality and Individualism. thus, the film questions about the fate of the human future in terms of human existence.

The film ended in two parts: demobilization and interrogations.

Behind a demolished industrial landscape, it was a post-industrial social and human destruction. It was also about the collapse of industrial-Collectivism and the substitution of Anti-Unism by Unism. Therefore, the questions aroused.



Fig. 13. Scene from *The Looming Storm*, Yu Guowei and Yanzi; phot. frame capture from *The Looming Storm*, dir. Yue Dong, Blu-ray, Wild Side Video 2017

The gigantic factory was demolished in front of the crowd, including Yu Guowei. It was once the place of their lives, where their collective social structure was built. Henceforth, they have been abandoned and their utopias have collapsed. It was also the moment when Yu's illusion of collectivism failed. After realizing that he had finally lost the woman who was in love with him, desperate and angry, he killed his suspect, he finally entered the prison.

Eleven years later, in 2008, Yu Guowei was released from prison. He visited the former police chief who was suffering from amnesia and was placed in the hospital. Yet Yu's counterpart left him a letter before his amnesia, claiming that the criminal was killed in an accident, and the identity of that dead was not identifiable.

Yu Guowei took a bus to leave, but a snowstorm suddenly arrived, the real snowflakes fell, this snowfall might remind him of those artificial snowflakes falling on his shoulders eleven years ago, when he was decorated as a collectivist hero... and it was at this time that he finally woke up from his dreams, from his heroic illusion. He became a wanderer and a vagabond, but began to question, to wonder about the fate...

## 5. Conclusions

Artistic ideas intersect and influence each other, regardless of geographic or political boundaries: The artistic quest can evolve from artistic utopias to social interrogations, and this process is guided by an awareness of human conditions, in which artists question the world and revolutionize their artistic expressions.

As for post-industrial art (Avant-Garde), it emerges in an industrialization and reflects the violent environmental and societal transformation. The relations between post-industrial art, industrialization and post-industrialization were characterized by "Je t'aime, moi non-plus" (love and hatred). It leads to a rethinking of Collectivism and Individualism; it raises social questioning by artists and their concerns about the human condition.

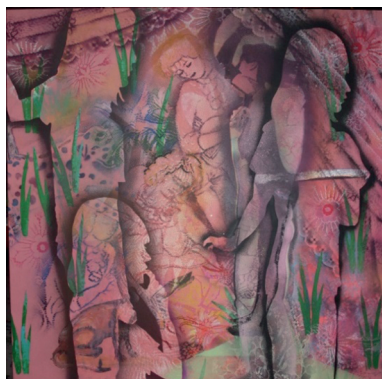


Fig. 14. Artwork *Question about* by Dominique Fury, 2019; phot. D. Fury

From Unism to Anti-Unism, Strzeminski's artistic life reflects an artistic revolution, as well as Dong Yue's "The Looming Storm". However, Strzeminski questioned about the transformation of collectivism into a consideration of individuality (individual human existence). Dong Yue wondered if there was a way to engage in human individuality on the basis of the demolition of collectivism, where the looming temptation of a radical individualism could be fierce and fatal.

This article ends for the moment by quoting a sentence of Fury, a French artist, the author of this art work entitled "Question about":

Destroying is a requirement and an important part of creation: destroying existing models.<sup>5</sup>

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