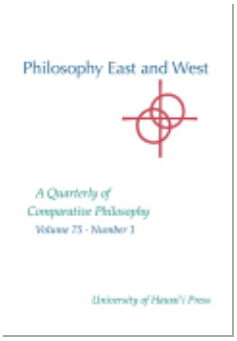
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Interjacent Intellectuals

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INTERJACENT INTELLECTUALS



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I. Introduction

Philosophers from the largely anglophone analytical tradition tend to present themselves as engaged in a detached observer-independent search for a body of context-free universal truths about human capacity, that is, as scientists of the human condition. Yet there are compelling reasons to think that the style of a philosopher's work in the manufacture and manipulation of concepts is closely associated with the circumstances in which they find themselves, in some broad sense of circumstance; that there is a puzzle with which their situation and experience confront them, and for which their philosophy is an attempt to find a resolution. The situation that demanded philosophical engagement for those profoundly articulate and learned thinkers of late colonial and early postindependence India—philosophers of the caliber of Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Surendranatha Dasgupta, Dhirendra Mohan Datta, and Anukulchandra Mukherji—was to make sense of their positioning in between two worlds of thought. What made these thinkers great, what defined them as philosophical giants, was their robust refusal to permit themselves to fall into inauthenticity by becoming entirely Sanskritic or by becoming wholly European. These thinkers understood that true philosophical authenticity in an age of rapid globalization must take a different form, one that respects the fact that one's intellectual location is to lie both *among* and *between* many worlds of thought. As such, their approach to philosophy offers one important paradigm for the idea of the global philosopher today: the paradigm, as I shall call it, of *the interjacent border intellectual*.

II. Border Intellectuals: Three Types

Ours is a time of walls, of borders, boundaries, and enclosures. I don't just mean real walls—those concrete and razor-wire abominations. I'm thinking also about walls in the ways we think, the ones that prevent us from thinking outside the box; and I'm thinking too about walls in the ways we feel, which keep us within our comfort zones of sensibility and imagination. I'm thinking about walls in the arena of empathy—barriers to our capacity to understand and identify with the lives, loves, and plights of others. And I'm thinking about walls in a new space, the space of attention, and how we seek out only the news

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that reinforces our prior beliefs and dismiss all contrary evidence as phony, or just don't notice it at all. "We live in information silos now. The individual is insulated from outside forces and surrounded by people who think and believe the same things he or she thinks and believes," a philosopher has recently and rightly remarked (Blackburn 2018). Ours is indeed an age of insularity, an epoch in which cultures, peoples, and nations have begun turning inward and international alliances seem to be breaking down, and when migration is conceptualized under the rubric of contamination rather than enrichment.

For much of the twentieth century, and indeed the nineteenth too, it seemed that the highest wall of all was the civilizational wall between East and West, a wall made of colonial concrete hard-set in Whitehall and Washington. Internationalism and cosmopolitanism based on the affirmation of our common humanity seemed to many Indian intellectuals to be the best hope to break down this wall and move toward an undivided world. Yet, and this is what I want to talk about, I believe that if we look closely, we can detect traces of a different current of thought. The different idea was that instead of trying to break down walls, we should subvert them, and that if walls create borders, it is precisely *in the border regions* that humanity can best find its freedom.

A first intimation of the idea can be witnessed in a few brief comments by the eminent sociologist George Simmel in an essay, originally published in 1909, entitled "Bridge and Door." Every act of separation demands and requires a coordinate act of connection, he argues: barriers cannot exist without bridges and doors, nor bridges and doors without walls. This is, he even claims, the essence of our humanity: "human being is the connecting creature who must always separate and cannot connect without separating" (Simmel [1909] 1994, p. 10). "Precisely because it can be opened," he says, "a door's closure provides the feeling of a stronger isolation against everything outside than a mere unstructured wall. The wall is mute, but the door speaks" (Simmel [1909] 1994, p. 7). It is essential to the idea of being human that even as we put ourselves behind walls we preserve for ourselves the freedom to find the bridges and the doors that would enable us to transit between the spaces they separate. If the question of the times is how one should live under conditions of insularity, Simmel hits on something fundamental when he describes the human being as "the bordering creature who has no borders" (Simmel [1909] 1994, p. 10). What he means, I think, is that if walls require doors, then doors create spaces of their own, which exist in their own right without lying on either side of the separation. Who can cross a land border, the threshold between two countries, without hesitating for a moment to enjoy the thrill of standing between them in a no-go zone that exists somehow outside of both? If walls are what create barriers, they are also what give rise to these strangely interstitial and ephemeral places. What I am calling an "interjacent intellectual" is nothing but one of Simmel's "bordering creatures who has no borders."

The idea has occasionally resurfaced in other fragments of testimony. The words of the translingual novelist Andreï Makine, who wrote both in French

and in his native Russian, provide a powerful illustration of my point. Makine summarizes his experience thus: "Strangely, or rather quite logically, it is at moments like this *when I find myself between two languages* that I believe I can see and feel more intensely than ever" (Makine 2011; cited in Safran 2003, p. 263). There is a certain region for thought and feeling—an ephemeral but real world—that consists in the interspace of the vestibule or foyer. Makine describes himself as at his most intense when he is thinking not in French or in Russian but in the silence between them. Many have made this place their own, a zone the mixed-race philosopher Celena Simpson perfectly describes as "the space between the ideas, books, traditions, practitioners, and conversations—a space so vast and fully of (messy) life, a space in which I can understand myself more clearly, a space I can embrace as my own" (Simpson 2016, p. 229). The architect Arata Isozaki gives voice to the same idea, saying, "I can't be Japanese and I can't be Western—but I understand both. I am double-binded, but—and this is perhaps most important—I am also in a position that generates a great deal of energy and creativity" (Isozaki; quoted in Iyer 2000, p. 116). Yet the idea is already an old one. In his book, *Three Ways to Be Alien*, Sanjay Subrahmanyam tells the story of Yahya, a sixteenth-century Berber adventurer. Yahya says, "From the day that I returned to this country, I have had neither pleasure nor rest with the Christians and even less with the Moors. The Moors say I am a Christian, and the Christians say I am a Moor, and so I hang in balance without knowing what I should do with myself" (2011, p. 1). What makes the interstitial space a vestibule of creativity is, perhaps, that one is forced to "think on one's feet" when faced with the loss of a single system of support. Pushing back in opposite directions simultaneously, one must *force* this space into existence; the door bangs shut unless *held* open. Although my focus will be on twentieth-century thinkers and the lessons we can derive for global philosophy today from their struggles, I don't preclude the possibility that there were moments of interjacency in the more distant past.

