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## THE SPEEDS OF JOURNALISM IN FILM: EIGHT FILMS ABOUT SLOW JOURNALISM

### LAS VELOCIDADES DEL PERIODISMO EN EL CINE: OCHO FILMES SOBRE *SLOW JOURNALISM*

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#### ABSTRACT

In these lines, we will see how the seventh art, through eight films, has reflected slow journalism. If we present and publicize cinematic works in which journalism struggles to find new ways of narrating reality, and to offer the audience higher-quality news material, the public will eventually develop a more optimistic view of journalism. In this way, the media will regain the respect of the audience and the consumer will regain confidence in the journalistic profession.

**Keywords:** Film; Journalism; News Business; Journalistic Ethics; Film Analysis.

#### RESUMEN

En estas líneas veremos cómo ha reflejado el séptimo arte, mediante ocho películas, el periodismo pausado. Si presentamos y damos a conocer trabajos cinematográficos en los que el periodismo lucha por encontrar nuevas formas de narrar la realidad, y ofrecer a la audiencia un material informativo de mayor calidad, el público desarrollará con el tiempo una visión más optimista del periodismo. De esta forma, los medios de comunicación se ganarán de nuevo el respeto de la audiencia y el consumidor volverá a confiar en la profesión periodística.

**Palabras clave:** Cine; Periodismo; Empresa Informativa; Ética Periodística; Análisis Cinematográfico.

## AS VELOCIDADES DO JORNALISMO NO CINEMA: ONZE FILMES SOBRE *SLOW JORNALISM*

#### RESUMO:

Nestas linhas veremos como a sétima arte tem refletido, através de onze filmes, o jornalismo de lazer. Se apresentarmos e divulgarmos obras cinematográficas em que o jornalismo se esforça para encontrar novas formas de narrar a realidade, e oferecermos ao público material informativo de melhor qualidade, o público

desenvolverá uma visão mais otimista do jornalismo ao longo do tempo. Dessa forma, a mídia reconquistará o respeito do público e o consumidor voltará a confiar na profissão jornalística.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** cinema; jornalismo; empresa de informação; ética jornalística; análise cinematográfica.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

How should we define the journalistic term *slow journalism* and what are its main characteristics? Rosique-Cedillo and Alejandro Barranquero (2015, p. 453) present three basic characteristics. They are the following: longer timelines are rescued in time to deliver the informative piece. That is, we speak of weeks or months. Its publication genre is far from the daily news and focuses more on in-depth reporting or chronicles. Finally, they tend to focus their newsworthiness criteria on the needs of citizens. Journalists do not abandon their subjective gaze in those works that bear their signature, quite the opposite. The use of the first person and the sharing with the public of those experiences that have made it possible for the informative piece to reach them are gaining more and more strength.

The professor of Journalistic Writing López Hidalgo (2018, p.10) makes a detailed explanation of how the information professional works in this type of narrative. Specifically, the immersion chronicle:

Before the writing, the journalist investigates, delving into the events with which he feels committed and identified. Immersion, as a consequence, is considered a previous and unavoidable step. They do not want to be told stories, they prefer to live them and recreate them from their own experiences. This immersion, as is logical, will condition the chronicler's relationship with the events that he intends to narrate. As a consequence, this narrative journalism also flees from the rhetoric - let's also call it the rhetoric of distancing - that was proposed by the style books of traditional journalism, the textual third person that the telegraph imposed after it wired the whole world with the immediacy of the news.

How does this way of working adapt to current digital environments? Albalad Aiguabella exposes the following idea within his study (2015, p. 42):

Longform.org, as an aggregator of long-form pieces, is capable of finding enough material in cyberspace to recommend about 30 newspaper articles of 2,000 words or more per week. This reflects the existence of media that, in the face of the immediacy and superficial information that abounds on the Internet, bet on deep and human texts that transcend the news (slow journalism).

We can see in these explanations another characteristic of slow journalism: its exhaustive way of working with documentation. It is a clear contrast with those jobs born under the speed that the internet demands. Benaissa Pedriza (2017, p.130) indicates the following:

The information saturation generated by this process and supported by digital audiences translates into continuous updates, a lack of consulted sources and sufficiently verified facts, as well as the standardization of journalistic narratives. For a decade, there have been constant requests from information experts and professionals to increase the time dedicated to producing publishable information. This deceleration of the news production cycle would improve the quality of information products, as well as the conditions of their reception.

On the other hand, the website [www.slow-journalism.com](http://www.slow-journalism.com) adds: «Instead of desperately trying to turn social networks into breaking news, we focus on the values that we all expect from quality journalism: accuracy, depth, context, analysis, and expert opinion”. If we add the abuse of objectivity as the only valid prism to focus on reality with a massive and rapid delivery of information to the newsrooms, the result is that the necessary times are not respected for the news to be treated under the principles that govern the regulations of good journalistic craft.

The adoption of objectivity, as an ethical and invulnerable paradigm, covered up the patio of the subjectivity of the first person, of the author; It divided opinion and information into two complementary but incompatible worlds for the reporter and left the personal and emotional point of view shielded from the reader. The distance and neutrality of the journalist, producer of impersonal and lifeless texts, would banish the feelings of the informative text (López Hidalgo and Fernández Barrero, 2018, p.19).

