

Santiago LOZA

Intersections and Differences in Writing for Film, Theater, and Narrative

I have been writing since childhood. I feel that writing is a vital necessity. What I live, what I feel, is fleeting. Everything tends to disappear, but writing is fixed to the present.

I've also always felt the need to tell stories, to hear stories, to watch movies, to read, to see plays. Fiction makes life more tolerable; that's what I have understood since childhood. Fiction is the space of the possible, and that is where I want to be.

Fiction provides an order. Even the most heartbreaking and terrible story has an order in which it is contained. Writing can enter places where words, in everyday life, have no access. And those words can create poetic justice. Stories are the artifice that we need to survive, they tell us something and then we tell them to others.

Live to tell.

I come from a country that experienced long periods of silence and darkness. I grew up in the time of a military dictatorship, in the capital, in a strict educational system. Writing allowed me to escape from reality.

When I chose writing as my profession, I studied screenwriting. Screenwriting is a practical type of writing, a hypothetical blueprint for a future movie. In the best of cases, the screenplay will be incorporated into the movie and disappear. To write for the screen is to think about history. Writing for the screen allowed me to write without exposing my literary writing desires. That kind of writing doesn't work the same way.

Maybe I didn't have confidence in my own writing in those first years. So the camera, the scene, the sound, that very processed language, let me finish the writing that I felt I had failed to do.

Years passed, and between personal and social crises I decided to dedicate myself to theatrical writing. From there, I once again found my first vocation for the literary, the delicate work with words.

The theater has an infinite capacity for evocation. I wrote several monologues. The presence of a single person, in an empty space, could provoke the spectators to imagine multiple universes. The theater with its limited physical resources had the potential to expand the imagination in the moment of the scene.

Both the theater and the cinema worked at the level of images, but while the images in the cinema are photographic and sonic, in the theater the images are mental. The work happens in the mind of the spectator. Words resonate and build spaces, sensations, characters. The work is finished by the spectator.

ICPL and the International Writing Program Panel Series, September 20, 2019

Gabriela Román (Mexico), Santiago Loza (Argentina),

Kim Jaehoon (South Korea), Chan Ping-chiu (Hong Kong)

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Through the theater, I resumed the desire to write narrative. Theater and cinema are collective disciplines. I write alone, but I work with actors, actresses, and directors who put on these texts. There is a dialogue about what is written, there are modifications, adaptations, etc.

I needed to try again to write without the pressure of that text being taken to the stage. Then the need arose to write narrative, to go on writing in the middle of other processes, like a secret plan. Between cinema and theater projects, I was developing a private writing.

Over time I'm coming to trust that first impulse that led me to write. I keep learning, I keep looking for new challenges.

I live in a country where social, economic and political crises are frequent. We Argentines get used to living in crisis. The lack of certainty drives many to take refuge in the creative to withstand the unstable. Writing is a kind of house, a space of freedom that is not colored by conjuncture or the changing future.

The outside is usually chaotic and threatening; writing is the private place where you can find some peace and, at the same time, the will to carry on, to continue inquiring about our fragile existence.

Translated by Danielle Benesh

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