Linguistics, English studies, and India Studies have lost one of their most charismatic leaders. Professor Braj B. Kachru successfully challenged the orthodoxies of the English establishment on both sides of the Atlantic (the British Council, TESOL), including the “sacred linguistic cow” of the native speaker, which looked upon non-native varieties as erroneous approximations of standard English. He argued for a pluralistic, socially realistic view of the English-using world, known as the “Three Circles of English” paradigm, where each circle has different contexts, uses and users. The inner circle consists of the native speaker varieties, the second language varieties are the outer circle, and the foreign language varieties comprise the extended circle. Through half a century of meticulous scholarship and energetic advocacy, Kachru demonstrated that the non-native Englishes such as Indian English, Nigerian English, and Singapore and Filipino English were rule-governed systems, shaped by natural evolutionary processes of second language learning and multilingual creativity, and vibrant expressions of distinct cultural identities. It is irrelevant to judge them with reference to native speaker norms. In the process, Kachru emerged as the world’s leading authority on the English as a global language. Today, “World Englishes,” the field of study he pioneered and dominated, is a burgeoning discipline, with a world-wide following.

Kachru was an influential authority on sociolinguistics, multilingualism, South Asian linguistics, applied linguistics, and his native language, Kashmiri, as well. He wrote well-researched, comprehensive surveys on language in South Asia for numerous international reference works. He founded South Asian Languages Analysis (SALA) in 1978, a major conference series for South Asian linguists. In his research, he showed how South Asian languages have been shaped by a history of multilingual give and take with one another and with the lingua francas, Sanskrit, Persian, and English. There is, therefore, a common core in the sound system, vocabulary, grammar, and culturally rooted modes of expression, such as greeting, which bridges the otherwise baffling diversity. He studied the communicative rationale for the widespread use of language mixing or hybrid languages (for example, Hinglish) all across South Asia. He described choices that speakers make based on the range of valued roles they make available. He was concerned with the “killer” effect of the hegemonic languages on regional, minority and tribal languages of South Asia.

Braj Behari Kachru was born in Srinagar, Kashmir, India, on May 15, 1932. He was educated at the University of Allahabad, the Deccan College, Pune, and the University of Edinburgh. He was Professor of Linguistics, Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Center for Advanced Study Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He died on 29 July, 2016 at Urbana. He was married to Yamuna Kachru, herself an authority on Hindi grammar and English discourse, honored by the President of India, who died in 2013. They have a daughter, Amita, a physician in Santa Rosa, California, and a son, Shamit, a professor of physics at Stanford, and two granddaughters, Sasha and Ila.

Professor Kachru authored and edited over 25 books and numerous research papers. He was author of The Indianization of English, The Alchemy of English, Asian Englishes: Beyond the
Canon, *A Reference Grammar of Spoken Kashmiri*, *A History of Kashmiri Literature*, and co-author of other important works. He edited or co-edited *The Other Tongue*, *The Handbook of World Englishes*, *World Englishes: Critical Concepts*, *Asian Englishes, Language in South Asia*, *Dimensions of Sociolinguistics in South Asia*, *Issues in Linguistics, Cultures, Ideologies, and the Dictionary*, among other titles, which have become standard reference works. He was associate editor *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* and contributor to the *Cambridge History of the English Language*, and other volumes. The *Collected Works of Braj B. Kachru* have been published by Bloomsbury, London, in three volumes so far.

With Larry E. Smith of the East-West Center, Honolulu he co-founded and co-edited the journal *World Englishes* (now in its 35th year) and co-founded the professional organization, International Association for World Englishes (IAWE), serving as its President from 1997-99. In his vast research, publication, advocacy, and institution-building enterprises, he worked closely with his brilliant wife and colleague, Professor Yamuna Kachru. His other major collaborators were Professor Kingsley Bolton of Singapore, as well as many students, who have made their names as distinguished scholars around the world.

Kachru was also a gifted administrator. In a distinguished career spanning nearly half a century at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, one of the leading public universities in the U.S., he served as head of three academic units. Under his leadership (1968-79), the Department of Linguistics blossomed into a vibrant, multi-faceted research center, and came to be ranked as the third leading department in the nation. His pluralistic vision ensured that its faculty comprised cutting edge Chomskyan theorists as well as Classical scholars, experts on non-Western languages, Asian and African, and applied linguists. He insisted that linguists should address not only the structural and theoretical aspects of language but also their social and cultural dimensions. He encouraged the study of linguistic theory with its applications to areas, such as, second language teaching, discourse structure, and analysis of literature. He championed the teaching and scientific study of non-Western (Asian and African) languages, and the dynamics of multilingualism.

Subsequently, as Director of the Division of English as an International Language (1985-91), he transformed it from a service unit into an innovative research entity. Finally, as Director of the university’s prestigious Center for Advanced Study comprising many Nobel laureates, he redefined its mission and gave it expanded visibility and influence (1996-2000).

Kachru held many influential offices and received many prestigious honors. He directed the Linguistic Institute of the Linguistic Society of America in 1978; he was Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fund Visiting Professor at Hong Kong University (1998) and a Visiting Professor at National University of Singapore; an Honorary Fellow of English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, and President of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (1984) and the International Association for World Englishes (1997-99). His book, *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes*, was conferred the English Speaking Union of the Commonwealth prize for the best book on English. He was a sought after Keynote Speaker at universities and professional conferences all over the U.S, India, and Asia.

Professor Kachru was a larger than life figure who left an indelible impression on everyone he met, from students to luminaries of the field. He was an encyclopedic and meticulous scholar, a
critical but respectful admirer of tradition, an open-minded integrator of scholarship from every culture, Asian, African, European, and American, an imaginative institution builder, and a confident, fearless, visionary intellectual. He was also an inspiring teacher, passionate public speaker, a caring mentor, a supporting colleague, and a charismatic raconteur. At Urbana, he and Yamunaji were an institution. They trained generations of well-rounded linguists. These beloved gurus are now, in the words of Abhinavagupta, the greatest of Kashmiri scholars whose millennial anniversary we celebrate this year, *kiirti maatra shriira* (present only through their fame), but they will be missed by their world-wide, extended family of scholars and students.

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