How do you try to alleviate this situation from journalism? Le Masurier (2014, p.143) argues: «Some slow journalism practices provide the opportunity for active co-production. The periodicity of its delivery also slows down, increasing the pleasures in production and consumption». The existence of slow journalism is the answer: look for alternatives in the narrative. In other words, how the journalist tells the reality. One of the greatest difficulties when using the term slow journalism is defining what is new about it compared to past ways of practicing the journalistic profession. Benaissa Pedriza (2017, p.133) warns about this issue:

At first glance, the basic characteristics that define slow journalism (narrative quality, length, more time dedicated to in-depth investigation) proposed by the doctrine do not seem to differ too much from other forms of journalism in the past. The authors themselves have no qualms about including under the umbrella of slow journalism narrative journalism, whose origins date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New Journalism that emerged in the United States in the 1960s at the hands of Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, and Truman Capote, or explanatory journalism that gave rise to a new category of Pulitzer Prizes in 1988. One could even think that the aforementioned are nothing more than the basic requirements that all types of journalism should meet at any time and place. Therefore, it is necessary to find that X factor that unequivocally defines slow journalism compared to other types of journalism.

In a few words, one of the keys to slow journalism is the sum of betting on the time factor plus the human factor when reporting. Pedriza (2017, p. 135) indicates that:

To try to curb the information saturation generated by the profusion of agency news repeated with hardly any changes by the big media, it is necessary to invest in the human factor. It would be useless to reduce the rate of updating news if it has not been previously prepared according to the principles of quality, rigor, and objectivity inherent to the journalistic activity. The frenetic pace of updating the information published in the online editions of the media is often because the journalists themselves have skipped some (or even several) steps in the process of searching or verifying sources. In a hurry, they find it necessary to correct inaccurate, confusing, or false data.

On the other hand, Le Masurier (2014, p.143) interprets the following:

Slow journalism avoids sensationalism and herd reporting. It is ethical in the treatment of topics and producers. Until now, these characteristics are not unusual in quality journalism. Slow's approach would add that journalism should not only be factually accurate but sources should be as far as possible verifiable and traceable by consumers through transparent methods (whether through links or including the origin of the information and the method in the text itself).

Using this narrative technique in journalistic production would help, on the one hand, to combat journalistic malpractice. Second, it would be useful for media consumers to regain trust in journalistic credibility.

### **1.1. Cinema as an educational tool in journalism**

It is stated in the section dedicated to the objectives that one of the goals to be achieved by this work is to be able to offer audiovisual teaching tools in communication matters for the professionals of tomorrow. That is, to provide teaching support that allows students to access the study and understanding of the new techniques in journalistic narratives. According to Mercader Martínez (2012, p.47):

Audiovisual has become an authentic reading-writing instrument in open competition with the written language, which it frequently supersedes in daily activity. Another manifestation that proves the influence of the audiovisual pieces is that many academic research works are not presented in writing but are reflected in audiovisual products. The everyday is also framed in videos that document life itself, many of which are uploaded to the Internet, thus magnifying their global presence. [...] It is a fact that cinema is an ideological device, with educational influences thanks to the arbitrary and immediate arrangement of its discourse with reality. These approaches demand the presence of cinema at all educational levels. Therefore, the function of the school concerning cinema must be manifested in a multitude of actions.

Bustos Metanzos (2010) states that pedagogical science is experiencing a marked openness to the use of new technologies in the field of education. Their main virtue is that they offer support that helps create creative situations to achieve learning goals:

In this aspect, education, in general, has assumed in recent years an opening to the use of audiovisual media under an innovative prism, thus motivating profound changes in teaching modes and methodologies where the impact and transformation that today's media and information technologies are producing in culture and society transcend and influence this educational framework, incorporating it as a real tool to generate creative learning situations.

How does the use of these audiovisual tools influence the field of higher Communication studies? On the one hand, create a vocation to practice good journalism. Montse Fernández (2008, p. 508) gives the example of the film *All the President's Men* (Pakula, 1976):

All the President's Men is a very special film because it caused positive effects both in the society of the time (it changed the perception of journalism and journalists that the majority had) and in the profession itself (journalists once again felt that they had a responsibility and that their work could change things).

Secondly, since there is already a more than fruitful marriage between cinema and journalism, why not complete this union with the use of journalists' cinema in university classrooms? Seeing examples of the application of the craft in cinematographic fiction, or the documentary genre, can help alleviate existing deficiencies in the study plans.

The new international economic and political order, the distribution of ownership of the media, and the monopoly of messages in the hands of a few countries and a few companies raise the urgent need to seek new proposals to study the reality and the constructions that the media make of that reality. In this context, there is an urgency to use the media in the education of citizens. (Dias Gomes, 2011, p.79)

Films of journalists bring students closer to the figure of the information professional and the conditions of their craft throughout history.

