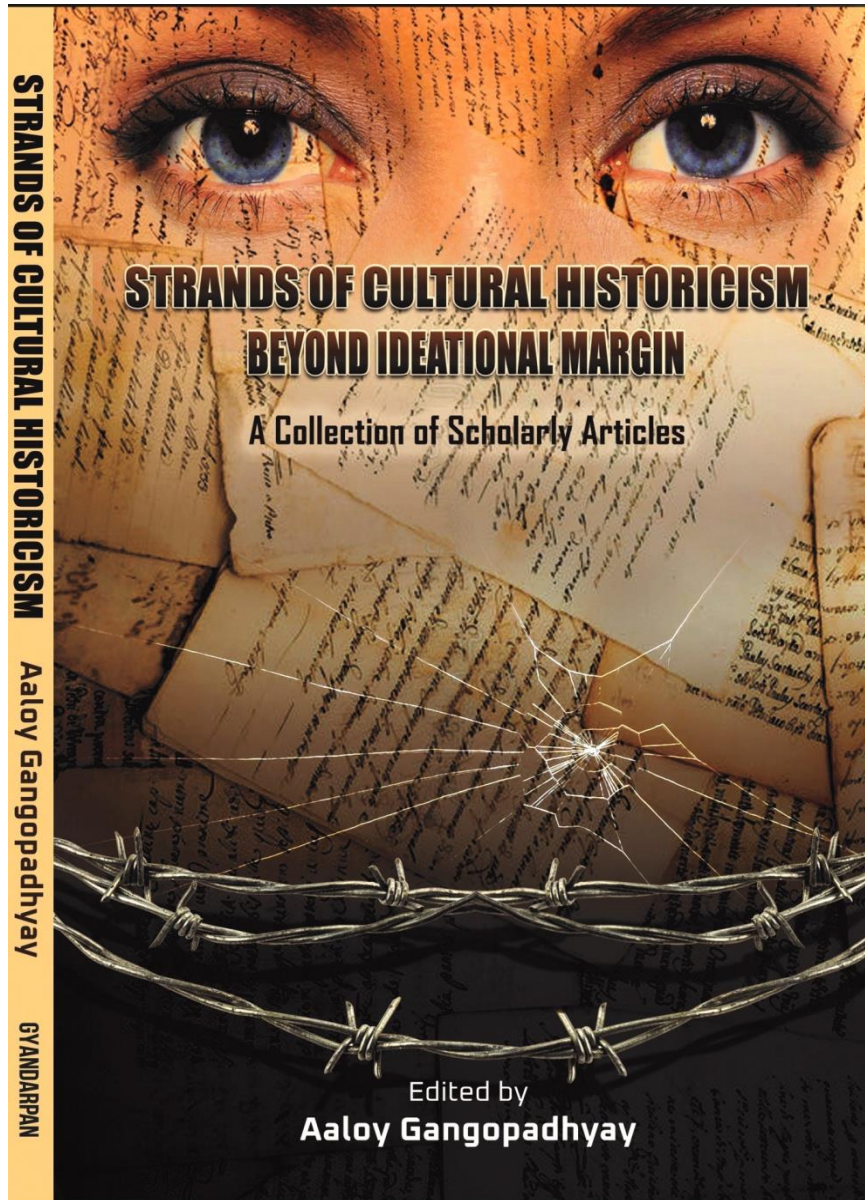


**Book Review**

**Strands of Cultural Historicism: Beyond Ideational Margin**

*A Collection of Scholarly Articles*

**Edited by Aaloy Gangopadhyay**



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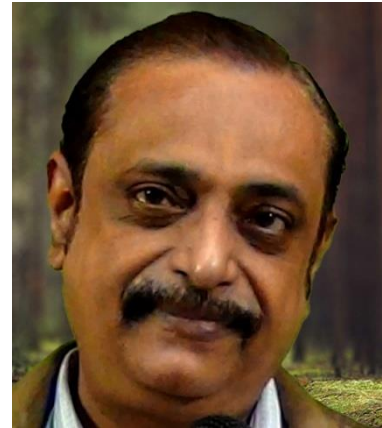
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**Reviewer's Biography**

*Jaideep Mookherjee is an Independent Researcher, critic, transcreator, and an eloquent speaker in the sphere of art, literature, and culture, with publications in esteemed Indian, French, and German papers and journals on Comparative Literature and Indology. A frequenter into the worlds of Indian and Western philosophy, he is also involved in Greek Language and French Art. Never misses close encounters with Indian Classical and Western Classical music. He can be reached at jaideepmookherjee@gmail.com.*

