

## From the Editorial Desk

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The rapid advance in communication technology, followed by the rise of digital and social media in the new millennium has redefined our social, cultural and literary spaces, creating new platforms for creative expression and its practices. Affordable software and easy access to technical specificities have led to new textual forms which have organically found their way even into our classrooms, compelling a rethink on pedagogical practices as well. The current issue of *Fortell*, with its theme, 'Media in the Classroom: Genre, Resource and Practice', has been conceived in this light, even as educators engage with challenges exacerbated in the aftermath of the global pandemic.

The range provided by the research articles included in this volume is multi-dimensional, dealing with a wide variety of media practices, be it cinema, television, web series, multi-media adaptations of literary texts, social media, as also the critical concerns raised by the technology-mediated intercourse that has taken charge of human existence itself. The very first article in the volume by Vaimani Shah on Blackout Poetry reflects on the postmodern aesthetics realised through a social media platform such as Instagram, where the visual and the literary come together, highlighting the significance of digital media in creating new creative paradigms.

Namita Sethi's "Representing issues of lineage, caste, and gender politics in the *Mahabharata*: Texts, teaching, and television adaptations" makes a relevant intervention in the study and understanding of the epic in contemporary classrooms where students have exposure to the its televised versions with sanitization of complex issues. Bhumika Sharma and Shibashambhu Nandi's examination of posthuman identity through the film *Blade Runner* and Kaustubh Ranjan's reading of the web series *Human* analyse the implications of an increasingly technology-mediated world where human identity itself is questioned and reformulated.

Another fresh approach is Sahana Das and Venkata Ramani Challa's article on a *Rasa Bhava* approach to understanding films that applies the principles of *Natyashastra* to come up with a model for predicting the commercial success of a film.

The late Prem K. Srivasatava, in what would be amongst her last articles— "The complexity of cultural transfer in Mahasweta Devi's and Italo Spinelli's *Gangor*"—uses the prism of Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak's

essay, “Can the subaltern speak?” to pose the question whether the cinematic version created by Spinelli as a Western filmmaker is able to do cultural justice to a text as rooted in the marginalisation discourse as Mahasweta Devi’s *Gangor*. Continuing on the subject of cinematic adaptations, Abhilash Kaushik and Ruchika Bhatia in their respective articles, focus on the compulsions of the cinematic form which leads to issues of variation and dilution of narrative impact in media transition. Two other articles, by Premila Swamy and Alamuri Sri Nidhi respectively, offer pedagogical strategies for using films and film adaptations of literary texts for instruction in the EFL classrooms.

Jitender Gill in her very interesting article, “*Naagins, daayans, chudails* in contemporary Indian popular imagination” uses a feminist and cultural studies approach to present the dichotomy in the representation of women in popular television serials and the on-ground reality as evidenced from newspaper reports. Shuby Abidi in “Female gladiators in fourth wave feminism: Mona Eltahawy’s *The seven necessary sins for women and girls*” contextualises the phenomenon of online movements called digital feminisms marking a radical turn in feminist voices through a seminal text. Besides, two articles of general interest, written by Suman Luhach and Bhaskaran Nair, expand the scope of this issue.

With the given selection of wide-ranging theme-based articles, we hope the present issue makes a timely intervention in the media pedagogy discourse. The interview with Prof Simi Malhotra is the highlight of this issue, where she illuminates and elucidates on literature and language in the age of media. Book reviews and language activities, usual features of *Fortell*, supplement the theme of media pedagogy in the journal.

We dedicate this issue of *Fortell* to the memory of Prof Prem Kumari Srivastava, one of the long-standing pillars of the *Fortell* Editorial Board. Her sad untimely demise on 12th November 2022 has left the *Fortell* movement bereft of a valued friend, colleague and a mentor.

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