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**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27**

**End-Semester Examination – April 2017**

**II Semester BCA/BA (VISUAL COMMUNICATION)**

**General English (GE 212) - Media, Culture & Technology**

Time: 2 hours 30minutes Max. Marks: 70

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. This booklet contains TWO question-papers for the sections MCT-A and MCT-B
2. The MCT-A paper contains THREE pages and TWO sections
3. The MCT-B paper contains THREE pages and TWO sections
4. Answer questions according to the section you have been assigned to. Please mention the section (MCT-A or MCT-B) on the front page of your answer scripts.
5. You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limits
6. You are allowed to use a dictionary.

# II MCT ‘B’ – Moving Images

# I.A Read this article from The Atlantic by Megan Garber and answer the questions below.

# How Rom-Coms Undermine Women

Here is one of the good things to come out of [Donald Trump’s recent hot-mic revelations](http://www.theatlantic.com/liveblogs/2016/10/trumps-tape-scandal-the-latest-updates/503480/): The scandal, in its assorted horrors, furthered a much-needed national conversation about the shadowed contours of sexual violence. In response to Trump surrogates’ attempts to dismiss the candidate’s misogynistic comments as “locker-room talk,” media outlets and individual Facebook-opiners alike came forward to insist that, on the contrary, what Trump was describing in Access Hollywood’s recording was in fact a form of assault. Trump’s words, in spite of themselves, ended up bringing a bit of ironic clarity to a culture that is living in the aftermath of patriarchy.

There’s one more thing, though, that has contributed to all the confusion: the romantic comedy. The common knock against rom-coms—besides their being too often horrendously lacking in diversity and ironically ambivalent about the women who generally watch them—is that they are fantasies, in the worst way as well as the best. (“I simply regard romantic comedies as a subgenre of sci-fi,” Mindy Kaling, both a lover and a creator of the genre, [has said](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-rom-com-is-dead-good/2016/10/06/6d82a934-859c-11e6-ac72-a29979381495_story.html).) The other complaint you can make about them, though, and one that seems especially apt at the current moment, is that rom-coms, on top of everything else, have a troubling tendency to blur the line between romantic exertion and sexual violence. Many assume a fundamental passivity on the part of women, and, relatedly, a fundamental assertiveness on the part of men. For any romantic coupling at all to take place, they argue implicitly—and, indeed, for the human species to have any hope of propagating itself—men must exert themselves, and women must gratefully accept them. Before Mars and Venus can fall in love, many rom-coms assume, Mars must first make Venus do the falling.

It’s a theme so common that, as my colleague Julie Beck [pointed out](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/02/romantic-comedies-where-stalking-meets-love/460179/), the site TV Tropes has a page dedicated to exploring it—“[Stalking Is Love](http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/StalkingIsLove),” the page is called. (The trope has also received that highest of cultural ratifications: an *Onion* headline. “Romantic-Comedy Behavior Gets Real-Life Man Arrested,” [the fake paper reports](http://www.theonion.com/article/romantic-comedy-behavior-gets-real-life-man-arrest-757), in an “it’s funny because it’s true” kind of way.) The trope also got treatment in How I Met Your Mother, a sitcom-length rom-com that found its romantic protagonist, Ted, similarly showing up—[several different times](http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/04/-em-how-i-met-your-aunt-em-a-bizarre-ending-for-i-how-i-met-your-mother-i/359957/)—at the window of his beloved. Ted, ever the theorist, invoked Lloyd “You Will Listen to Peter Gabriel and You Will Love It” Dobler in what he dubbed the “[Dobler-Dahmer theory](http://how-i-met-your-mother.wikia.com/wiki/The_Dobler-Dahmer_Theory)” of grand, romantic gestures. Ted’s theory [went like this](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/02/romantic-comedies-where-stalking-meets-love/460179/): If the person on the receiving end of the gesture is romantically interested in the gesturer, then—à la Lloyd Dobler, Heartsick Hero—it’s charming. If not, the gesture will come off as creepy and stalkery and threatening and awful (in the manner of Jeffrey Dahmer, the cannibalistic serial killer).