The professionals of the pen, the microphone, or the camera, are no longer just a reckless, stupid, and confused mass that pursues the true protagonist of the film, microphone at the ready, begging for a statement and forming an amorphous and pitiful choir of extras in thousands and thousands of films. Gradually they have risen to the top of the cast, offering through their fictional characters a particularly pertinent way of approaching today's complex world or simply offering a good story. A couple of hours of healthy entertainment in a dark room or the living room at home. (Mínguez Santos, 2012, p.13)

Depending on the year of production of the film, students can approach the footage in question as an art piece that is not indifferent to the historical context in which it was conceived. In this way, they can check, in a short period, how the information professional and the information company itself have evolved.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

Find and analyze film works that have shown the viewer techniques and characteristics of slow journalism. Secondly, to offer, through the analysis of these films, didactic material for teaching communication matters. The idea is to facilitate through the debate about the film's message, the idea of journalism as a common good.

We corroborate through a documentary search that cinema should be used as an educational resource and not as a mere distraction in the classroom. If cinema is not used properly, it can lead to not questioning the reality that surrounds it, taking a passive role, forgetting the importance of critical capacity and the learning process that cinema can suppose, hence the need to use it properly in the classroom (Monsalve Lorente and Ruiz Romero, 2021, p. 164).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

An important role has been played by the work of prior documentation based on the consultation of the bibliography in Spanish specialized in cinema and journalism: *Los chicos de la prensa* (1996) by Juan Carlos Laviana, *Las cien mejores películas sobre Periodismo* (2018) by David Felipe Arranz, *Historias de portada. 50 películas esenciales sobre periodismo* (2017) by Josep Maria Bunyol, *El periodista observado: Cine sobre informadores* (2012) by Javier Sierra Sánchez (Coordinador), *El periodista en imágenes de cine* (2012) by Beatriz Peña Acuña (Coordinadora), *Periodistas de cine. El cuarto poder en el séptimo arte* (2012) by Luis Mínguez Santos, and *Cine entre líneas: Periodistas en la pantalla* (2006) are the main manuals consulted.

The subject to be analyzed, how the films viewed reflect slow journalism, has been worked on in eight productions. The guide offered by Laviana in 1996 has been used as a starting point. There are thirteen categories: The tycoon, the director, the chief editor, the political journalist, the special envoy, the yellow reporter, the committed journalism, the critic and the columnist, the crime reporter, the society journalist, the sportswriter, the photographer, the busy bees. Laviana (1996, p.347) defends this last category as those professionals who are part of the information company but have enjoyed less viewing on the big screen: secretary, workshop operator, and draftsman are some examples.

Recalling the aforementioned definition of Rosique-Cedillo and Barranquero (2015, p. 453), we must also look at three basic characteristics of slow journalism: longer timelines are rescued in time to deliver the informative piece. Their publication genre is far from the daily news and focuses more on in-depth reporting or chronicles, and they usually focus their newsworthiness criteria on the needs of citizens. From Laviana's thirteen initial categories, we chose those that best correspond to the definition of Rosique-Cedillo and Barranquero: the special envoy, the committed journalist, the event reporter, and the chronicler. Following the same criteria, to these categories we add the one exposed by López Hidalgo and Fernández Barrero in their book *Periodismo de inmersión para desenmascarar la realidad: immersion journalism*. In this way, we obtain five categories in which to place the films that are part of the sample. Table 1 shows the definition of the different categories and the titles that, finally, form part of the research corpus.

As a guide, students can visualize the different proposed footage based on whether the following characteristics of what investigative journalism should be are met (Gómez Patiño, 2018, p.50):

- 1) the search for a hidden truth, whose information citizens have the right to know.
- 2) distrust official sources of information and are not interested in the information given in press releases. They are not interested in the "pseudo-events" generated by communication cabinets of different organizations/institutions. Their interest is in what they do not say.
- 3) the methods of the social sciences are used, besides databases, surveys, statistical data, etc. (Data, big data, precision, or fact journalism).
- 4) investigative journalists look for relations with anonymous people or not but they are not necessarily part of the usual information circuits, who wish to remain anonymous.
- 5) their agenda is made up of people who are not regular reporters. They need people who have data on the subject and who are willing to collaborate with them.
- 6) they never publish a scoop for the fact of giving the data exclusively. They are used to exclusive information, the result of their work.
- 7) they have enough independence regarding the sources of information. Their starting point is the systematic rejection of the official versions.
- 8) their information is usually unknown by the media of the competition. That is the informative value of the investigation: their texts are exclusive.
- 9) they anticipate the facts themselves, bringing to light what is hidden, and creating informative news of their own. They are active journalists and generators of news where current affairs can serve as a clue to start an investigation but it is never an end in itself.
- 10) are oblivious to the pressures of closing time and daily work planning. These journalists work on their behalf, as a team, and publish their texts when they have completed their investigation, strategically.

Along with the characteristics of Gómez Patiño, a series of films are proposed that facilitate the creation of a series of debates with Communication students based on the following points:

*The times of journalism:* what is the amount of time used by the protagonists of the different footage to finish the informative product? It is intended that the students reflect on the fact that the film journalists mentioned here do not let a closed delivery time mark their way of working. The informative pieces are delivered when, in the eyes of their authors, they are ready for public opinion.

*Use of information sources:* is there more use of official sources than unofficial sources, or is there a balance? How does the journalist work with them?