It is, I suggest, the defining trait of an interjacent border intellectual to call these interstitial spaces—whether between cultures, civilizations, languages, ethnicities, or systems of intelligibility—one's natural home. These intellectuals are not comparativists, seeking similarities and differences among the conceptual spaces they straddle, in the hope, more often than not, that the commonalities point to common truth rather than common error; nor are they trying to use one of the spaces as the benchmark against which to evaluate the other. And they are not attempting to produce a synthesis, amalgamation, or fusion of the spaces. Their philosophical project and the grounds of their identity are different altogether. The concept of interjacency, as I will elaborate on it, likewise differs in key respects from more familiar postcolonial notions such as those of hybridity and liminality.

In a series of essays, Abdul JanMohamed has developed a helpful typology of border intellectuals, based, he says, on the intentionality of their intellectual orientation. Border intellectuals, that is, intellectuals who are "situated on

cultural borders" (1992, p. 97), fall, he argues, into one of two types. The *syncretic* border intellectual, "more 'at home' in both cultures than his or her specular counterpart, is able to combine elements of the two cultures in order to articulate new syncretic forms and experiences" (ibid.). As examples, JanMohamed cites Wole Soyinka ("whose plays often combine Greek tragedy with Yoruba mythology"), Salman Rushdie ("whose 'English' novels are often structured by Urdu syntax"), and Chinua Achebe ("whose 'English' fiction is structured by Igbo oral narrative patterns"). The intentionality here is toward syncretism and combination, and so, evidently, the fusion philosopher is a syncretic border intellectual. A contemporary syncretic border philosopher is Arindam Chakrabarti, who encourages such an entanglement of traditions as results in a "comparative philosophy without borders," which is generative of new philosophical thinking (Chakrabarti and Weber 2016). Chakrabarti writes that "fusion philosophy proceeds with an open eye toward philosophical ideas and thoughts wherever they can be met. It is the conscious attempt of filling one's mind in an almost terribly unsystematic manner with whatever one gets out of the study of different styles and traditions. Then, in a subsequent step, one forgets about one's sources. Instead of preserving, quoting, and juxtaposing them, one picks up a context, a line of reasoning, or some minor point arising out of years of imaginative rearrangement and cross-fertilization of the ideas retrieved from different cultures, periods, texts, and disciplines. Strategic oblivion of one's sources makes an unexpected osmosis of concepts possible" (ibid., p. 231). As these comments make clear, the obliteration of borders is the strategic ambition of the fusion philosopher. Even earlier, however, Dhirendra Mohan Datta had already provided this precise analysis of the intentionality and state of mind of the fusion philosopher: "real philosophical synthesis is marked by inner harmony arising from a steady and consistent vision and the resultant attitude with which ideas are selected, interpreted, assimilated, and transformed into a new theory or system" (Datta 1963, p. 27, 1972). Anukulchandra Mukerji, whose 1938 book *The Nature of Self* is a paradigmatic exemplar of fusion philosophy, had likewise emphasized the need for critical reinterpretation: "He whose primary concern is to discover what is real and true has very often to make explicit what was left implicit in the original system and, if necessary, interpret and re-interpret its conflicting tendencies in the interest of logical consistency—only thus is it possible to offer, by means of a comparative study, useful suggestions for new constructions and expose the pit-falls and fallacies in the different systems brought together for comparison" (1938, p. 3). Creative novelty, for the fusion philosopher, consists in the discovery of new connections between concepts rather than the invention of new concepts and principles (Chakrabarti 2011, p. 5). JanMohamed's syncretic border intellectual is, in fact, precisely the object of inquiry in the emerging field of transcultural studies, whose practitioners emphasize how "processes of interaction between groups of different cultural origin do not only result in processes of transmission, reception, adaptation, and assimilation but also

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lead to the transformation and amalgamation of previously distinct cultural elements within a new cultural synthesis" (König and Rakow 2016, p. 90). The fusion philosopher as transcultural philosopher is one important model for global philosophy.

We must note, however, that the term "fusion philosophy" is often used to refer to a rather different intellectual orientation, where the intention is to exploit ideas from another culture to solve problems in one's own; this is, I believe, how Mark Siderits, who coined the term, intended it to be understood (the idea of "constructive engagement," often appealed to in discussions of comparative philosophy in an East Asian context, has a similar import; see Mou 2010). Again anticipating later developments, Datta describes this attitude as follows: "Philosophers rooted in their respective regional cultures and philosophic traditions can work for that ideal [of a world philosophy] by assimilating from all other regions valuable ideas, from their respective standpoints, to widen, deepen, and enrich their thought" (Datta 1963, p. 30). Such a philosopher would not count as a border intellectual in JanMohamed's sense, for there is implicit groundedness in what is *one's own* and a consequent absence of intention deliberately to locate oneself, as a thinker, in a border zone. Some of the more innovative of the traditional Sanskrit paṇḍits made an attempt to meld newly available European knowledge with traditional Sanskrit knowledge systems, and may for that reason be considered as intellectuals of this sort, to the extent that they were willing to enrich and expand traditional frameworks in the process, to enter into "processes of transmission, reception, adaptation, and assimilation." Let me call these two very different modalities of fusion philosophy the *inventive* and the *extractive* models, respectively. Only the first, to repeat, is that of a border intellectual; the latter can more appropriately be seen as, in Scheffler's phrase, "traditionalists with a cosmopolitan inflection": "Those whose traditionalism takes this form will think it important to identify and perpetuate the values and practices on whose continuity the integrity of their tradition rests. At the same time, however, they will be prepared to reconceive those elements of the tradition that are no longer credible as they stand but which admit of illuminating reinterpretation; to abandon elements of the tradition that have come to seem unacceptable and which resist reinterpretation; and to promote the intelligent selection and incorporation into the tradition of new ideas and practices whose inspiration may be drawn from external sources, but which can be embraced without doing violence to the integrity of the tradition, and can instead serve to enrich it. This is, if you like, traditionalism with a cosmopolitan inflection" (Scheffler 1999, p. 275).