**The Review of****Strands of Cultural Historicism: Beyond Ideational Margin**

Aaloy Gangopadhyay has pulled a humdinger in presenting an anthology of eleven articles that prorate a kaleidoscopic view of ethnicity, civilization, decadence, art, music, language, literature, diaspora, spiritualism, historicism, post - modernism, social reformation and ideologies from freethinking perspectives. A graduate student of History at Visva Bharati University, Aaloy is no neophyte in the circle of editing scholarly essays. The title has met with a vibrant reception in the recently concluded *International Kolkata Book Fair, 2023*. A frequent contributor to the *United Nations*, he has already etched a niche in the world of academic treatises. He is a prolific writer and his articles have appeared in *Times NIE*, *Observer*, *Le Visage*, *Ankur Art and Cultural Magazine*, *The Mag*, *Literatures Light*, *The Literature Today* and many other reputed journals of India and abroad. He has been awarded by the *United Nations* twice for his write ups. He frequently conducts webinars on topics of cultural and historical interest. He has also penned an article for this anthology: *History of History: The Narrative of Chronicles* --- a thought provoking article on the conundrums of tracing history without compromising on factual accuracy. The write up of Aaloy traces the significance of the alternative narratives in History, much needed with the updated inputs, stating also the limitations of homogenous perspectives of elucidation.

In *Perspectives on Decadence and Culture*, Jaideep Mookherjee, an independent critic and researcher, has sought to investigate the ideational definition and causes of decadence and its implications. Mookherjee approaches decadence, both western and eastern, from a philosophical standpoint, adding a unique dimension to the topic, which usually is seen to get a socio-political interpretation. His scholarship and pedantry are intertwined with lucid explication, flavoured by moral overtones, so integral to the notion of decadence.

Professor Ahmed Tahsin Shams, a poet, filmmaker, Bangladeshi academic and a Visiting Faculty at the University of Notre Dame, USA, has stuns the reader with his coruscating article : *Decrowning Postmodern Protagonists from Page, Stage and Screen : A Critical Approach to Theoretical Historiography*. He deconstructs the modern icons while tracing the postmodern ideals from expressionism to Dadaism and Bakhtinian analysis. From Keats

'nightingale to Hughes' crow, nothing escapes his scathing scrutiny that is bound to unsettle the reader's conventional notion and enlighten him from new paradigm.

Critic, scholar, researcher and educator nonpareil, Avik Gangopadhyay for the umpteenth time explores the vicissitudes of language and how it influences a person's understanding, impression and theorising in *Language Sculpting Thoughts in Diaspora Studies*. As always, Avik is never repetitive and unfailingly edifies the reader from an unexpected frame of reference in understanding the ramifications of vocables. Avik shows how a word in one language may not be properly translatable into another language. For instance, a verb in one language may indicate the time of occurrence, while in another it may indicate the gender of the person who indulges in the action. Thus there is a difference in the information conveyed by a word in one language and that in another. Often there are fine distinctions which are expressible in one language quite distinctly, while in another it is not so clear, a certain degree of vagueness in conveying the idea cannot be ruled out. So the two languages which differ in this manner conjure up slightly different images. Such cross - linguistic differences may shape our thoughts differently. While some languages have horizontal spatial metaphors to express time, others have vertical spatial metaphors. Some have expressions to convey ideas of time in length and some have ideas of time expressed in amount. The reader having access to both languages is bound to have a different image of the same idea. This article is a must read for those who are astute observers of the use of words. As for the language enthusiast, this is bound to whet his appetite. Never has a writer been so authentic and comprehensive since Partridge, Jespersen, Volsinov and Bakhtin. An arresting article for those with a yen for words.

Biswadeep Chakraborty, an independent researcher and a Mental Health Professional escorts the reader through the maze of complex Indian Spirituality and the Christian theology in a commendably lucid manner in *Similarities between Christian and Indian concept of Salvation : Reading through John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress and The Holy Ear, Perspectives from Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata and the Bible*. Chakraborty syllogistically explains the analogies between the ideas conveyed by the ancient Rig Vedic philosophy and the Judaeo - Christian theology with extensive quotes and explanations that are comprehensible and unassailable.

Aadrit Banerjee, an undergraduate student of English Honours at Ramjas College, affiliated to Delhi University, deserves more thanks than any reader can convey for his soul searching essay : *Interrogating Aurobindo : Beyond All Purblind Sentimentalism*. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, a highly misunderstood and underestimated savant of Indian culture whom Tagore described as the manifestation of the spirit of India, has been examined impartially and his actual contribution to Indian culture as well as to humanity has been indubitably explained. Aadrit makes it clear at the outset that on the one hand Sri Aurobindo is considered an escapist from the freedom struggle against the British rule and on the other side over - enthusiastic Hindutva zealots have catapulted his image to an icon of Hindu political mascot. The first group vilified him as an opportunist; the second used him as a brand for tomtoming Hindu religious superiority. None cared to portray him as he was. This, despite the fanfare with which his sesquicentennial was celebrated last year. This article serves as an eye opener to all readers harbouring misconception about the sagacious philosopher who did not merely peddle an esoteric doctrine of Nirvana to sport Gurudom but brought out the secret of the

Vedas and the Upanishads to uplift humanity from the morass of covetous consumerism to a life divine full of eternal bliss, knowledge and immortality.