*Goals of the information company:* do the information company and its workers pursue a common goal?

*Goals of the information professional:* what are the reasons that move the protagonists to carry out their work? Can the protagonists be considered heroes, villains, or a mix? In the words of San José de la Rosa (2019, p.141):

In 2010, *Journalists in film*. Herodes and villains, the work of Professor Brian McNair, raises the distinction between 'good guys and bad guys' in information. Among the heroes are the "watchdogs", witnesses on the front lines of the events, heroines, and artists. Among the villains, he distinguishes rogues, swindlers, and 'king makers'. In

other words, the reflection is pursued about whether the journalists reflected on the screen are champions of the craft, quite the opposite, or professionals with their lights and shadows.

**Table 1**

*Films that are part of the corpus.*

<b>Films</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Category</b>
* <i>Another Day of Life</i> (2018) * <i>Thunder Rock</i> (1942)	The most admired and maliciously envied by the newsroom. He travels nonstop. He covers important events. [...]. And his life, always from here to there, and his life leaves a lot to be desired no matter how hard he insists on demonstrating his bomb-proof resistance. (Laviana, 1996, p. 127)	<b>Special Envoy</b>
* <i>The Fourth Estate</i> (2019) * <i>Spotlight</i> (2015)	Journalism is, in itself, a profession of commitment. Every journalist pursues an end, he is committed: with sales, with glory, with the truth, with a cause [...]. (Laviana, 1996, p. 193)	<b>Committed Journalist</b>
* <i>Slap the Monster on Page One</i> (1972)	Crimes were big events when written by expert reporters and, if the crime was solved by them, could serve as publicity for 'a public service newspaper'. (Laviana, 1996, p. 250)	<b>Crime reporter</b>
* <i>Radio Tekie Murrow</i> (1951)	Cinema has known how to use them as great narrators. There is no movie in which an event appears [...] in which we have not seen or hate them passionately narrating the events they witness. (Laviana, 1996, p. 312)	<b>Chronicler</b>
* <i>Oloture</i> (2019) * <i>Shock Corridor</i> (1965)	The journalist investigates, immerses himself in the events that he narrates, covers up his personality, and infiltrates the environment to be investigated, or else rises as the protagonist of these events if the circumstances so require. In these cases, the journalist flees from traditional journalism looking for other formulas that help him unmask reality. (López Hidalgo and Fernández Barrero, 2013, p.15)	<b>Immersive Journalism</b>

**Source:** Own elaboration

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Special Envoy: Lonesome Reporting

Kapuchisky is the protagonist of *Another Day of Life* (de la Fuente and Nenow, 2018). The driving force behind his work is to be present at the scene of events when they take place without letting an official source narrate them to him. «My name is Richard Kapuchisky. I work for the Polish news agency. I am your only foreign correspondent and I cover fifty countries around the world. A new Africa was being born in Angola. How could I miss it?», exposes the prestigious Polish reporter. Kapuchisky indicates the difficulty of obtaining informative material. The rest of the correspondents indicate that he chases ghosts: «Do you think that Nelson's news stories are more real? There are no facts here. Just *confusao*<sup>1</sup>. And everyone is afraid

<sup>1</sup> A complex term very repeated during the footage. In the words of Kapuchisky himself: "It is a word that synthesizes everything. Simplifying a lot, *confusao* means disorder, a state of chaos, and anarchy. It is a situation created by people but ends up getting out of control of those people, who, finally, become their victims (...)"



to speak in case the CIA hears them", replies our protagonist. The exhaustive investigative and documentation work of the European journalist is not shared by all of his colleagues: "He likes to play spies," says one of them. "What I like is getting to the bottom of things," Kapuchisky replies.

His way of working attracts retaliation. Once he returns to his hotel, the FNLA<sup>2</sup> has searched it. In his room, they have written: "You are dead, socialist reporter." Kapuchisky's travel companion is from Angola and a journalist. He expounds on the reasons that lead him to take up arms for the independence of his country while continuing to work as a journalist: «I was a journalist and a combatant at the same time. I had to shoot. That is not worthy of a journalist but I was also a combatant. I am aware that I violated my professional code and not only did I violate it, I torpedoed it», he argues. He supposes this character to be a good example of an information professional who has set aside objectivity to take an active part in the reality that he intends to narrate.

On the other hand, Farruto, military leader of the MPLA<sup>3</sup>, presents Kapuchisky's modus operandi in African lands: «Kapuchisky left Luanda to come and see what was happening. To tell the world that South African forces were invading Angolan territory. The world denied it. I think this was his mission. A mission that brought him to me, in the south of Angola». It is this situation that causes Kapuchisky to take the side of the Angolan people: he decides to warn the Cuban soldiers of the South African military intervention. The Polish news agency, having its reporter inform on the US-backed invasion by South Africa, asks Kapuchisky if the MPLA receives Cuban or Soviet aid.