What, then, is JanMohamed's second type, that of the *specular* border intellectual? He says, "the specular border intellectual, while perhaps equally familiar with two cultures, finds himself or herself unable or unwilling to be 'at home' in these societies. Caught between several cultures or groups, none of which are deemed sufficiently enabling or productive, the specular intellectual subjects the cultures to analytic scrutiny rather than combining them; he

or she utilizes his or her interstitial cultural space as a vantage point from which to define, implicitly or explicitly, other, utopian possibilities of group formation" (JanMohamed 1992, p. 97). JanMohamed's examples of this type of border intellectual include Richard Wright, Edward Said, and W.E.B. DuBois. Of Richard Wright, he says, "Wright's major tactic in resisting hegemonic formation consisted of establishing a specular relation with society's attempt to negate him; he turned himself into a mirror that reflected the negation back at the hegemony" (1987, p. 247; see also his 2002 and 2012). Frantz Fanon seems to be another clear case. The process Fanon calls "disalienation" (the original title for *Black Lives, White Masks* was "An Essay on the Disalienation of the Black" and is more accurate because a mask is merely a disguise) consists in a freeing act of self-creation: "The Other fixes me with his gaze, his gestures and attitude, the same way you fix a preparation with a dye. I explode. Here are the fragments put together by another me … In the world I am heading for, I am endlessly creating myself … Here is my freedom, which sends back to me my own reflection" (1967, p. 89). The metaphor of specularity implies a mirroring, a reflecting-off of one against the other, and an acute attention to how each is seen in the gaze of the other. In the background, of course, is Sartre's analysis, in *Being and Nothingness*, of shame as a humiliating awareness of yourself as you are seen in the gaze of another (Sartre, Fanon, and Wright were conversant with each other's work). So Said's attitude "is specular because, from his very different location on the same border between European and non-European cultures, he faces these Western intellectuals across that border, so to speak, and crosses over into the West only to re-cross the border with them in order to map the politics of their forays into other cultures" (JanMohamed 1992, p. 98). The intentionality of the specular border intellectual is toward the reflection of each culture in the other. The borders of specularity are not really inhabitable spaces, therefore, but surfaces, like the surface of the sea, which, from above, reflects back the sky but permits a glimpse of the ocean below, and, from below, reflects back the ocean while allowing sunlight in. JanMohamed says of Said that he "constructs an analytic mirror that reflects and refracts the structures of the host culture" (JanMohamed 1992, p. 108). So "borders are neither inside nor outside the territory they define but simply designate the difference between the two. They are not really spaces at all … Thus, intellectuals located on this site are not, so to speak, 'sitting' on the border; rather, they are forced *to constitute themselves as the borde*r" (JanMohamed 1992, p. 103). The embodied lived experience of the border intellectual is itself what the border consists of.

Insofar as the emphasis is on double mirroring, JanMohamed's specular border intellectual is, I would say, an *adjacent* intellectual. Indeed, Hayden White summarizes Said's contrapunctal method as one which is "based on notions of adjacency, complementarity, discontinuity—in other words, contiguity" (quoted in JanMohamed 1992, p. 109). That provides a clue as to why, while agreeing with JanMohamed in his important insight that there are types of border intellectual other than the syncretic, I do not assimilate the notion of the

interjacent intellectual to that of the specular border intellectual. Interjacency is not specularity. It is not grounded in the idea of double mirroring, of the reflection of each in the eyes of the other. There is, certainly, an unwillingness to be at home in one culture and a playing off of one against the other, but the emphasis is rather on the way in which an internal opposition forces into being a new subjective space. While the specular border intellectual is homeless (JanMohamed 1992, p. 110), the interjacent border intellectual forges a home for themselves in acts of resistance and defiance. Rather than the double reflection which is constitutive of specularity, an interjacent intellectual lives in a space created by acts of double defiance. We will see many cases of such defiance in the biographies of the philosophers I will present as anticipants of the interjacent border intellectual. This results, if anything, in the creation of new philosophical principles in the mind of a thinker whose laboratory is the interstice, a moving space the thinker keeps alive by pushing back equally on both sides. While what the syncretic intellectual aims at is the systematic obliteration of borders, borders are a precondition for the possibility of adopting an interjacent stance. Here we see the difference between bridge and door: if the syncretic border intellectual is a bridge-builder in search of new ways to connect, the interjacent border intellectual is an opener of doors, the creator of new interstitial spaces. Another precondition is that both cultures carry roughly equal weight in the mind of the thinker; the power asymmetries of colonialism have made interjacency an intellectual orientation difficult to consistently maintain. Interjacency is an unstable equilibrium, an interregnum between two competing systems of norms, neither of which one wants to be bound by. Fanon's "I explode" comes closer, though this isn't so much a double defiance as the shattering of a hall of mirrors.

III. Interjacency and Idealism: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

I would like to develop my argument by juxtaposing the lives of two philosophers from early-twentieth-century India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) and Surendranatha Dasgupta (1887–1952). Neither was simply an academic philosopher; in the lives and writings of both, there is a burning need to address the central existential question: how to live authentically in the shadow of the wall. It was not an option for either of these men to live entirely on one side or the other, turning a blind eye to the other half of themselves, and they were not willing to divide themselves into two, with distinct and separate Eastern and Western personae. The common feature of these two intellectual greats was a will to find a way to be true to themselves under conditions of civilizational division.