Rishakhi Chakraborty, a Xaverian, a post-graduate student of Journalism and Mass Communication at Indira Gandhi National Open University and a media personality, adroitly draws the reader's attention to much observed but little known fact that the global culture, for quite some time, has been under the spell of Hallyu effect that is South Korean cultural invasion. Her article, *Hallyu and the Cultural Invasion* is a tour de force that explores the sway of Korean lifestyle, cuisine, sartorial fashion, music, not to speak of electronic gadgets and a bevy of sleek and elegant cars. Rishakhi points out with statistics that Korean delicacies and beverages witnessed an increment of 300 per cent in demand during the pandemic period. She further furnishes details of the popularity of Korean drama, films and music on Netflix. BTS and Black Pink enjoy a popularity that proves her contention. She even cites evidence to suggest how the number of learners of Korean writing system (Hangul) is increasing the world over. Korean pop idols are fast capturing the marquee and giving their American and European counterparts a run for money. The average reader is bound to be intrigued at the mind boggling range of Korean entertainment items that are establishing their sway over the global media. For all those who keep a track of the dominance of cultures of different regions of the world, this article is enlightening. But most importantly, if you thought that when it comes to culture and fashion, Uncle Sam is the ubiquitous Moghul, this article can give you jitters as you discover the aggrandisement of South Korean ways and culture over our life.

Arindam Banerjee, an academician of repute and a scholar of English Language and Literature takes a peek into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Bengal to rediscover Raja Rammohun Roy. His article *Bethinking the Renaissance Proponent Raja Rammohun Roy* is a delightful reading to anyone interested in Bengali Renaissance in the days of John company. Today as we celebrate the Raja's birthday, we scarcely think of how advanced he was for the time when he was born. He visualised an India where a liberal religion shall dominate, whose political conditions will be like Europeans, and which will serve as the guide to Asia. He did not merely visualise, he spared no effort to make his dreams come true. His whole life was the manifestation of the noble ideals he cherished. Unfortunately, he is remembered as a social reformer who founded a new religion. Actually he tried to reform the society in which he was born. He wanted to rid the society of caste and gender discrimination, but ended up being excommunicated and a founder of a new religion. His humanitarian outlook on the females makes him stand apart from mere freedom fighters driven by blind Anglophobia. This article is compulsory for those who wish to read biographies of exceptional human beings who can act as guide to people belonging to any era.

Sanjib Kumar Roy, an academic, sketches the culture and life of Naga's in his article, *Zunheboto: An Academic's Escapade into a Territory of Nagaland*. He discovers peace, serenity and a culture that is in sync with the eco system. He finds an echo of the ancient Indian ethos "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," an all-inclusive doctrine preaching universal fraternity which is most essential to save mankind from itself in a world ridden with hatred, bigotry jingoistic political ideologies. He is able to capture the local colour with regard to

their culture, rituals, rites, beliefs, and points of view to education, region and nationality that vary so much with the mainstream ideas of culture, region and nationality.

Aishy Mukherjee examines the veracity of the Shavian ideal "Dancing is a perpendicular form of a horizontal desire" in her article *English Literature and Indian Classical Dance*. Aishy seeks to delve into the aesthetics of Indian traditional dance and establish a relationship between the pursuit of Romantic ideals of beauty and truth and the terpsichorean manifestation of the irrepressible zeal for perfection and excellence. She covers the entire gamut of Indian dance forms through the length and breadth of the subcontinent to reveal the relentless quest for the outer embodiment of the sense of beauty inherent in mankind from time immemorial.

Ashis Ray Chowdhury, a brilliant percussionist of international repute, a painter and a writer, seeks to elaborate the role of music in shaping social and individual culture in his contemplative essay: *When Music bonds Culture*. He shows the power of music in uniting people within an ethnic group, within a nation even with multi - racial population, and internationally. He points out how music breaks all conventional barriers and develops its own idiom to assemble people of all ages, religions, nationalities and genders. He argues that despite playing a key role in providing amusement, music can have an incredibly therapeutic value. It is incontrovertibly the hall mark of any culture, but does not remain confined to any particular culture or race. It is a form of art as well as a mode of communion of souls. This is a must read for those with a vision of a more hospitable world where religious, political, cultural, ethnic and socio - economic barriers melt away to facilitate a psychologically universal togetherness.

This bouquet of eleven articles, published by *Gyandarpan*, is dedicated to the memory of the editor's grandfather Late Professor Manab Gangopadhyay, an unrivalled pedagogue whose mission in life was to convey the most intricate subjects in the simplest possible manner, without diluting the contents thereof, to the meritorious and the least sophisticated alike. Sujit Das deserves accolades for the extremely evocative cover design that is an indefectible match to the insightful contents of the book. This book is a definite buy for the serious reader with an insatiable appetite for perusing weighty subjects.