Kapuchisky's comrade indicates that if he reports future Cuban aid, the CIA will increase its influence in the area and it will be the end of the cause of Angola's independence. «Knowing that it was a large-scale operation, I had doubts about whether I should send the telex or not. We were reporters and we gave our lives for our profession. That Cuba mobilizes against South Africa is very big. And I'm a reporter. I have a scoop. We spend our lives waiting for an opportunity like this», are the doubts of the journalist. Finally, he makes a risky professional decision and decides to help Angola's independence by not reporting on the Cuban intervention. We continue with the example of David, the leading foreign correspondent in *Thunder Rock* (Boulting, 1942). This reporter confronts his publisher in England: "This is what I wrote and this is what you have published. Spain, Abyssinia, Austria, concentration camps, German rearmament. The sad story. That's what I saw and that's what you say I saw and they don't match! [...] Do you want your readers to know the truth or not?" exclaims the foreign correspondent angrily.

"What is the truth Charleston? Who is the judge? Our readers are satisfied because we offer them the truth. Our circulation is 1,300,000 for the first time", a director of the newspaper indicates. "Your vision of the truth is colored by the left, and our

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<sup>2</sup> National Liberation Forces of Angola. Politically situated to the right, this guerrilla movement received the support of China, Zaire, the United States, Spain, and South Africa during the Angolan Civil War.

<sup>3</sup> Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the enemy of the FNLA. In the struggle for the independence of Angola, it received the support of the following countries: the Soviet Union, Libya, Somalia, Egypt, the Republic of the Congo, Algeria, Tunisia, Tanzania, Guinea, East Germany, and Yugoslavia.

readers are not interested in that," says another manager. That is to say, the directors of the newspaper for which David writes do not share his way of taking sides in his chronicles and reports through his denunciations of the horrors that he has witnessed in different parts of Europe during the Second World War. The journalist must look for another support for his work, beyond the newspaper for which he works, since the header does not consider that informative material profitable. The value of David's work consists of two points: his long presence in the scenarios he covers to obtain as much data as possible and his closeness to the reader when it comes to offering them.

Thus, the journalist can adopt a distant perspective, with the use of the third person, although the proximity and presence at the scene of the events confer authenticity and credibility to the story, to the extent that the journalist becomes a reliable witness of the events that are reported, from the privileged perspective that his role as observer grants him (López Hidalgo and Fernández Barrero, 2013, p.39).

David has reflected in his text his own vision of the humanitarian horror that the fascist concentration camps entail.

#### **4.2. The committed journalist**

"We are a research team of four people. We informed Ben Bradle Jr. and our work is confidential [...] we just did a story about a botched construction company and right now we are looking for our own story", exposes the editor of Spotlight in the film Spotlight (McCarthy, 2015). A new editor has arrived at the Boston Globe whose first wish is to meet with the editor of the renowned investigative team. His dialogue is of great interest as it shows the diptych between quality versus the economy of the media outlet in question:

"How long do they usually take?" is the information that the new editor-in-chief of the Boston Globe, Marty Baron, wants to know. "I couldn't say, a couple of months [...] we don't like to rush it. When we decide on the project, we can spend a year researching it," is the response of Spotlight editor Walter R. Robinson. Baron, however, continues to make numbers: «But the readership has dropped. The Internet is killing the ads and I will have to study everything very well», he exposes. "Are you planning more cuts?" is Robinson's main concern. "One could say so, yes. But what worries me is to find a way to make the newspaper indispensable for the readers", replies Baron. "I want to believe that it already is," is Walter's last word.

Marty Baron begins by pointing out that the case of a priest protected by the Church accused of abusing minors has not been well followed up. To follow up closely, he wants to send the project to the Spotlight team. Marty goes to management to report that he wants to challenge the Geoghan case. "The Church will fight tooth and nail and will not go unnoticed by our subscribers. 53% are Catholics", explains management. Finally, he gives the go-ahead for the investigation. We see a good sign in this scene that there is a concern to annoy the subscriber with the published topics. However, the media outlet in question prioritizes the importance of research over the convenience of not angering the reader. What strategies will be used to make the various sources speak? The prestige of the media outlet: "Nobody reads the Phoenix anymore. They are sunken. They no longer have power. The Globe

does. If we cover this story, the whole world will know," says Michael Rezendes, one of the Spotlight researchers.

Rezendes repeatedly uses similar arguments with his sources due to the difficulty of obtaining direct testimony. As the investigation progresses, The Boston Globe must deal with attempts by prominent personalities to sabotage freedom of information. Another hurdle to overcome is reaching an agreement on how to approach the information. There is disagreement among writers about the most appropriate approach to the story under investigation. Investigators have confirmed fifty priests protected by the Church after being accused of abusing minors. However, Baron believes the news is a cover-up by high church officials. "You have to focus on the institution, not on each priest separately," he informs his workers.

**Figure 1** *Walter R. Robinson (Michael Keaton) with the Spotlight writing team*



Fuente: [Filmin.es](http://Filmin.es)

When Rezendes finds solid evidence of the cover-up, he wants to speed up the process so as not to lose the exclusive: "If we don't publish it now, others will find these letters and destroy the story," he exposes. "We need the whole picture, it's the only thing that will put an end to all this," is Walter's response. That is, it is hard for the team to keep a cool head to put together the story well given the scope of their report. Time becomes a problem when a judge declares that a series of documents that the Church intended to keep hidden are public. This fact means that now any media can find them and get the story out. "You have all done a great journalistic job here. A task that will have an immediate and considerable impact on our readers. This kind of story is why we work," Marty Baron exposes his workers moments before publishing the scandal.