Radhakrishnan's story is the better known and more glamorous of the two. An academic career in India, moving from professor at the University of Mysore to the George V Chair in Philosophy at the University of Calcutta and serving as Vice-Chancellor at Andhra University and Benares Hindu University before

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becoming Vice President and then President of India, ran hand in hand with a notably distinguished career in Great Britain. This began with his Hibbert and Jowett lectures at Oxford, where he then assumed the Spalding Professorship, to being honoured with a knighthood and fellowship of the British Academy. The two documents which, I think, are most revealing are his essay "My search for truth," published in 1937, and his inaugural Spalding lecture, entitled "The world's unborn soul," delivered in October 1936. "The world's unborn soul" speaks, indeed, directly to my theme. Radhakrishnan begins by pointing out that the world of 1936 is in a state of crisis, one of fragmented nationalism. Every civilization, he claims, is an experiment in living. But the European experiment has reached a dead end, its only hope of salvation lying with an infusion of ideas from India. For, as he puts it, it would be "an academic error, a failure of perspective" for Europeans not to listen to sources of inspiration found in the world's literature. "Perhaps, the civilizations of the East, their religions and ethics, may offer us some help in negotiating difficulties we are up against … Now that we have the whole world for our cultural base, the process of discovery and training in classics cannot cease with listening to the voices of Isaiah and Paul, Socrates and Cicero" (Radhakrishnan 1936, p. 1). In his striking use of the first person plural here, Radhakrishnan distances himself from the role of cultural spokesperson for the East alone, despite a strong wish by others so to cast him (indeed, his synoptic volume *Indian Philosophy* is the work by which many know him).

Mankind, Radhakrishnan says, is still in the making. It has the potential for universal fellowship—a common humanity based on a shared form of subjectivity. And this is, famously, Radhakrishnan's fundamental idea: that there is a common, universal core in the subjective character of all human experience, a commonality that represents the best of us and on which a universal feeling of camaraderie can be based (the term "subjective" here standing for the experiential, not the private). This is a conception of authenticity based on the rediscovery of this basal core of universal subjectivity: "The aim of all human living is self-definition. It is to isolate the substantial permanence which each finite life possesses deep down, from the strife of empirical happenings. We can exceed the limits within which human consciousness normally functions. Man can abstract from his body and flesh, from his feelings and desires, even from thoughts which rise like waves on the surface of his mind, and reach a pure awareness, *the naked condition of his pure selfhood*" (1936, p. 26; my italics). "What is our true self? While our bodily organization undergoes changes, while our thoughts gather like clouds in the sky and disperse again, the self is never lost. It is present in all, yet distinct from all. Its nature is not affected by ordinary happenings. It is the source of the sense of identity through numerous transformations. It remains itself though it sees all things … This persisting self which is universal seer to all things seen, this essential awareness which nothing has the power to suppress …" (1936, p. 24). A self that is never lost, independent of the vagaries of our physiological and psychological constitution, an everpresent

and unchanging source of self-awareness, represents, for Radhakrishnan, the ultimate ground of human fraternity. Ironically, although "never lost," this self, as the Upaniṣadic seers were the first to discover, is remarkably hard to find. The new philosophical principle that emerges in Radhakrishnan's mind is that of intuition, "where intellect, will and emotion are fully integrated, and man is one with the spirit in him" (Datta 1948, p. 558).

Rediscovering this pure, universal self, the "authentic being" from which we have become "exiled," is the solution we have been looking for, of how to live in our age of insularity: "The fundamental truths of a spiritual religion are that our real self is the supreme being, which it is our business to discover and consciously become, and this being is one in all. The soul that has found itself is no longer conscious of itself in its isolation. It is conscious rather of the universal life of which all individuals, races, and nations are specific articulations […] Those who are anxious to live in peace with their own species and all life will not find it possible to gloat over the massacres of large numbers of men simply because they do not belong to their race or country […] Our normal attitudes to other races and nations are no more than artificial masks, habits of thought and feeling, sedulously cultivated by long practice in dissimulation […] Racialism and nationalism which require us to exercise our base passions, to bully and cheat, to kill and loot, all with a feeling that we are profoundly virtuous and doing God's work, are abhorrent to the spiritually awakened. For them all races and nations lie beneath the same arch of heaven. They proclaim a new social relationship and serve a new society with civil liberties for all individuals, and political freedom for all nations great and small" (1936, p. 30).

Despite the soaring rhetoric, Radhakrisnan's entire argument trades, I think it is clear, on an equivocation in the meaning of the word "pure." We might certainly agree with him that there is a common subjective feature in all human experience—something it is like to be conscious—a core element in the phenomenology of human existence. Insofar as this core element is impervious to more local variation in the qualificative character or intentional content of experience, we could describe it as "pure consciousness," consciousness uncontaminated by subject-specific dimensions of variation. As such, however, it is present in the consciousness of every human being, however good or wicked they might be, and so can in no way be identified with a *morally pure* essence, which Radhakrishnan believes is there in all of us (even, Gandhi believed, in Hitler). His brilliant students at the University of Calcutta were quick to spot this, one student, later to become a famous philosopher in their own right, reminiscing thus: "He had a lot of firework phrases. When, however, we tried to sum up his lectures, we often fumbled for some substance [… and we …] found his claims about 'Indian Spiritualism' or about 'Advaita Vedānta' representing the highest synthesis of wisdom etc. etc., too tall, and so these claims did not have much impact on our minds" (cited in Murty and Vohra 1990, p. 28).

