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| **ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27** |
| **JOURNALISM - VI SEMESTER** |
| **SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2018** |
| **JN6113: ADVANCED JOURNALISM** |
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| **Time- 2 1/2 hrs** |  | **Max Marks-70** |  |
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| **Instructions**1. This paper is meant for VI semester students of BA-EJP course
2. You are allowed to use a Dictionary.
3. You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limit.
4. This paper contains four pages and TWO sections

**I. Read the following piece by Jack Shafer in The Politico and answer the questions that follow.****Why BuzzFeed’s Exploding Watermelon Won’t Destroy Journalism**April 18, 2016The shockwave from the [watermelon](https://www.buzzfeed.com/tasneemnashrulla/we-blew-up-a-watermelon-and-everyone-lost-their-freaking-min#.kwxwKjM0j) that BuzzFeed playfully detonated online last week has shaken New York Times media columnist Jim Rutenberg. Using the blast as the news peg for a [piece](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/18/business/media/for-news-outlets-squeezed-from-the-middle-its-bend-or-bust.html?ref=todayspaper) detailing the journalism industry’s obsession with page views, he asked how traditional journalists can possibly compete economically with the BuzzFeed stunt, which drew 10 million pages views in a couple of days, when the best they have to offer is straight stuff about war, voting rights, immigration, ISIS brutality, the Federal Election Commission and the rest? Must all news outlets create their own page view-attracting watermelon trick to hook readers?It’s not even clear that exploding watermelons can, by themselves, save journalism. As Rutenberg notes, citing reporting in the *Financial Times*, BuzzFeed appears to be having trouble meeting its revenue goals. Still, the triumph of the watermelon has him rattled. “All I’m asking is that we be careful not to lose too many core values on our way to the future,” Rutenberg writes near column’s end.But the “core values” of the *New York Times*(and other top newspapers) to which Rutenberg refers have long included generous doses of the fun, the frivolous, the entertaining, the diverting and the exploding—just like BuzzFeed. He need only open his newspaper or survey its last century of output through the [Times Machine](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/browser), the paper’s online archive, to confirm this assertion.Or he can consult a brilliant academic [paper](http://jou.sagepub.com/content/17/3/366.abstract?rss=1#corresp-1) by Matthew C. Ehrlich, “Taking Animal News Seriously: Cat Tales in the *New York Times*.” The paper documents a *Times*ian obsession to all things feline that makes BuzzFeed’s devotion to kitty videos seem restrained. With the exception ofthe 1950s and the 1960s—which another academic called a period of “high modernism” in which the *Times*dealt its readers mostly “accurate, ‘unbiased’ information about public affairs”—the paper has doted on cats over the past century. The paper has honored cats that fly bombing runs ([1941](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1941/01/05/85248592.html?pageNumber=38)) and cats staging heroic long marches to reunite with their owners ([2013](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/one-cats-incredible-journey/)). Cats have been written up as villains, “Pet Angora Cat Attacks Woman in Auto; Clings with Teeth Until Choked to Death,” Page One, ([1921](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9B02E0D8163EEE3ABC4C53DFB166838A639EDE)); as victims, “Want to Captivate New Yorkers? Try the (Latest) Trapped-Cat Story” ([2006](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/16/nyregion/16cat.html)); and as a woman’s best friend, “the especial pet of elderly spinsters, who adopt the animals as companions in loneliness” ([1927](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1927/04/03/97138616.html?pageNumber=144)).Cats, the *Times*has reported, hunt rats in delis ([2002](http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/24/nyregion/urban-tactics-they-call-me-assassin.html?pagewanted=all)), reside in offices, clubs, hotels, theater, police stations and even the offices of the *Times*([1925](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1925/09/13/104186075.html?pageNumber=24)). In [1930](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1930/06/25/96161631.html?pageNumber=13&smid=tw-nytarchives&smtyp=cur), the paper found the truce between one cat and one bird newsworthy. In [1936](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1936/12/06/85439958.html?pageNumber=13), a fight between a soda machine and a black and white cat known as “The Battler,” earned its column inches in the *Times*(Battler lost in a TKO). One week in early [2014](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/07/science/cat-sense-explains-what-theyre-really-thinking.html), the most [frequently](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/14/opinion/bruni-according-animals-dignity.html)emailed story was titled “What Your Cat Is Thinking.”