Compared to previous film journalistic investigations, *Spotlight* presents logical novelties. From the outset, it legitimizes the legal loopholes to obtain compromising documents, a hot topic in times of Wikileaks and various leaks. Interactivity with readers also varies ostensibly. When publishing the first article (deciding when it will be published already gives rise to an intense debate on civic responsibility), the team values the convenience of adding an Internet link to the supporting documentation and also the telephone number to receive more calls from potential witnesses. (Bunoyol, 2017, p. 180)

It can be seen how a characteristic of committed journalism is its marked professional ethics. The German film *The Fourth Estate* (Gansel, 2013) also reflects on this issue. The film begins when the journalist Paul has been hired by Moscow Match. The plot takes a turn when Paul is a direct witness to the murder of journalist Jaszinky. The murdered man was the editor of the political magazine Svoboda. When the protagonist journalist tries to introduce himself to Katya, a colleague from Svoboda magazine, she tells him: "Your editor should write something about Jaszinky. I would be nothing without him. Instead of writing about gossip." This journalist has doubts about how Paul has evolved from prestigious journalism to tabloids and his yellow press: «You attended one of the best journalism schools in Germany [...] your career started excellently. Why get into the pink press?», She exposes. «We are not in the seventies, things are no longer about saving the planet [...]», Paul tries to defend himself. He is interrupted by Katya forcefully: «There is nothing right in bad practice».

Finally, Paul manages to slip between the pages of his yellow magazine a few lines that pay tribute to Jaszinky. For this reason, he earns a scolding from his editor: "This could get us closed." "For a few lines?" asks Paul. "Very explosive in this country. Sit down," replies the editor. He begins by arguing that practicing sensationalism is the most efficient way for the information professional not to be bothered by the factual powers due to the content of the publications: "Match is a celebrity magazine. That is the only reason they leave us alone», he argues. As the story progresses, Paul is aware of how necessary his profession is in a country where political transparency is scarce and there are repressive laws that endanger democracy. After a hard search, Paul finds the material of his father, named Nolbert and also a journalist, about an attack committed in 1998. The Russian government declared that it was a Chechen terrorist act. Paul's father explains in a video the following:

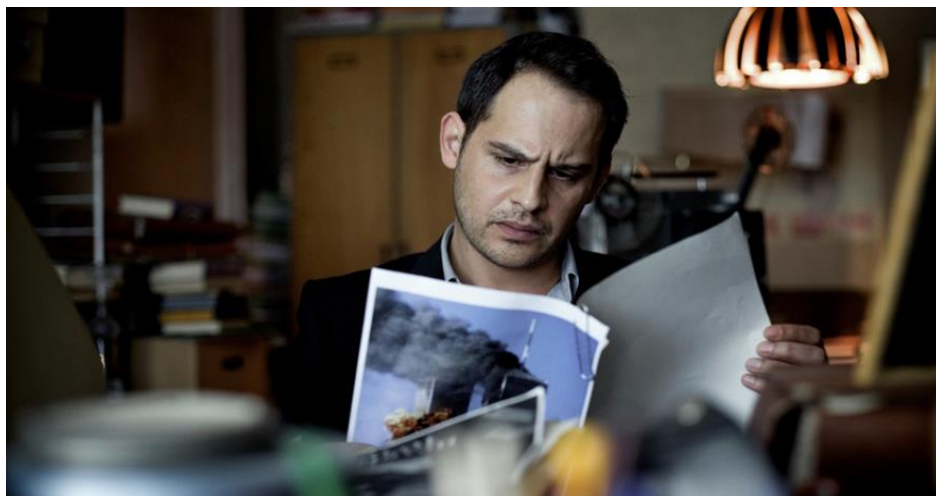
After the explosion, I met an elderly woman [...] she said that that night she saw a car parked with a woman guarding the perimeter of the building. She said that she saw the license plate number clearly. Nobody was interested either in the report of a policeman whom I interviewed later. He said that two kilos of the same explosive used in the attack were found in a building that belonged to the secret service. And most interestingly, just before the incident, the president was implicated in a serious corruption scandal. When they couldn't cover him anymore, he appointed a successor whose first action was to grant the former president immunity. Then I met Timur Dagiliev. The secret service said that the Chechen was primarily responsible for the attacks [...]

The suspect in the attack indicates in an interview with Norbert that he was released once the bombing began. "They no longer needed a suspect," Norbert says. "The war was already underway. In the elections that followed, the president's successor won by an absolute majority », the veteran journalist explains in his video. "But why didn't he write a story about it?" Paul asks. The photographer Damian then offers an answer: «He was obsessed with the idea of bringing the truth to light. But, when Moscow Match became a celebrity magazine, it missed its target. There was no room for his articles. Paul discovers that his father was murdered because of the report that he exposes in the video. He then begins the work of completing the report and publishing it. This footage, in short, is a good example of how to deal with the dark factual powers that seek to intervene directly in the information product: investigate sources beyond the official ones in parallel and not be afraid of the initiative of undertaking

alternative and independent investigations.