Nevertheless, as Murty and Vohra note, Radhakrishnan's vision of "the possibility of a world philosophy emerging from a synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophies, the establishment of universal peace and harmony through an awareness of the presence of the same Divine Spirit in all human beings: these were commonly accepted by many Indian intellectuals" (Murty and Vohra 1990, pp. 203–204). What I find most astonishing is that Radhakrishnan should have felt able to promote this very same account from 1936 again in 1954. World War II, which shook to the core the world's faith in itself, did nothing to shake Radhakrishnan's faith in his brand of idealism. Radhakrishnan entitled his 1954 Beatty lectures at the University of Manchester, "East and West." He says, "The present chaos in the world can be traced directly to the chaos in our minds. There is division in man's soul … Whispers that come from the secret depths of the soul are rejected as unscientific fancies" (1955, p. 261). "When the spirit, which is the mind in its integrity, is at work, man has the immediate intuition of his unity with the eternal, though, in the derived intellectual consciousness, he remains apart and works into the grounds of his own being and discerns his relation to and dependence upon the presence behind the trembling veil of phenomena" (1955, p. 267), he says, and again, "To bestow a sacred character on racial traditions is to give a false turn to the life of the spirit" (1955, p. 287).

Radhakrishnan is certainly not fully detached from the grip of the metaphor of synthesis, which he depicts as a "cross-fertilization" (a term that reappears in Chakrabarti's definition of fusion philosophy). Yet, in his more introspective moments, Radhakrishnan reveals an acquaintance with the interjacent phenomenology I am interested in. In "My search for truth" from 1937, we find him alone with himself, struggling to make sense: "A meditative frame of mind is responsible for my love of loneliness. Side by side with my outward activities, there is in me an inner life of increasing solitude in which I love to linger" (1937, pp. 11–12). When Salman Rushdie refers to this same self, he calls it his "best self": "There's a writing self which is not quite your ordinary social self and which you don't really have access to except at the moment when you're writing, and certainly in my view, I think of that as my best self," he says, continuing, "To be able to be that person feels good; it feels better than anything else" (2008). Or as the mixed-race philosopher Tina Botts describes it, "I have only recently taken on the identity of being a person of mixed race, although I think I have always felt the way that many mixed race persons describe feeling; that is, like *a perpetual stranger*, always on the outside looking into the world, rather than being immersed in it; *never feeling fully integrated into any particular frame of reference, or into what I like to call a particular system of intelligibility* …. I want to say very clearly that this is an all-encompassing feeling, permeating all aspects of my life and who I am, including how I think, what my priorities are, how I choose to live, and how I interact or do not interact with others" (Botts 2016, pp. 117–118). I wonder if interjacency wasn't, after all, the foundation of Radhakrishnan's conviction that the phenomenologically pure Advaitic self, the self which *feels good*, is also a *morally* pure and good self.

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In equating the interjacent conception of self with the Advaitic idea of *brahman* as universal foundational consciousness, Radhakrishnan made a daring and radical move, even if the tragedies of the twentieth century revealed it to be, in the end, an unsustainable one. The borders are not mere ephemera; they are not tricks or illusions but real divisions within the human body politic. The many references to synthesis and the desire to ephemeralize borders mean that we should identify Radhakrishnan as a border intellectual in whom syncretism is infused with interjacency, someone who, while seeming to feel at home in each culture, speaks also, at times, of feeling an outsider to both.

IV. Interjacency and Dependent Emergence: Surendranath Dasgupta

If Radhakrishnan's belief that the walls which divide us are all just tricks of *māyā* turned out itself to be an illusion, for borders are not merely ephemera, what of the other great figure I want to talk about, Surendranath Dasgupta? Dasgupta, like Radhakrishnan, led two careers in parallel, though neither was as distinguished or flamboyant. His Indian career began as a teacher at Chittagong College, then as a professor of European philosophy at Presidency College, Calcutta, as principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, and, finally, succeeding Radhakrishnan as George V Professor of Philosophy at the University of Calcutta. Meanwhile, Dasgupta taught at the University of Cambridge while doing a second Ph.D. under McTaggart (who indeed used to boast that he was proud of just four of his students: Russell, Moore, Broad, and Dasgupta), subsequently making several extended lecture tours of major European capitals before replacing A. B. Keith as Professor of Sanskrit at The University of Edinburgh.

For Dasgupta and his contemporaries in late colonial and early postcolonial India, the "impossible meeting" of East and West was not an abstract puzzle in the theory of interculturalism but a challenge to find an authentic interpretation of their lived experience. What does authenticity consist in for a thinker as much rooted in two lifeworlds and as much thereby alienated from either? I will look for Dasgupta's answer in a series of fascinating talks he delivered over the years, which were eventually collated and published as his *Philosophical Essays*, and from the biography written by his wife, Surama Dasgupta. Dasgupta is acutely conscious of the dilemma, which he formulates with precision in an essay entitled "Dogmas of Indian Philosophy": "If we could completely transform ourselves by the newly introduced European culture our problems of life would be very much simplified. But howsoever we may be modified by Western thought we can never forget our traditional past and howsoever the foot-prints may have been obliterated, we are still intimately connected with it, and we can never wholly take ourselves away from the grip of the great ideals of our forefathers […] We are thus in a very difficult situation: we cannot identify ourselves with our forefathers, nor are our problems of life the same as theirs; we cannot also identify ourselves with our Western brethren nor can we look at

life wholly from their point of view" (1941a, p. 233). "Thus," he continues, eerily echoing the sentiment of Yahya, "we cannot bind our faith to our traditional past nor can we heartily welcome the Western outlook of life. If the religious and moral problems of our forefathers are not our own, we cannot also wholly believe ourselves to be like the Westerners having the same view of life as they have. We are thus in a state of transition where both the Indian and the Western ideals are fighting for supremacy and we do not know which to choose and where to stand" (1941a, p. 233). A simple return to Indian tradition makes little sense in a global age, but neither can the Indian seeker of authenticity merely imitate the ways of the West. Colonialism may have erased our footprints, but the cultural soil in which they were an impression is still what has brought us here.