The Dobler-Dahmer theory is helpful not just in its acknowledgement of the high-stakes nature of the romantic gesture, but also in its recognition of the agency of the gesturee. The rom-comic plots it invokes don’t simply celebrate stalker-ish behavior on the part of men; they also, on the flip side, often celebrate passive behavior on the part of women. Many of them treat women either as bundles of buzzing, desperate desire—Love Actually, How to Be Single, He’s Just Not That Into You—or, on the other hand, as empty vessels for it.

Take Hitch, the “love doctor” in *Hitch*, who introduces himself in the movie that treats him as a romantic hero with [the following voice-over](http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/02/the-charming-misogynies-of-hitch/385389/):

No woman wakes up saying, “God, I hope I don’t get swept off my feet today.” Now, she might say, “This is a really bad time for me.” Or something like, “I just need some space.” Or my personal favorite: “I’m really into my career right now.” You believe that? Neither does she. You know why? Because she’s lying to you, that’s why. You understand me? Lying. It’s not a bad time for her. She doesn’t need any space.

She’s lying to you. Lying. This, in the context of the film, is presented as cheerful and charming, a realtalk-y acknowledgment of the world’s awkward romantic realities. It would never occur to *Hitch* to doubt its own intentions—“because with no guile, and no game,” the Love Doctor later explains to a client, “there’s no girl.” Watching Hitch today is uncomfortable not just for all the reasons watching a rom-com might typically be uncomfortable—its assumption of the centrality of romance to feminine life, its downplaying of things like family and friends and career and other vehicles for human spiritual fulfillment, its conviction that a woman must not be simultaneously attractive and single—but also because the film studiously extracts a woman’s own desires from its romantic equation. She says she’s not interested; he assumes she’s lying. She says “no”; he replies, “I will make you say yes.”

It’s an attitude suggested even in the many rom-coms that aren’t explicitly stalkery in their premises, but whose plots—and whose sense of what romance is all about—revolve, nonetheless, around gamefied manipulations. Cameron, in *10 Things I Hate About You*, fakes a deep knowledge of French so he can become Bianca’s tutor. Wedding Crashers condemns the pick-up artistry of John and Jeremy at its outset, but then rewards their manipulations, in the end, by letting them get their girls. The cue-card guy in Love Actually—his character is so roughly sketched that he is generally and correctly known simply as Cue-Card Guy—[shows up at the door of his beloved, while her husband sits watching TV, to confess his love](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yd_fcyg1Fdk). There he is, at her home, without, the cards say, “hope or expectation,” for the purpose of … what? Confusing her? Making her feel good about herself? Convincing her that she should totally leave his best friend for her? Using her so that he may, himself, get some much-needed romantic closure?

It’s unclear—opacity is the defining characteristic of Cue-Card Guy—but the movie suggests that it is probably the latter of these: “Enough,” Cue-Card Guy says to himself as he’s walking away from her house, “Silent Night” still blaring on his Doblerian boombox, having successfully passed his romantic frustrations on to the woman who is their object. “Enough now.”

It would be one thing were the awkwardness of Cue-Card Guy and his love-sick ilk limited to the screen. But, of course, they are not. Rom-coms are powerful, in part, because they pervade. They, too—like celebrities, like songs, like presidential candidates—have norm-setting capabilities. A [study](http://crx.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/02/13/0093650215570653.abstract) released earlier this year from Julia Lippman, a postdoctoral fellow in communication studies at the University of Michigan, [found that rom-coms can give their audiences the illusion that stalking behavior—criminal activity—is, yes, romantic](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/02/romantic-comedies-where-stalking-meets-love/460179/). The gestures of Say Anything and There’s Something About Mary and their fellow films “are often framed as unequivocal signs of true love,” Lippman wrote. “Indeed, they may be seen as reflecting one of the great cultural myths of romantic love: that no matter how big the obstacle, love will conquer all.”

