
Memoir

The Generous Disciplinarian

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CDN was a tall figure not only literally but also figuratively in every sense: as a scholar, as a pioneer and as a dreamer, who had the perseverance of realizing his dreams and make them come true. Above all he was also a stern disciplinarian. He was the initiator of a new change in the syllabi of his generation and opening out English studies wide open by and inclusive of the literature of other Commonwealth countries which included Indian literatures as well. This was later to be categorised as Postcolonial Literatures, the scholars in the South were ahead of the North as at a time when there was hardly any journal in the Northern Universities. *The Literary Criterion* and later other journals were catering to publications and the aspirations of scholars. Later Professor Gowda brought out the *The Half Yearly* and Professor Balram Gupta *Indian Writing in English*, P. K. Rajan was editing *Litterit* in the mid-seventies. The North had nothing to offer in comparison. It was not easy to get published. These journals brought unity and oneness to the scholarly world.

Meenakshi Mukerjee and Harish Trivedi organised a seminar at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, I think some time in the eighties. C. Vijayshree and I were to present papers in the same session which was being chaired by CDN. I recall how the learned professor kept on interrupting her, reminding her to cut it short and stick to the time limit of twenty minutes. Vijayshree's was an excellent paper with a series of insights. But CDN's constant snapping made me nervous. Thus, when my turn came, I hurried through my presentation with an eye of the wall clock. There was a centre opened by CDN in Mysore, Dhyanaloka, where people could go and work in the library. One of my scholars visited the centre and found it rich with material on Commonwealth literatures including journals as well. I longed to visit it. Some years later when I had to go to Bangalore, I wrote to CDN and told him about my desire to visit Mysore. The materialisation of this dream was literally a dream come true; CDN came personally to collect me from the station. I availed of their hospitality. Mrs CDN was so gentle and kind I had dinner with them every evening, stayed in their guest room and worked in the library for a couple of days working on the journals. And when I was to leave, he himself saw me off at the station generous and considerate as ever! They treated me like a family member. I still remember these contrasting sides of his sternness and thoughtfulness. Precious qualities to have and a rare combination goes to emphasize the human quality of great learning. We remember him with respect and I am glad *Dialogue* is bringing out this issue to pay a tribute to him. He was one of those who have left a remarkable heritage for us to appreciate. A rare achievement on part of any one person.