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24 True Lies per Second

Many directors and novelists agree that Shakespeare would have loved cinema. Shakespeare belonged to the age when drama was the only way to enact fictional characters and stories. His styles and techniques, which were influenced by ancient mythology and the theater of ancient Greece and Rome, are still alive in contemporary drama and movies.

Cinema has its own mode of expression, and exposes society's thought and suffering. It can help viewers understand themselves, others, and history. There is a bridge between writing and film, a bridge built by many classic novels and stories. Thought travels between novels and films, and both provoke questions that are reborn in the reader or viewer.

Cinema allows us to wonder without using the words "who, what, when, where, why," and novels are a way of asking questions without waiting for an answer. Politics and religion can provide some answers, but art—and the impulse to make it, which was born in humans from the beginning—cannot serve a meal of answers. Whenever we notice a new movement in cinema, we should view it as a kind of protest—which is the job of art—against war, radicalism, terrorism, and the irrational rules that control us. What politics can simplify into one sentence, art can say 24 ways a second. In this statement, I have used an idea from Jean-Luc Godard. It is also the title of my paper. Godard indicates a deep relationship between narrative writing and the cinematographic scene.

Whenever war is represented on TV, it is accompanied by lies and fake images. What cinema wants to do is to retell the story itself, the story you have never heard—the true lies. In the news, sharp, concentrated images are presented, like instructions in any ancient religious text that cannot be rejected. In novels and cinema, we can correct those questionable, fishy images. Living in Iraq means that I am from the country of breaking news, which people have their preconceived ideas about. People are used to opening up a can of media and feeding their minds on routine scenes of war in Iraq.

But apart from the official story of the war, millions of stories emerge silently. The raw material of many novels is looking for lucky writers who will save it and bring it into written form. The reality of ruthless conditions provides many ready-made scripts, but sometimes we need to dilute the horror of the Iraqi reality to make it fiction. We have to simplify reality to make it believable.

Because of the poetic context in contemporary Iraqi literature, many written texts can't be modified or converted to films. The phenomena of the director who writes his own scripts has appeared; a new generation of filmmakers plots their scenes without the aid of fiction writers. Rather than cinema reflecting literature, literature can now reflect cinema.

I am first of all a novelist. When I'm writing a script based on one of my short stories, I'm thinking about how a lot of stories around me aren't appropriate for animated short movies. I should put on the hat of a director, which is now—thanks to the evolution of the industry of cinema—not so similar to the hat of an author. Authors could spoil their story if they use the wrong hat. In the same way, directors sometimes intrude on the author's task, like interrupting him during a meal.

The golden rule for film, I believe, is that the frame is like a prism, which we use to find another

understanding of our text. Each cinematic reinterpretation of a text is one of a thousand possible interpretations. There are 24 frames per seconds, 24 truths, 24 interpretations, 24 perspectives.

Making short movies wasn't a decision; I started making movies in the same way I started writing. It's something very personal and individual. In cinema, as in writing, I want to be loyal to my own beginnings, my very first drafts.

Gabriel García Márquez said that it's better for novelists to watch what happens in the film editing room—they should focus not on making a good movie, but on writing their own novel! I have taught myself that shooting and editing my own films supports my fiction writing. Initially, I misunderstood cinema, but now I know that the best way to understand cinema is to misunderstand it. I thought that novelists would be the ones best-suited to create a cinematographic world for their characters, until I found out that cinematography is an independent, rich, and freestanding art. It's an art that can master the arrogance of writers.