I.B. **Answer ANY TWO questions in 180- 200 words (15x2 = 30marks)**

1. Elaborate the arguments presented by the author in the article explaining your agreement or disagreement with the same.
2. What is your understanding of the author’s description of the Dobler-Dalhmer theory? Do you think the same can be applied for the genre in Indian films? Explain with examples.
3. Do you think films are a mirror to reality? Why do you think the author has used the term ‘aftermath of patriarchy’? Agree or disagree citing examples from your experiences of viewing romantic comedies.

**II.B. Read this small excerpt from the Time magazine by Brian Moylan**

A Decade of YouTube Has Changed the Future of Television

YouTube started developing its own culture and its own genres, from makeup tutorials and song parodies to GoPro skateboard theatrics and toy-unboxing videos. Television no longer has to worry about YouTube stealing their shows, because YouTube has plenty of shows of its own. YouTube even started calling them “channels” and in 2011 Google spent almost $200 million to launch their own original channels with partners like Madonna, Pharrell Williams, VICE and The Wall Street Journal.

II.C Describe the genres you have encountered on YouTube? How different is the YouTube experience from traditional TV viewing. Answer in around 200 words. (20X1= 20)

**III.A. Read this article from *The European by Guy Westwell***

**Politics By Visual Means**

Hollywood has always been an eager accomplice of Washington’s political elites. But over the past few years, it has foreshadowed the decline of neoconservative ideology.

It is common to hear people say that films are simply a form of escapist entertainment, a harmless product designed to make money. As a Hollywood studio-era executive might have said to an aspiring politico screenwriter, ‘if you want to send a message, use Western Union.’

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, George W. Bush’s Deputy Chief of Staff, Karl Rove, invited almost four-dozen of the Hollywood power elite to the Beverly Peninsula Hotel and asked for help garnering support for the neocon policy agenda, including wide-ranging homeland security measures and the waging of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Following the meeting jingoistic war films such as Black Hawk Down, We Were Soldiers and Behind Enemy Lines were rushed into cinemas, while war films with a critical perspective such as The Quiet American and Buffalo Soldiers were quietly held back. This careful management of release schedules aligned cultural production with Rove’s directives: as the politicians sought consent for war in Iraq, cinemagoers watched films barely distinguishable in their pro-war message from Griffith’s Hearts of the World.

With the multiplex thus politicized, Michael Moore’s Fahrenheit 9/11 directly attacked the neocons during Bush’s campaign for re-election in 2004; like Birth of a Race , Moore’s film sought to redress the prevailing political direction of US cinema and politics. The highest grossing documentary of all time was joined by a raft of films that critiqued and questioned, among other things, the state-sanctioned use of torture (Standard Operating Procedure, Rendition ), the war on terror (In the Valley of Elah, Stop Loss ), CIA subterfuge (Syriana, The Bourne Supremacy ), and even offered a dark, introspective view of US history (Good Night and Good Luck, There Will Be Blood ).

Taken together, these films marked and reinforced an emerging liberal consensus that came to fruition with the election of Barack Obama in 2008. In less than ten years, cinema had played a significant role in consolidating the neocon’s preferred worldview, and then, through myriad acts of resistance and critique, enabling an alternate ideology to germinate and take root.

This is not a hypodermic model: no single film will provide a hit of ideology that determines behavior; nor should we overestimate the affect of avowedly political films such as Lincoln. Instead, those interested in the cinema’s political affect should consider how the cinema shapes political reality through the seeding of ideas, and the propagation of belief in those ideas.

**III. B. Answer ANY TWO questions in 150 words: (10x2 = 20marks)**

1. What do you understand by the term hypodermic model used in the article? Elaborate your answer with examples from your own experiences of viewing films.

2. According to your experiences of viewing films how can political reality be manipulated through the medium of films? Elaborate your answer using examples from feature films, documentaries or TV shows.

3. In light of the facts mentioned in the article examine cinematic interventions by Indian films compared to Hollywood as a tool of propagating political ideas.