Bernard Williams, another philosopher who put great store on authenticity in intellectual life, when asked in a late interview to reflect on his journey as a philosopher, remarked that "if there's one theme in all my work, it's about authenticity and self-expression. It's the idea that some things are, in some real sense, really you, or express what you are, and others aren't" (quoted in Macintyre 2016, p. 150). What was it, for Dasgupta, to live an intellectually authentic life? Without ever, to my knowledge, referring to it explicitly, Dasgupta rejects Radhakrishnan's conception of authenticity as consisting in a return to a phenomenology of pure spirit from which immersion in the empirical world has exiled us. The authentic self, for Dasgupta, is not a hidden universal essence but a constructive achievement, the outcome of a process of self-relating: "The word 'mind' is a symbolic term for what is in reality a process of weaving experiences together in a definite and systematic order, which transforms a denotation of objective presentation into an experience, by associating it with meaning. In one sense, therefore, mind is not an entity, it is a series of relationing processes […] It is these processes excited in a limited field which, being in themselves relational complexes, behave as an individual that is referred to as 'I'" (1936, p. 197). "Such a self," he continues, is neither a bundle of perceptions nor an entity which has perceptions as its body, but is an integrated whole, as part of a bigger mental whole. It, therefore, not only grows but may change its nature at different times as a result of the mental history, as also of environmental influences, and on the occasion of diverse kinds of apperceptions" (1936, pp. 197–198). Dasgupta is quite emphatic in his rejection of a substantialist metaphysics of the soul, even as he acknowledges the centrality of the idea in much traditional Hindu thought: "It is not out of place here to mention that the present article is not written on the assumption of the existence of the soul-entity or the soul-substance […unlike …] most systems of Indian thought, where this assumption has played an important part […but rather …] on a view that the total personality of man is composed of the diverse relational groups acting in unison" (1941b, pp. 46–47).

Part of what constitutes authenticity, for Dasgupta, is the avoidance of what the great Danish existentialist thinker Søren Kierkegaard termed "despair."

Kierkegaard based his profound exposition of the notion of despair, in *The Sickness unto Death* on an astonishing and startling analysis of the structure of inwardness. Indeed, and much in the same spirit as Dasgupta, he argues that subjectivity is an activity, not a thing, and that, more specifically, it is a process of relating oneself to one's self, a synthesis of factors that are in some sense the mirror images of each other, despair being nothing but the failure to achieve synthesis: "The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself it itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relates itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. […] Despair is the misrelationship in a relation that relates itself to itself" (1983, pp. 13–15). Selfhood, Kierkegaard says, is a process—the process of bringing two aspects of oneself into relation to one another. And the misery he calls "despair" is the unhappy state one falls into when those different aspects, which are, in themselves, both aspects of oneself, are misrelated. Dasgupta, drawing as we shall see on a full range of sources, both Indian and Western, takes a further step: authenticity is a matter not merely of avoiding misrelation but of an expansion in the self's self-relating and an ever-increasing complexity in its relationships.

In his essay, "International morality," Dasgupta uses his idea that the self is a self-relating whole as the basis on which to construct an internationalist ethics. The basis of the theory is of self as self-relationing mind-complex: the self grows in an expanding process of self-relationing activity: biological, familial, social, national, and finally international. The most authentic individual, for Dasgupta, is the most expansive and therefore the most international: "Although our personalities apparently seem to be individual entities, our life is not merely a resultant of the conflict or co-operation of these personalities. There is a common field of life in which they share a joint existence and which serves as the reserve tending towards the true norm of the more and more extending processes of self-affiliating realisation. Thus there is an eternal message of hope for all individuals and nations that even in times of an individual moral crisis or a national moral crisis the different personalities would not necessarily wreck themselves into destruction by mutual conflict [… because …] the emergent personalities are nothing but modifications of the self-relating activity …. It thus appears that the parallel personalities participate in one another … by sharing the life of a bigger whole with which they are connected" (1941b, pp. 53–54). He is severely critical of the type of nationalist popularism so rife today: "However great a nation may be in opulence, pomp, glory, and prestige, the national mind remains largely in the economic and political stage, and it is always possible that there should be many individuals in it who have outgrown the national limits and have formed a mentality in which the biological and the secondary biological instincts and tendencies have shrunk to their minimum and the highest aspirations have bloomed forth in such a manner that they are one with the humanity of all times and faiths" (1941b, p. 58). Individuals should

[35.176.47.6] Project MUSE (2025-07-08 08:31 GMT) University of Warwick

not limit themselves; the ethics of authenticity is an ethics of internationalism: "No dogma of individual morality can be fruitful unless it is supplemented by the still higher truth of international morality" (1941b, p. 61); this is not least because nations are responsible for one another: "When nations will realise the responsibility that they have in the growth and well-being of other nations, not in a spirit of furtherance of their own economic welfare, but through an inspired and enlightened feeling of sympathy and love in recognising other nations as their fellow-beings … the kingdom of Heaven will be established on earth" (1941b, p. 62).

This is Dasgupta's philosophy of dependent emergence, inspired as much by Sāṃkhya and Yoga (Dasgupta 1924, 1930) as by the emergent evolution of Lloyd Morgan (Morgan 1923) and Samuel Alexander (Alexander 1920), ideas Dasgupta may well have encountered during his years in Cambridge from 1920 to 1924. The relationship between Dasgupta's ideas and those of Morgan and Alexander are brilliantly discussed in a forgotten essay entitled "Emergent Evolution: An Indian View" by K. R. Srinivasiengar and published in *The Philosophical Review* in 1934—perhaps, indeed, the last time this august journal of philosophy in the analytical tradition has published an essay in Indian philosophy (aside from Dhirendra Mohan Datta's review essay, "The Contribution of Modern Indian Philosophy to World Philosophy," published in a 1948 special issue). Dasgupta displays his creative and constructive approach to Indian philosophical inherence, appropriating the Yoga idea of evolution (*pariṇāma*) but not the Yoga teleology. He argues that the order of evolution is not from whole to parts or from parts to whole, but from a relatively less differentiated, determinate, and coherent whole to a relatively more differentiated, determinate, and coherent whole. And he takes from Sāṃkhya the idea that increasing differentiation proceeds together with increasing integration within the evolving whole. The idea of expansion is thus completely central to Dasgupta's conception of an international morality, and "Ever Expanding" is the very appropriate title of Surama Dasgupta's account of his life.

