

Nightcrawler: the unscrupulous information

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Abstract

With the interest of investigating the role of journalism in relation to reality, this article reviews the ethical responsibility of those who use a camera to document the violent vicissitudes of life in the midst of a world where filters are increasingly weak. Through different films, it is revealed how difficult this exercise is and how many dangers are woven in its excess.

Keywords: information, journalism, cinema, reality.

“One of the most generous acts in the world is to be filmed,” says veteran Colombian filmmaker Luis Ospina (2016). *The Vampires of Poverty* (Agarrando Pueblo, 1977), his fake documentary co-directed with Carlos Mayolo, reflects this position. A piece that is an awareness of the ethical implications of registering human decadence and that puts against the wall those who profited from porn-misery: sensational films of social decomposition filmed throughout the country, marketed in the United States and Europe. An activity driven by the money that many were willing to release for a good dose of truculence (Third World) that satiated the morbid.

The Vampires of Poverty tells the story of a production team that travels the Cali of the 70s in search of that impressive export material. Today, the cynicism, satire and black humor of the film are more valid than ever, judging by a panorama altered by the changes of the digital revolution and the Internet in which content such as those denounced by the work of Ospina-Mayolo are accessible from the comfort of the sofa or the chair in front of a computer.

Not only the cinema realized that a work that produces strong emotions is a good ally for a millionaire box office. Some media also welcomed this philosophy. For the sample, the news sections of the judicial court yellows that enjoy important audiences.

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Be save

In the television documentary *The Horrors of Stephen King* (2011), the famous American writer shares an interesting reflection on the popularity of terror among viewers and, incidentally, explains the fascination of many consumers for the sensational and sensationalist journalism. "The human being has a tendency to reduce the speed (of the car) and look at the traffic accident. It is natural. Our survival instinct tells us: 'the worst has happened to these people, but I am safe'."

Nightcrawler (2014), the film by Dan Gilroy, dialogues in many aspects with the Colombian film. It tells the story of a man named Louis Bloom (Jack Gyllenhaal) who sniffs the business of the bad practice of judicial journalism. Buys a car and a video camera to work as an independent for a newscast specializing in these contents. There he will enter into a labor and economic relationship that will be a win and win with many zeros to the right, both for him and for the television program.

The treatment is simple: Bloom registers without ethical filters the harshness of traffic accidents, murders, suicides and other events that contain physical violence of irreversible damages in order to profit from the profits of disseminating the material. A rating triggered by the lack of scruples and indolence.

Living the american dream

Then the business grows. The ramshackle car and Bloom's modest video camera give way to an imposing Ford Mustang and a state-of-the-art camera. The careless appearance of the character is subject to a reformulation worthy of elegant shirts and expensive sunglasses. A twisted version of the 'American way of life' and its promises of promotion, protected in an office that protects US neoliberal policies and its constitution, although in many ways bordering on criminal activity and is a headache for those who pretend judicialize this practice.

But to record the scene of the crime is not to commit it, although the fact is reason for heated reproaches when considering that the material diffuses without ethical veils through a means of communication. That is the alibi of Bloom and his corporate subsidiary, which conveniently plays with the limits of what is punishable and what is not punishable to find the legal vacuum that makes it get away with it. Justice, tied up in the matter.

Freedom of expression is always spoken of as an unquestionable guarantee of democracies, but little of the responsibilities of those who hide behind it. Much less the possibility that some assume this right as a springboard to profit in the practice of a "journalism" that is front, it discards from its system an elementary principle of the trade: its commitment to dignity and justice.

Trust the journalist

Nightcrawler touches the fibers of controversial issues related to the production of information. A moral lesson about journalism, not about morality. It is grateful that the tone of Gilroy's film has nothing to do with the redemption, the kitsch and the inspiration typical of certain ideal cinema for the family television strip of a festive Monday.

Just as filming is an act of trust in the filmmaker, since he can manipulate and shape the images according to his intentions, the journalist also has the power to do whatever he pleases with interviews and other material compiled to make his reports. . For the sample the case of Claas Relotius, German journalist who invented reports and who worked for the magazine *Der Spiegel*.

Network (1976), by Sidney Lumet, is a successful look at the concerns and challenges of a mediated world; a film that at the time was timely to understand the expansion of the media and advertising in the United States since the 70s.

Howard Beale (Peter Finch), its protagonist, expresses a declaration of principles that the screenwriter of the film, Paddy Chayefsky, puts in the mouth of the character: a defense of dignity in a scenario governed by the insensitivity and greed of the facet the darkest of the media, which turn this strategy into the spearhead of their capitalist interests.

Beale, in a rabid speech, asks viewers while presenting a program: "I only know that you have to get mad. You have to say: 'I am a human being, damn it! My life has value!'"

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