**II MCT ‘A’- Fourth Estate**

# I.A. Read the following article by Supriya Sharma from The Caravan magazine

# Minority Report

# Will newsgathering survive the proliferation of online media?

**DURING THIS SUMMER’S NATIONAL ELECTIONS,** I spent a month travelling from Guwahati to Srinagar. Journeying by train through seven states, I filed regular dispatches for Scroll, the digital news outlet where I work. The reports used conversations with locals to explore the junctions between politics, everyday life, and people’s hopes and anxieties. The work seemed to strike a chord with readers. It was also noticed abroad; after the series, the American radio broadcaster NPR interviewed me for its popular “Weekend Edition.” But this modest success underscored a more measurable failure. In all, my 25 reports generated fewer page views than about three hundred words of hastily written opinion that I filed soon afterwards. That piece—about some controversially leaked photographs of a male politician and a female news anchor—was published in the early morning, and had clocked more than one lakh page views by afternoon. The final tally was much higher.

Writ large, this is the story of journalism today. Across media, opinion—often highly popular and relatively cheap to produce—is ascendant. Digital media executives understandably favour pieces—humour, photo features, listicles and provocative commentary—that garner page views and court advertising revenues at little cost. Opinion’s financial advantages over reportage have already driven television news channels to reduce reporting staffs and convert primetime news shows into the sort of tamashas that pass for debate. Something similar is happening in print. Newspapers, which once confined opinion to the edit pages, now carry snippets of comment next to news reports (“Times View” in the Times of India) or get reporters to produce commentary (“Semi Column” in the Indian Express). Whatever one thinks about the desegregation of shoe-leather reporting from armchair commentating, the rise of opinion has consequences that go beyond concerns over objectivity or neutrality. The real danger now is the devaluation of newsgathering—the process of acquiring information from primary sources—which remains the foundation on which other kinds of journalism, including commentary, can be built.

Critiques of the Indian media have often focused on the general inadequacy of our newspapers and news channels: reporters rarely look beyond official sources for information; and coverage leaves out vital areas of our national life, both geographic (the North East, rural hinterlands, the tribal belt) and socioeconomic (the lives of the poor and working-class get far less attention than the lifestyles of the rich and famous). Valid as such criticisms may be, they prevent us from recognising the institutional strength of the traditional media—particularly newspapers, the biggest of which have vast information-gathering networks. The Times of India, for instance, might not offer much depth—most of its stories are no longer than three hundred words—but on any single day it publishes roughly a thousand new reports in fifty editions across the country.

These reports may often appear insignificant, adding only small bits of information to what is already known, but the careful aggregation of minor facts is what allows reporters, commentators and readers to discern larger patterns. The steady, uncelebrated process of newsgathering also makes the media an essential invigilator of power. In an ideal newsroom, beat reporters—the primary information-gatherers—slowly acquire enough expertise to become specialists. A journalist reporting regularly on a government ministry is well placed to ask the right questions of it, and to raise the alarm over decisions that might not serve the public interest. It’s true that reporters often fail to do this, either blinded by an unhealthy proximity to their sources or simply out of complacency. But the failures of India’s traditional media organisations demand a reinvigoration of our newsrooms—not their dismantling.

Unfortunately, the enervation of reporting is exactly what we are likely to see as news moves online. While readers have begun to migrate to the internet, advertising revenues are yet to follow. Until now, most Indian media companies have expanded their digital footprints by dipping into content and revenues from their print and television properties. But those seeking a larger slice of the internet audience will eventually have to customise their content to suit the preferences of readers; and given the uncertainty of digital advertising revenues, that content will almost certainly be generated in low-cost ways. Some of this is already happening. In August, for example, the Times of India announced that it was partnering with the Huffington Post—primarily a news aggregator—to launch a website by the end of the year. A month later, the India Today Group—which began life four decades ago with a fortnightly magazine and expanded into satellite television in the 1990s—started a digital outlet called the DailyO. The website defines itself as “an online opinion platform” that will, in the words of its promoters, “isolate opinion, the big O, from the oohs, and aahs, and ouches of daily news.”