If Dasgupta was willing to provide creative and revisionary interpretations of classical Indian theory to adapt and refashion the Indian philosophical legacy, he was just as willing to criticize and counter European thinking, especially at its most dogmatic. His wife, Surama Dasgupta, recounts Dasgupta's encounter with Sigmund Freud during one of his visits to Vienna:

> *Dasgupta*: In our country students are getting interested in your theories.
>
> *Freud*: Is the Indian mind keen enough to understand my science?
>
> *Dasgupta*: Well, Professor Freud, whatever you have been saying amounts to this, that we, human beings, are guided by the unconscious, about which we cannot do anything. The Indian yogis, however, on the other hand, had established through thousands of years of history that we can, by conscious effort, completely change or modify our subconscious or unconscious level.

Freud: Why, that is impossible!

Dasgupta: Have you ever tried it?

Freud: Oh, no, I have not done anything like this.

Dasgupta: Being a man of science, you have no right to declare anything impossible unless you had experimented and found it so … Therefore, it is better to restrain one's comments about the findings of the yogis of India. (Dasgupta 1971, p. 73)

Dasgupta himself would report on the encounter as follows: "The word *yoga* is used to denote … the arresting of the mental processes … The theory that mental states can be arrested by our efforts is an extremely original one, and up till now we know of no country other than India where such a possibility was ever conceived. In an interview that I had with the famous psychologist Dr. Sigmund Freud, he expressed great surprise, in the course of a long discussion, that such a thing should be conceived possible, but he admitted that this experiment had always been made and that therefore it would be hazardous to deny its possibility" (1941c, p. 276). This is Dasgupta actively engaged in a border skirmish as a way to constitute himself as an intellectual.

Despite his philosophical daring and the creativity he displayed in drawing on both Indian and Western resources to fashion a new philosophy of mind based on the idea that the self is an emergent complex and a new ethics grounded in expansive internationalism, Dasgupta's original philosophical work is not what he is now remembered for. How did Dasgupta's chief lifework, the massive *History of Indian Philosophy* in five volumes (Dasgupta 1922–1955), fit into this picture? A proper articulation of Indian philosophy in all its complexity is, he seems to have hoped, itself a means to achieve the evolution of the self; the self is an emergent international mind-complex: "If even now Indian philosophy is kept as a proud possession of a few expert Sanskritists, it may as well lie buried in the moth-eaten pages of palm leaves and the whole world would move on without even noticing that it has missed it. Yet it is this philosophy which may be regarded as the highest achievement of the Brahminic civilization of India of which we are justly proud, and on the bed-rock of which we want to rebuild our future national culture" (1941a, p. 224). His view was not that the Indian traditions are irrelevant to a modern Indian intellectual but rather that "if we want to construct the future philosophy on the basis of our own, we must at least thoroughly study our philosophy and know how and where it differs from the philosophy of the West … It is the great necessity of our age to make a complete study of our achievements in philosophy as faithfully as we can, in consonance with the spirit in which it was carried on and the atmosphere that it breathed" (1941a, p. 221). These are not the words of a traditionalist, but of someone who drew creatively and imaginatively on the historical sources, yet without deference to them. As Surama Dasgupta put it, "his own attitude towards life and its problems

was different from both the Eastern and Western thought, though very much enriched by a study of both" (1971, p. vi).

Despite this colossal work of historical scholarship, Dasgupta was shunned by the more orthodox elements in India. They saw in him someone who was too sympathetic to European philosophy, as too free-thinking to count as authentically Indian. He was stung, in particular, by the criticism of S. Kuppusvāmi Śāstri, who comments on the *History*: "Dasgupta endeavours to give an account of the evolution of philosophical thought, strictly in accordance with the original sources in Sanskrit and seems to hold the view that there is hardly any need for an exposition of the doctrines of Indian Philosophy, for the reason that they appear to him to be essentially the same as found in European Philosophy" (1941a, p. 222). Dasgupta responds in a typically uncompromising manner: "This is a gross misinterpretation of my views. Indian philosophy anticipates many problems and discussions of European philosophy; but in its history, structure, aims, ideals and concrete development as a whole, it widely differs from European philosophy. And it is exactly for this reason that I urge that Indian philosophy must first be faithfully interpreted and it is only after it has been faithfully interpreted that an attempt at constructive comparison or construction should be made. It is regrettable that Mm. Kuppusvāmī Śāstri should make such a gross blunder" (1941a, p. 223). Another skirmish. Never really "at home" in either the world of traditional Sanskrit learning or the world of contemporary Anglophone philosophy, Dasgupta made an intellectual home for himself in the interstices between them.

V. Conclusion

The philosopher of mixed race, Tina Botts, describes her own experience in a way that would, I think, have fitted Surendranath Dasgupta very well: "I floated in and out of systems of intelligibility (white and black) that were drastically different with completely different ways of perceiving, understanding, and being in the world. These differing systems of intelligibility, it is important to highlight, were not experienced by me as mere frameworks of meaning, but as completely different ways of being. But, more profoundly, I have never felt like exclusively one race or another at any given time (e.g., black or white) and *living in a world that required me to choose one race or another created, I believe, an openness to multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways of being*. I believe that these experiences lead to interdisciplinary and intertraditional work, with my never feeling comfortably staying inside a particular disciplinary or traditional box" (2016, p. 132; my italics). It was Dasgupta's remarkable achievement that, despite intense pressure to conform from both sides, he preserved for himself this space of openness and, in doing so, sought to live as an authentically interjacent border intellectual. He indeed shows great self-awareness when he writes: "Our real chance in life is neither to hold fast to the submerged rock [of traditional learning], nor to allow ourselves to be washed away, but to build