“That the 21st century *New York Times* devotes space to cat stories might appear silly, if not pathetic,” Ehrlich writes. But it’s neither, he explains. We understand our world, in part, through the art of the story, and cats do us great service as proxies in our struggle to frame the world. Plus they’re cute. Their stories provide reporters, editors and readers relief from life’s toil, which dominates the rest of the paper. Plus they’re cute. Cats reconnect us, however tangentially, to the animal world. Plus they’re cute.The *Times*need not apologize to anybody for writing about cats, or for featuring the online bursting of watermelons, should they decide to chase that beat. As a variety of writers have noted over the years, most recently Michael Wolff in [*USA Today*](http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/wolff/2016/01/10/wolff-new-york-times-dueling-magazines/78447158/), the modern *Times*exists as two newspapers. There’s the self-serious *Times*with its breaking stories about earthquakes, budget battles, the economy, and plagues, its book review section and editorial/op-ed section. And then there’s the lighter *Times*, populated with fashion advice, first-person confessionals, food coverage, home and design, puzzles, travel, celebrity profiles, and other fluff, including an endless series of [bogus trend stories](http://www.poynter.org/2010/how-slates-jack-shafer-calls-out-bogus-trend-stories/105778/).The lighter *Times*was largely the 1970s creation of *Times*Executive Editor A.M. Rosenthal who, admiring the lifestyle coverage success at *New York Magazine*, the *Washington Post*Style section and the *Los Angeles Times*, added consumer-and-advertiser friendly sections to his paper. “The *Times*subsequently paid frequent attention to goods and services aimed at well-to-do, city-dwelling cat owners,” Ehrlich writes, “a story trend that has continued into the 21st century.” The paper invested in stories about Manhattan boutiques selling high-end apparel for cats ([1987](http://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/15/business/what-s-new-in-the-animal-business-selling-the-good-life-for-cats-and-dogs.html)) and “cheery cat condos” at a Westchester veterinary clinic ([2001](http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/23/nyregion/pets-where-cats-purr-and-heal-to-music.html)). Ehrlich continues: “Since 2010, concurrent with cats’ rise on the Internet, the *Times*has devoted an average of 45 stories a year to felines.”Rutenberg might be right to worry that the whole journalism game might crumble as outlets reposition themselves as entertainment venues in pursuit of watermelon-sized numbers. But a century of *Times*coverage of cats shows us that newspapers—like drama and sermons—can be entertaining and edifying at the same time, with fun and the seriousness co-existing in the same package. Let me suggest that the proliferation of cat stories (or watermelon stories) creates in the minds of sufficient numbers of readers the appetite for something more substantial to go with the cat story. If that was not the case, the editors *New York Times*would have repositioned the publication a broadsheet version of *Cat Fancy*decades ago.Herbert Bayard Swope, who edited the *New York World*until 1929, saw no incompatibility in pairing the editorially worthy and the editorially popular in the same package. “What I try to do in my paper is to give the public part of what it wants and part of what it ought to have whether it wants it or not.” Swope [said](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1144&dat=19310930&id=5eshAAAAIBAJ&sjid=jI4EAAAAIBAJ&pg=6135,3674951&hl=en).1. **Answer all of the following in about 150-200 words each ( 3X10= 30)**
2. Buzzfeed claims it drew close to 10 million page views in a couple of days after they blew up a watermelon on Facebook Live. Jim Rutenberg, Columnist for the New York Times wrote ‘Traditional journalists everywhere saw themselves as the seeds, flying out of the frame. How do we compete with that?” Is this really something that ‘traditional journalists’ have to compete with? Or do you agree with Shafer when he says, “exploding watermelons won’t destroy journalism.”
3. In the concluding paragraph the writer seemingly agrees with someone who says he gives readers ‘part of what it wants and part of what it ought to have.” Is this a good editorial policy? If ‘No’ then defend your answer. If ‘Yes’ then can you identify one aspect that you believe the public wants and one that you believe that they ought to have.