The emerging crisis in newsgathering is not confined to India. In the West, digital platforms have denuded dead-tree publications of readers, but have not replaced the revenues siphoned away from print. And this has dealt a decisive blow to primary reporting. In 2010, the American journalist Jonathan Stray examined the coverage of a single big news story—about two Chinese students who hacked Google—for the media think tank Neiman Lab. Of the eight hundred reports that showed up on Google News, he found that only 121 were unique stories, only 13 contained at least one original quote, and just seven were based primarily on original reporting. “What were those other 100 reporters doing?” Stray asked. “When I think of how much human effort went into re-writing those hundred other unique stories that contained no original reporting, I cringe.” Strikingly, the majority of original stories came from print organisations. Only one started life at an online outlet. (I analysed one recent Indian story—this November’s introduction of compulsory voting in Gujarat. Of the 131 pieces that appeared on Google News, only 64 were unique, and just 16 contained at least one original quote. Nine of these 16 came from newspapers, four from news agencies, two from television channels and just one from an online outlet.)

Is it premature to agonise over the transition to digital news in India? Unlike in the West, where the growth of online journalism has coincided with the economic collapse of newspapers, many papers in India are not only viable, they’re strong, and unlikely to disappear anytime soon. Young metropolitan readers may depend for news on their social media feeds, but print circulation in smaller towns is growing, and newspapers continue to hire reporters. In this landscape, digital outlets could add value by acting as counterpoints to the mainstream media. Freed from printing presses, satellite transponders, and all the other paraphernalia that weigh down traditional news sources, they can be nimble and independent. But if online platforms are to consistently pursue original stories, they will also need sustainable revenues. Otherwise, they will not be able to support the sorts of newsgathering networks once typical of traditional media.

Those mourning the death of newspapers in the West have pinned their hopes on the possibility that the internet itself will ultimately resuscitate journalism, albeit in a completely different form. A report from the TOW centre for online journalism at Columbia University imagines a brave new world in which citizens post pictures of newsworthy events, algorithms assemble and analyse data, and the journalist moves “higher up the editorial chain from the production of initial observations to a role that emphasizes verification and interpretation.” The potential of the internet is undeniable. A vast amount of public data, available through government websites, awaits mining for insights that anecdotal reporting cannot reveal. Journalists no longer have to comb tediously through telephone directories to get in touch with sources; often, a quick search on the internet suffices. In the four years since Stray’s analysis, however, not much has changed in the United States, despite digital news outlets adding more staff and publicly committing resources to newsgathering. In March 2014, the Pew Research Centre’s State of the Media report found that despite “roughly 5,000 full-time professional jobs at nearly 500 digital news outlets” in the country, the “vast majority” of original reporting “still comes from the newspaper industry.”

The Indian media faces even greater challenges. This is still a country where the majority of citizens can neither speak nor be heard on the internet. When communal clashes broke out this October in east Delhi’s Trilokpuri neighbourhood, Scroll used social media to source pictures. But it was the reports that we published from the freelancer Nishita Jha, a former reporter at Tehelka magazine, that brought the scale of the social rift home. Jha visited the neighbourhood and wrote, among other things, about the experiences of women who had been assaulted by policemen or threatened with sexual violence by hostile mobs—information that could only have come to light through on-the-ground reporting. Around the same time, Hindutva groups were reportedly instigating attacks on church-going adivasis in Bastar, Chhattisgarh, where there was no possibility of crowd-sourced pictures. A Times of India correspondent in the state capital broke the news by speaking with local activists over the phone. A more complete picture of the violence could only have come from travelling to Bastar. We may live in the age of the internet—but reporting on the lives of most Indians, and the conduct of the authorities who administer them, still requires going out, observing, and speaking with people.

I.B Answer any two question in around 200 words (15X2=30)

1. What is your understanding of the author’s position of traditional newspapers as against online journalism? Do you agree with his opinion? Elaborate with examples of your own reading.

