

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

**ARTS & CULTURE JOURNALISM – VI SEMESTER EJP**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2018**

**JN 6313 B –JOURNALISM - ARTS & CULTURE**

**Time- 21/2 hrs Max Marks- 70**

**Instructions:**

1. **This paper has THREE SECTIONS and THREE printed pages.**
2. **This paper is for the VI Semester Journalism students who have opted for the Arts & Culture Elective.**
3. **You are allowed to use a dictionary.**
4. **You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limits.**

**I. Read the following article by Baradwaj Rangan called *Southern Lights: Fifteen years, and Counting…*and answer the questions below.**

*In which I look back at the time I started out as a film critic, what it’s like now, and a few things in between*

On January 30, 2003, my first review was published – that makes it 15 years this week. The film was *Dum*, made when Vivek Oberoi was a thing, when Yana Gupta was a thing. (Remember *Babuji zaradheerechalo*?) Unlike today, when online *is* the place to be in order to get noticed, it wasn’t such a sure thing then. I put my articles and reviews on my blog, mostly as a sort of portfolio, and things just happened. Through no planning of mine, I became one of the first “internet generation” critics, along with writers like Raja Sen and Jai Arjun Singh.

The critics before us had established themselves through the print medium. They were the big names in the newspapers and magazines. We were among the first who developed a following largely through the online community.

This isn’t a nostalgia piece – though I’d say I’m entitled to one. It’s just that I got thinking about how different the scene is today. My first review was published in *The Economic Times – Madras Plus*supplement. (The other writer on the cinema beat was Samanth Subramanian, who, eventually, ditched plans of being a film critic and went on to greater international glories .)

But it was at *The New Sunday Express* that I began to be widely read. I’d watch a film on Friday, jot down thoughts that evening, write the review all of Saturday, and send it in by Saturday evening, so it could appear on the Sunday paper.

My job description is the same today (except that I review many more non-Tamil, non-Hindi films), but the way I do it couldn’t be more different. I watch a movie, jot down thoughts soon after, write the review and send it in, all in a matter of hours. We’ve heard the saying, “Journalism is literature in a hurry.” Today, it’s more than that. It’s literature with a ticking clock and a gun to the head. I feel lucky I was able to make a mark in slower times. I don’t know what I’d do if I were starting out today, with the constant awareness of eyeballs and clicks, the constant pressure to be the first one out with the review.

One really enjoyed the process back then. I had time to think up “creative” headlines for my posts – like “Ghost Ghost Na Raha” for my review of *Paheli*. (My puns aren’t for all tastes, but I stand by them.)

Today, I’d write the headline in a more direct manner: “A spirit enters the world of humans in an evocative love story that succeeds more often than not.” I’d probably end up thinking I need to add the stars’ names in there, so that the review will show up better on a Google search. The headline would become: “Shah Rukh Khan and Rani Mukherjee shine in an evocative love story.”

It’s fun going through old reviews. Take this bit from the review of Himesh Reshammiya’s *AapKaa Surroor – The Moviee – The Real Luv Story*. “You can’t tear your eyes off the screen because, (a) you want to see what kind of cap he’s going to wear next (one with a *bandhni* design? Something with a Kanjeevaram temple border? A batik print on stonewashed denim, perhaps?), and (b) you want to see if the cap ever comes off.

HR wears the damn thing even in prison, and I think it’s safe to say that not since Darth Vader has there been so much curiosity about what lies under a man’s headgear.”

From my review of *Anniyan*: “I found it easier to take *Anniyan* for exactly what it is – an umpteenth variation of the *Gentleman* formula, just like Visu’s *KavalanAvanKovalan* was the umpteenth variation of the *SamsaramAdhuMinsaram* formula. You know exactly what’s in store – yes, including The Flashback That Explains Everything…” And here’s what I wrote about *Pithamagan*(my first Tamil review): “Bala, who never met a love angle that he couldn’t taint with tragedy, then takes things to their brutally violent conclusion.”

It’s scary how many times I have expressed some version of these sentiments in my reviews since then. Because movies themselves don’t change all that much, writing reviews is also about finding newer ways to say the same old things.

Or newer forms. In the film class I take, I go through the review of the same film by two different *types* of critics, say, Pauline Kael and Roger Ebert – one deep and personal and experiential, the other business-like and (relatively) crisp, sticking largely to the point and not veering off into (interesting) tangents.

They’re both terrific critics; this isn’t so much about comparing them as analysing their approaches to criticism. There’s usually a fair number that prefers Ebert – and even *he* would be considered Pauline Kael-like today, given the space allotted to reviews these days.

I find this ironic, because it was supposed to be the opposite. One would have thought the unrestricted space the internet offers would result in more critics writing long-ish reviews. There are a few out there, but fewer than I imagined there would be.

Now, it’s all about video. I’ve jumped in too. It’s exciting, even if I find it hard to think of it as “film criticism.” But I cannot deny that my current job with *Film Companion* is amazing, because earlier I was in newspapers where cinema was one of the many things covered while, here, it’s all about cinema. From someone who used to write in the print media and *then* put up those articles online, I am now employed by a publication that’s entirely online. It’s the future, I hear.

**I.A Answer ANY THREEof the following questions in 150 - 200 words. (3x15=45)**

1. ‘Because movies themselves don’t change all that much, writing reviews is also about finding newer ways to say the same old things.’ Explain. Give examples to substantiate your argument.
2. What is Rangan missing about the older writing culture? Do you think writing film reviews was a better practiced back then?
3. Point out to an observation that Ranganmakes here that has brought a larger perspective to online reading and writing.
4. Write a short review of a film that you have enjoyed watching this semester.

**II. In 300 words, write about the strangest eating habit you have ever encountered. (1x20=20)**

**III. Which of your classmates’ Arts and Culture presentation did you find interesting? Why? Write in FIVE to SEVEN sentences. (1x5=5)**

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