4. Describe a similar event that you think might work for a Bengaluru based news portal.

**II. Read the following passage.****A Twitter Tempest**It is rather disturbing to find Twittererati framing the refusal of Jignesh Mevani, a newly elected Member of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, to speak to a section of media in Chennai last week as a freedom of press debate. Mr. Mevani had taken objection to the presence of Republic TV’s microphone at the event. Dawood Mian Khan, founder of the Quaide Milleth International Academy of Media Studies and the host of the event, and activist Nityanand Jayaraman, in a press release and an article for the news website, thewire.in, respectively, have explained the sequence of events and have established clearly that it was not a press conference but an impromptu interaction.In July 1988, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi introduced a defamation bill that sought to create new offences of “criminal imputation” and “scurrilous writings”. As a young reporter, I was a part of the nationwide agitation that forced the government to withdraw the bill. Later, I played a role against the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly’s decision to invoke an uncodified privilege to punish journalists. This note is in anticipation of questions indulging in whataboutery. As a journalist, I not only cherish the freedom of the press but I am also committed to protecting it from multiple assaults. However, my notion of press freedom does not circumscribe all other freedoms.I learnt about fairness in journalism from Aidan White of the Ethical Journalism Network. He makes an important distinction between free expression and journalism: “Journalism is not free expression, it is a constrained expression — you can’t just say whatever you want to say.” According to him, good journalism is guided by truth, independence, impartiality, accountability, and humanity.Journalistic freedom is inextricably and inalienably linked to good practices and it has no space for any kind of witch-hunt or targeted slander. How do we understand some of the prime-time television programmes nowadays? Do they uphold any of the principles of journalism? Can we call gladiatorial sport, which is designed to draw blood rather than hold those in power accountable, journalism, and accord all the privileges that are inherent to a free press to it? Can a channel that advocates the abrogation of others’ freedom invoke the freedom of press argument when someone chooses not to speak to it? What happens to the rights of individuals, including of political activists, to choose who they don’t want to talk to and avoid in their private space? Is it right to invoke the rules of a press meet, which has to be open and non-discriminatory across media houses and platforms, to an informal discussion forum?This column has been a champion for the means of journalism as much as it is about fair and accurate journalistic content. John Rawls, the celebrated moral and political philosopher, has dealt with one of the salient issues which arose from the Mevani versus Republic TV debate. In *A Theory of Justice*, he explained the vexatious question of tolerating intolerance: “First, there is the question whether an intolerant sect has any title to complain if it is not tolerated; second, under what conditions tolerant sects have a right not to tolerate those which are intolerant; and last, when they have the right not to tolerate them, for what ends it should be exercised.” Professor Rawls, a champion of tolerance, agreed to a small window for the tolerant to curb the intolerant: “While an intolerant sect does not itself have title to complain of intolerance, its freedom should be restricted only when the tolerant sincerely and with reason believe that their own security and that of the institutions of liberty are in danger.” His argument was that the just should be guided by the principles of justice and not by the fact that the unjust cannot complain.One has learnt to acknowledge that most principles get refined over a period of time. For instance, the Supreme Court, which defined Article 21 in a narrow manner in the early 1950s in the A.K. Gopalan v. the State of Madras case, expanded its scope to bring in due process as an essential element in the Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India case in 1978. Freedom of press is of paramount importance and should be guarded at all cost. We cannot safeguard this hard-won right by flouting journalistic principles and values.**II A. Answer any two of the following questions in 200 words each (2x10=20)**1. Evaluate the position offered by the writer in this piece? How does he frame the question of journalistic principles with regard to this incident?
2. The writer offers a ‘note’ as the lead to this column ‘in anticipation of questions indulging in whataboutery.’ What do you understand of the term ‘whataboutery’? Explain with an example.
3. What is your opinion on the event described in the piece? You can draw on similar events in recent time where there were altercations between the press and public figures to substantiate your argument.

**III. As you write your final Journalism paper, write a pitch for a long-form piece about your understanding of the field of Journalism and your personal experiences (with anecdotes and observations) as you trained to be a journalist/writer in the last three years. (Max 350 words) 20 MARKS** |
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