2. Compare and contrast the facts given in the article with your own experiences of reading newspapers and viewing online news.

3. According to your reading of the article which medium, the traditional newspaper or online news carries more depth and possibility of exploring a news story? Elaborate your answer citing readings from your class.

II.A. **Read this article from The Wire by Sidharth Bhatia**

# When Journalists Become Jingoistic Cheerleaders

### The media is supposed to question those in power, not happily go along with the official narrative.

Within days of the terrorist attack on Uri, in which 17 soldiers were killed, and even as the government mulled over various options, some newspapers and digital platforms published a story about a secret operation by Indian elite forces who entered Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and killed 20 terrorists. Or, as one of the outlets said, “neutralized” them, which sounds impressively like military jargon. If true, this would have major repercussions, since it would effectively mean an incursion into Pakistani territory, even if in name that part is Azaad Kashmir.

The army was quick to deny that such a raid took place. One of the websites stood by the story, insisting they had confirmed the facts. Many other newspapers, channels and digital platforms chose not to write about it, mainly because it was non-verifiable. More than the story itself and its authenticity or lack thereof, was stood out was the headline and hashtag used by one of the sites – “[Uri Avenged](https://www.thequint.com/uri-attack/2016/09/21/uri-avenged-2-india-paras-special-forces-cross-loc-uri-sector-jammu-and-kashmir-pakistan-neutralise-20-terrorists)” – implying clearly that this was a tit for tat operation by India. This is muscular, nationalistic editorialising that aims to rouse passions in the reader, quite a contrast from the detached tone that the media used till not too long ago.

Headlines refer to soldiers as martyrs and heroes and journalists now sound like cheerleaders of the government. Social media is full of cyber-warriors with advice on how to annihilate Pakistan, speaking glibly of the nuclear option as the final solution. Television talk shows discuss military strategies on how best to enter a sovereign country, showing little or no understanding of international law. Thundering ex-generals, when they are not getting emotional, speak of breaking Pakistan into several parts. BJP spokespersons, never short of colourful rhetoric, declare blithely that the country will not be around to celebrate its independence day next year. And not to forget those who feel they have done their duty by forwarding a WhatsApp message about what patriotic Indians should now do. Private citizens are well within their rights to express their views, however extreme and even if bordering on lunacy, but surely journalists should remain objective and refrain from such over-emotionalising? Their job is to report, calmly and accurately, not wave the flag or indeed, speak up for the government. The use of words like ‘braveheart’, ‘martyr’, ‘heroes’ is an American import, which has swiftly been accepted in India. I don’t recall newspapers using such words earlier – soldiers were soldiers and that is it. The Kargil war, shown in real time on television, was probably the first occasion when journalists began valorising the army instead of dispassionately reporting what they saw and heard.

But aren’t Indian journalists allowed to be nationalistic too? Yes, they are free to harbour nationalistic feelings, but their professional commitment should always be to the news. Every Indian citizen will want the government to take some action against the perpetrators of the Uri terror attack, but when headlines begin to use words like “avenged”, it becomes provocative.

Our TV talking heads, led by some perpetually angry anchors, appear to have not just called for war, but led the troops themselves and even declared victory. All this increases TRPs and unique visitors (and revenue and valuation too), but the intelligent viewer knows it is all a cynical exercise. That, however, is no comfort because it feeds into prejudice and jingoism of the worst type.

II.B. Answer any two questions in around 100 words. (10X2=20)

1. Have you noticed any differences between newspapers and TV channels in the reporting of stories related to nationalism? Answer citing examples from both mediums.
2. What is the author’s take on the kind of nationalism propagated by the media? Do you disagree or agree with the author?
3. What do you understand by the usage of the word ‘jingoistic’ in the article? Are there any pitfalls of over-emotionalising news stories? Explain using examples from your reading.

III.A. Observe the cartoon below and answer the question (20X1=20)



III.B. Do you agree or disagree with the cartoon above? In the light of the cartoon write an essay evaluating the condition of Journalism in India citing examples from your readings inside and outside the classroom.