**Figure 2**

*Paul reviews the files of his father, an investigative journalist*



Source: [Filmin.es](http://Filmin.es)

### 4.3. Immersive Journalism

John, the editor of the Daily Globe, wants to carry out the following plan for his new report: pretend to be his sister's sexual aggressor and, thus, be admitted to a mental hospital. The goal is to write about the inner workings and solve a murder, finding the murderer of a guard within its walls. This is the plot of *Shock Corridor* (Fuller, 1965). As part of the documentation process, John spends a year training the answers he must give to the center's doctors thanks to the help of a psychiatrist paid by the Daily Globe. How does John feel about his future stay in the mental institution? This is the editor's thought when he was already hospitalized: «Since he was a child, he had always wanted to be among the greats of journalism. And this long corridor is the magic highway to the Pulitzer Prize." However, John gets too much into his role and ends up losing track of reality. Despite this, he finds out who the murderer is and writes an article about him. But, living in the hospital and undergoing psychiatric tests so as not to reveal that everything is a hoax, provokes catatonic schizophrenia in the journalist. "A crazy mute will win the Pulitzer Prize," says the director of the center where John is interned.

Another example of immersive journalism is the protagonist journalist of *Oloture* (Gyang, 2019). Oloture poses as a prostitute in Lagos, Nigeria. Under the name of Ehi, she imitates the prostitutes' way of speaking and their way of dressing. She lives with them. Ehi investigates human trafficking between Africa and Europe. Her editor Ameka warns the reporter not to let herself be consumed by her character, one of the dangers of this journalistic technique.

Undercover journalism is, therefore, investigative journalism, and the reporter is assisted by the spirit of social denunciation, the revelation of injustices, or, simply, the discovery of reserved information. At least two outstanding aspects coexist in this concept: immersion and infiltration and concealment. Immersion entails, for the journalist, the adventure of entering a community, a corporation, a company, or an institution, to observe, while concealment entails the

concealment of identity, which can occur with different degrees and nuances. (López Hidalgo and Fernández Barrero, 2013, p.36)

The infiltration is maintained under a lot of pressure and danger: a pimp of another prostitute beats up the journalist. At a party with politicians, the journalist is raped by the host. Ameka is worried. After the party, Oloture gives no sign. "Give yourself some time before you get scared [...] go to the usual places tonight. If you do not find her, we will know that something is wrong», he indicates in direction. Ameka insists on going to the house where his journalist is staying with the rest of the prostitutes. What if, contrary to what you think, nothing has happened to her? Do you think she will like you to blow the cover on her?», Indicates the director. Another big risk for the journalist is that her editor ends the investigation prematurely, according to the professional judgment of the reporter.

"The report is not over. There is much more to tell about this story. A lot of people have to fall», protests Oloture when her editor tells her to go back to the newsroom. "You're out of the story," says the editor worried about his reporter. "Look, Ameka, it's not your story anymore. Now it's my story. And I will reach the end with or without you", defends the journalist.

### Figure 3

*Oloture (right) currying favor with a source*



Source: [www.laprensa.com.ni](http://www.laprensa.com.ni)

#### 4.4. Crime reporter

In this section is *Slap the Monster on Page One* (Bellocchio, 1972). It begins with an attack by protesters on the right-wing newspaper *Il Giornale*. The violence suffered by the newsroom will be used by the owner for political purposes. Although it should be noted that one of the main points on which the plot is based, is the different views on the journalistic profession between the director of the *Bizanti* newspaper and the young editor Roveda. He undergoes a great change as the footage progresses: he begins as an obedient young apprentice in the editorial office of *Il Giornale* to evolve into the figure of an editor who will have to confront his director for the latter's lack of good journalistic practice. Another point that the film shows is the speculation that the newspaper carries out with the murder and rape of Professor Martini's daughter. *Il Giornale*'s editorial strategy is to insist on the victim's virginity, besides taking pictures

of her younger siblings. Bizanti remarks that: "I would like a living portrait of the character. Her habits, dreams, hobbies. Readings. If Italian mothers want to cry, we will make them cry."

Several colleagues will be responsible for opening young Roveda's eyes to the journalistic world and its imperfections. A colleague warns: "If you do this, you can't afford to be an idiot. While you write commissioned articles, Bizanti and Lauri build culprits and that means business". Everything previously analyzed causes the confrontation between Roveda and Bizanti.

The discussion brings to light a very interesting debate: should the journalist be a mere informant and observer of reality or take sides? Roveda's point of view is to criticize the use of information to change the elections made by the newspaper: «We have to explain and report this reality objectively. Instead, you distort it and don't mind stepping over people if you can fabricate your symbol, as you say.' Bizanti defends a leading editor, not an observing one: «It's okay, Il Giornale and I are provocateurs. We do not objectively report reality. Objectivity Roveda [...] you think that the journalist is an impartial observer and I tell you that those impartial observers make me feel sorry. We need to be protagonists, not observers. We are in a war! We do it too. The class struggle was not invented by Marx and Lenin.

