

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE – 27**

**VI SEMESTER BA-JIP**

 **END SEMESTER EXAMINATION: MAY 2022**

**LITERARY JOURNALISM, NONFICTION AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS/NARRATIVE JOURNALISM: JN 6219**

**Time- 2½ hrs Max Marks- 70**

**Instructions:**

1. **This paper is for students of III JIP who have chosen the Narrative Journalism elective.**
2. **This paper has THREE SECTIONS and THREE printed pages.**
3. **Please provide word counts following every response that you make.**
4. **You are allowed to use a dictionary.**
5. **Read the following excerpt from a Q&A forum and answer the questions below.**

**Question-** Does journalism have a scope in India? If so, then how do I become a top journalist when I am doing my BA in English literature?

**A-** I am a journalist from India. Ever since I came into the field in 2007, I have been interested in Literary journalism or what they call narrative journalism. (Gay Talese is my favourite writer). Sadly, this genre of journalism , to put it bluntly, doesn't exist in India. I have seen the websites of NYU which offers MA in literary reportage and lots of other colleges which offer MFA in creative nonfiction. I wanted to know if any of guys out here have been part of these programmes and could advise me on which one to go for and how much does such a degree help in getting a job. I am really fed up with the limited opportunities that exist here to do narrative journalism as most editors haven't even heard about such a form of writing and are unwilling to devote time and space for this long from of writing. Are these degrees worth the time and money in terms of knowledge and job prospects? Also if someone could tell me about the prospects of doing long form/narrative/literary journalism in America right now? How is the market for such kind of writing?

**B** - Don't get an MFA. They rarely help a developing writer become a major talent. The best way to learn is to just write and write and write and write. Read the kind of writing you want to do and try to imitate it. MFAs are a waste of time and money. They won't help you get a job writing.

There are many places that publish such writing. Vanity Fair, New Yorker, American Scholar, Harper's, The Atlantic, Granta (UK), London Review of Books (UK) -- the list goes on. They rarely hire people as staff writers. Usually what happens is you submit articles as a freelancer and get small amounts of money. There is a fair amount of publications, but don't expect to make a living off of it. And don't waste your time with an MFA. I think you're wrong to say such writing doesn't exist in India. Rana Dasgupta and Amit Chaudhuri are both Indian and excellent at exactly this kind of writing.

**A-** Thank you very much for your response. I had read about the debates regarding the utility/non-utility of the MFAs but anyway your post has helped me decide against it. Thanks. It is also partly due to the fact that I don't have the thousands of dollars required to get the MFA and I don't want to be in debt for the rest of my life after taking such a course.

As for Amit Chaudhari and Rana Dasgupta I had more of day to day reporting and reporters in mind when I was talking about the existence of such writing. You go to any editor of a newspaper or even a magazine and talk about narrative journalism and they will be scratching their heads. Anyway, if you have any specific works of these authors in mind you could point them out.

Thanks for your response once again.

**B-** Editors simply don't care whether or not you have a certain degree. You will get published by virtue of whether or not your piece is good (or, unfortunately, who you know). If somehow you got into an MFA with full tuition + stipend, I would maybe recommend it as a networking opportunity and to have 2 years to devote to writing exclusively. But if you can't get that, it's a waste of time. MFA programs train writers to teach at MFA programs. So few successful -- I'd argue artistically as well as financially -- writers come out of MFA programs. This is a field in which you learn by doing.

I think a more valuable alternative would be to seek out jobs at publications, regardless of what your job function is. Networking will help you a lot. Major publications get hundreds of unsolicited submissions a day and most are vetted first by interns (I was once one of these interns) before moving up the food chain. But if you have a good relationship with someone at the publication, it is a great advantage. So: get a job at a publication. Go to book readings and literary events. Meet people socially, build a network.

1. **Answer ANY FOUR of the following questions in FIVE to SIX lines each: (4x5=20)**

1. Are *A’s* concerns about the existence of literary/narrative journalism in India valid? Why?
2. As a soon-to-be-graduating student, are *B’s* responses useful in planning a career in Journalism?
3. *A* observes that news/magazine websites that feature literary journalism don’t hire staff writers. That the journalism produced in these places come from freelance work. Is this a situation that should fill a young person with hope or dread? Why?
4. From your brief experience with internships and part time jobs, would you say that a degree in journalism today is as valuable today as it was before the pandemic? Give reasons.
5. What is a piece of helpful advice you’ve received about the future? Why was it helpful?
6. **Answer the following questions in 150-200 words. (2x15=30)**
7. Would you agree with the view that the ethics of Literary Journalism are different from the ethics of news Journalism. Why? Support your argument based on the texts discussed this semester.
8. Which of the four country-focus areas from this semester did you enjoy reading about? Why? Does a film centred around a county offer the kind of clarity that Literary Journalism offers. Explain.
9. **Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in 200-250 words. (20 marks)**
10. What is the kind of learning that narrative journalism offers to a humanities student? Explain using examples from the last two semesters of reading.
11. From all the writing you have read, does narrative journalism require a different method from daily journalism? What are the key differences?

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