

Overall the book is very comprehensive and well researched work on global deposit insurance systems and the system that exists in India. The book is analytical and provides thoughtful insights into the topic. It is worth reading for all who are interested in understanding the gamut of deposit insurance.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics,  
Pune 411004.

K.S. Reddy

Stuti Khanna, *Writing the City: Looking Within, Looking Without*, Orient Blackswan, Noida, 2020, pp. 120, Price ₹750/-.

Each city has a heart, rhythm and beat. It lives in our music, it plays in our sports fields and makes a bond with us and generates a far-reaching impact on personality – both individual and collective. Yet, depending on the city and on the explorer, there might begin a mutual love or dislike, friendship or enmity. Where one city will raise an individual to glory, it will destroy another who is not suited to its personality. Only through travel can we know where we belong to, we are loved and we are rejected.

This impact, mood, memories and relationship have given rise to new literary styles and formal methods that have in due course transformed into fiction. This slim volume, which is a collection of fourteen essays, examines richness and vitality as it explores the symbiotic relationship between the form and content, specifically the ways in which city-spaces are produced in literature and, in turn, reshape the contours of literary writing.

The writers in this book lay emphasis on the relationship of their writings to place and space, in the process allowing us an insight into the creative mind and the unique ways in which it processes the world that we inhabit and transmutes it into literature.

In the beginning Chandras Choudhury explains how a pulsating energy and a profound exhaustion of Bombay (now Mumbai) influenced his writing and how he learned to become a writer of fiction amidst the politics of Bombay in 1990s. However, it was in Delhi that Choudhury learned how hard it was going to be to be a good novelist.

In the second essay Zac O' Yeah, who is a great traveller and is well known as a travel writer, tries to discover cities through their detective novels. His ability to weave humour into everything has the same relentlessness that his character has when solving cases. Here he writes about Bengaluru and claims to know the city better than the bus drivers. He thinks it's karma that brought him to India and asks a question: is it the writer who finds his setting or is it the setting that finds a suitable writer? Additionally, he talks about crime novel, a reader's attention and the mundane details of local life to adorn its plots.

Moving away from the bigger Indian cities, Siddharth Chowdhury discovers the ways in which Patna has influenced him and his writing of fiction. He points

out that its aspects that have influenced him positively are the city's ability to change frequently and its ability to "provide the comic view of life in a sea of grief" (p. 34). This duality is real life and, therefore, he has attempted to capture it in the fiction that he has written. Sumana Roy, draws our attention towards things and issues which we would otherwise overlook in a town (Siliguri).

In the sixth essay Anjum Hasan responds to the question: who am I writing for? She then goes on to discuss how chance events have played a major role in her writings. Manju Kapur too emphasizes research as a key to situating her novels. She can imagine Delhi, Lahore or Amritsar in the past more richly for having searched through the archives, talked to people, and taken pictures of places. Amitabha Bagchi is notable in refusal to treat the city as 'a character.' Delhi is present in Bagchi's books but he expressed through the lives that people lead, not through thick description or self-conscious cartography.

Tabish Khair chafes against the stereotype of small-town provincialism by showing Gaya's cosmopolitan roots.

However, for several contributors to this volume, small places were indeed experienced as limiting, that is why they left them. Samrat Upadhyay at Kathmandu and Saikat Majumdar at Calcutta still feel the tug of places that left the earliest and deepest impressions on their writings.

Cyrus Mistry loves both the notion of Bombay and the tangible act of living in it. He believes that it is essential for a writer to be tethered to some place so that (s)he is never in a situation where "people and their preoccupations are alien to the writer's consciousness..." (p. 97). Knowing the impact of an adored place on a writer's ability to write, Mistry ends his essay on a melancholy note, hoping that things in Bombay never get so bad that he has to "stop writing altogether" (p. 102).

Overall, most contributors focus only on their own journeys and the nexuses between city spaces and literary writings. Most of the themes discuss these nexuses in informative ways and encourage us to read more on the subject.