On the other hand, Roveda conducts an independent investigation. He does not agree with the violent media campaign carried out by Il Giornale that provokes the arrest of an innocent man who is associated with leftist movements to influence the elections. Through a meticulous documentation process, far from the writing and the daily delivery of sensational headlines to keep the controversy alive, he will find the real murderer of María. His director kidnaps his article so it doesn't see the light of day. He accuses Roveda of not having proof: «I demand that Il Giornale consider this other clue and that this lie ends. It makes this guild something ignoble. I'll report it to the journalists' association!" protests the novice editor. The owner of Il Giornale launches a series of statements making it clear that the economic and political arm of society often imposes itself on the good work of a media outlet: «Everyone should do their job and take charge of their responsibilities. And of course, their share of the profits. Not always the one called director is the one who holds the reins of something. Each one in its place. The police to repress, the court to sentence. The press to convince people as we want".

#### **4.5 Chronicler and reporter as the center of the story**

*Radio tekee murren* (Kassila, 1951), is an example of immersive journalism. Specifically, gonzo journalism. In the words of López Hidalgo and Fernández Barrero (2013, p. 53):

Gonzo journalism constitutes a modality of immersion journalism in which the leading role of the journalist is prioritized, whose participation in the facts investigated can condition and alter the course of events.

As soon as the film begins, the protagonist journalist Toivo narrates to his listeners how he parachutes from a plane. He works for Finnish National Broadcasting. He highlights how the reporter has become the protagonist of his own information and how he narrates at every moment how he feels. For this journalistic work, the reporter

is congratulated. Toivo very soon has his next work in mind, using the same narration technique that he used in his previous report. Toivo exposes to the direction:

For some time now I have wondered how a criminal feels when he walks into a store in the middle of the night. How does he do the operation, thinks, and finally feels when the police catches him? I walk into a store at night with a microphone in hand with permission from the owner and the police, of course, and try to report what's going on and how it feels from the thieves' perspective. Finally, I call the police. They arrest me and take me to the police station. What do you think?

Although the idea is enthusiastically received, management prefers to give that story to another reporter. Toivo will quickly set off to do the report before the journalist chosen by the station. In planning, he has the misfortune that a thief hears his plans and plans to execute a robbery with the journalist's strategy. Studying the art museum, he begins the night reportage of it. The thieves who heard the journalist's robbery plan listen to the broadcast and tie up the technician. They'll call the police after robbing the museum. Meanwhile, the reporter continues the broadcast: «I have hidden the cable of my microphone so that the police do not notice it on their way. I have a knife to make it look like I am cutting a painting. The police are on their way here. I am in a tense moment. I just hope they don't shoot me. In that case, dear listeners, you will witness a unique homicide report. When the police arrive, the reporter hides his identity. He is forced to tell the whole truth when they try to blame him for the real robbery perpetrated by the thieves who heard his plan. Once he escaped from prison, he relays the police chase to the real thieves.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In the footage viewed, we have been able to observe a series of characteristics that respond to the journalistic technique of slow journalism: information professionals use all the time they need, in their opinion, to finish gathering all the possible documentation that they will then put into their work. On the other hand, it is the journalists themselves who choose the topics of their investigations. The results are usually informative pieces that hardly have a place in the media in which journalists work. David, at *Thunder Rock*, must resign from his correspondent position due to censorship of his writing. The journalist then compiles all his notes, the result of his long trips through Europe, and publishes this informative material in the format of a book. *Spotlight* writers speak of months to prepare and deliver their work. They do have the support of their newspaper to carry out their independent investigations. There are also many days that the protagonist of *Shock Corridor* uses to prepare himself and pass himself off convincingly as a mentally unbalanced person.

Although this way of working has the great risk that information professionals are absorbed by the characters they play. From a business point of view, the objective of this narrative modality called slow journalism is to achieve a quality product that allows the reader to witness a series of events that will not be covered by conventional narratives.

*Radio tekee murren* shows a journalist who transmits informative pieces to his listeners in which he is the protagonist: what it is like to jump from a parachute, how a thief feels when robbing a museum and being arrested, and even retransmits his



act of escaping from jail. It should be noted that although this type of journalism is supported by the audience, news companies do not see short-term profitability in this type of journalism. They make it difficult to publish either for political or economic reasons. Let us remember the reasons given by the photographer Damian why the magazine in which Norbert worked, in *The Fourth Estate*, did not publish his report: «He was obsessed with the idea of bringing the truth to light. But, when Moscow Match became a celebrity magazine, it lost its objective. There was no place for his articles».

Sometimes, slow journalism leaves aside the prism of objectivity to be the journalist who participates in the facts that are reported or denounced. Journalists are part of the narrative. It provokes a marked use of the first person and a high level of detail that gives veracity to the informative work. In other words, it is not incompatible to set aside objectivity and for the text to continue to have high journalistic value. *Oloture* is an example. Specifically, immersive journalism. In her work of denouncing human trafficking, she practices prostitution. Her work gives all kinds of details about the criminal organization, abuses, and violations included because she has suffered them in her own skin. The new ways of transmitting information are necessary beyond a mere question of aesthetics or the evolution of information formats. The reason is that the public has lost trust in the media. This fact has the consequence that there is less concern about being well informed, which in turn results in the audience being easy prey for information hoaxes.

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