[35.176.47.6] Project MUSE (2025-07-08 08:31 GMT) University of Warwick

an edifice of our own, high and secure enough to withstand the ravages of all inundations. We want to avail ourselves of all that comes floating to us, and enjoy them at home. Let the waters of the Western sea come and break themselves on the walls of our fortress with their foaming billows. Our only safety is thus to be with the sea and yet above it" (1941a, p. 215). We stand on a submerged rock as the storms of newness break around us, and in so doing "build an edifice of our own." While elements in Dasgupta's praxis may be syncretic, this comment makes clear that his *intentionality* is not wholly that of the syncretic border intellectual; it is not to reconnect conceptual constructs but to create the conditions under which new concepts can emerge. Indeed, what I have tried to emphasize in this essay is the simple fact that, although Radhakrishnan and Dasgupta would both write as syncretic border intellectuals—for Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy* and Dasgupta's *A History of Indian Philosophy* are syncretic in exactly JanMohamed's sense, works whose content is Indian but structured according to English historiographical principles—nevertheless, in their original philosophical writings they hint at the intentionality of the interjacent border intellectual.

The philosopher Daya Krishna would later give the idea a distinctive twist: "To search for the distinctive philosophical problems seen as problems or for distinctiveness in the solutions offered to similar problems is not only to see the alien tradition in a new way but to enrich oneself with the awareness that has already been actualized. The awareness of this alternative actualized possibility may, one hopes, free one's conceptual imagination from the unconscious constraints of one's own conceptual tradition. Thus philosophy has the chance to function as a mutual liberator of each philosophical tradition from the limitations imposed upon it by its own past, instead of being what it is at present, the imposition of the standards of one dominant culture upon all the others and the evaluation of their philosophical achievements in terms of those alien standards" (1986, p. 69). We find here a rich formulation of the idea that a border intellectual plays off different traditions, indeed actively resists them, in order to force into being a space between them—an idea, however, somewhat mixed up with an extractive account of philosophical fusion. Daya Krishna was, I think, wrong to picture interjacency as a total liberation from all cultural formation, and his attitude toward the Indian past is more dismissive than that of Dasgupta. Yet his remark returns me to the place from which I began. There is a way to be a global philosopher today, a way that does not reduce to the roles of a dogmatist, comparativist, or fusion philosopher, nor is it still that of a critic. The way is to allow oneself to have the freedom that comes from inhabiting and making one's own interstitial space, to savor and elongate that brief moment of exaltation as one crosses a border and is between both worlds. Radhakrishnan and Dasgupta were, in their very different ways, both seeking to construct a notion of authenticity which respects this insight, and both, in doing so, established new philosophical principles, spiritual intuition for Radhakrishnan, and dependent

emergence for Dasgupta. Dhirendra Mohan Datta should be mentioned in the same breath as a very creative thinker who, anticipating contemporary trends in embodied, ecological, and enactive cognition, developed a new philosophy of the body inspired by—but by no means reducible to a synthesis of—ideas from India and the west (Datta 1951, pp. 32–50). Datta was favored both by Radhakrishnan and the Spalding family to replace Radhakrishnan in the Oxford Spalding chair, a wish regrettably ignored by the selection committee in favor of the establishment pick (Murty and Vohra 1990, p. 127). All three, despite inevitable accusations of cultural infidelity, were unafraid to push back against a tradition which also inspired them: Radhakrishnan against the monism of Śaṅkarite Vedānta; Dasgupta against teleology and the immutability of the soul; and Datta against the denigration of the body ("The almost universal deprecation of body-consciousness [*dehātmabuddhi*] in Indian philosophy has created the wrong tendency to underrate the importance of the body" [1971, p. 50]). Another philosopher whose thought requires an extensive discussion of its own is, of course, Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya; his book, *The Subject as Freedom*, might profitably be read as an exercise in interjacent philosophy.

Nowhere, perhaps, is the difference between syncretism to interjacency more immediately evident than in the generational gap between the brilliant Indian political philosopher Raghavan Iyer (1930–1995), whose conception of a "glass curtain" between East and West perfectly represents the idea of a wall that must be torn down, and his son, Pico Iyer, perhaps the most self-consciously interjacent thinker of recent times, who has written about the international airport and the shopping mall as what I am calling interjacent spaces, and of how he is "a person who had grown up in many cultures all at once—and so lived in the cracks between them" (Iyer 2000, p. 18), regarding them with an attitude not only of defiance but also of "amused detachment" (ibid., p. 20), a person "best characterized by the fact of falling between all categories" (ibid., p. 23), who "lives in the spaces between cultures" (ibid., p. 32), which is a "place between two rival forms of authority" (ibid., p. 41). As someone of Indian heritage who grew up in England and lived in California, Pico Iyer has kept alive an interjacent sensibility by deliberately choosing to live *as an outsider* in a *third* country, Japan, fully aware of the generational shift that separates him from his father: "Standing in this mock thirteenth-century Gothic cathedral, I could have been my father, in Bombay in 1937, reciting a borrowed litany—except that his world was made up of two cultures that he knew, while I, at this moment, was between two homes (California and Japan) that were quite strange to me" (ibid., p. 90).

I believe, to conclude, that the paradigm of interjacency has much to contribute to a theory of global thought as we move forward in the twenty-first century. Global thinkers will increasingly need an "elsewhere," a Japan. My argument in this essay has been that JanMohamed's important typology for the border intellectual therefore needs to be supplemented; that, in addition

to *syncretic* and *specular* border intellectuals and their instantiations as the transcultural fusion philosopher and the postcolonial philosophical critic, a third type must be recognized: the *interjacent* border intellectual and, thus, the interjacent global philosopher. I have detected early hints of a movement in this direction in the original philosophical writings of twentieth-century philosophers in India, whose dominant paradigm of self-understanding nevertheless remained syncretism, transculturalism, and fusion, and have found more evident articulations in recent mixed-race philosophy (*mestizo/a*) and bilingual literary theory. Living in the cracks between cultures, it seems increasingly evident, is a freeing and enabling way to live.

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