

Travel Is So Broadening Review

By: Laura Bere, Branch Assistant, Exeter Library

In her short story collection, 'Travel Is So Broadening,' author Wasela Hiyate attempts to explore a diverse range of experiences and emotions related to travel, whether outside of one's country or just outside of one's comfort zone. The stories encompass a wide range of experiences with travel, representing voices of travellers by choice and by necessity, as well as people who are not travelling, but are affected by those who are.

The stories are not always comfortable to read, dealing with complicated themes and emotions including racial, social and gender inequality and the ways in which travel has shaped countries and people, in both positive and negative ways. These are not the types of travel stories for a reader looking for fun, adventure, and escapism. Instead they require of the reader a certain level of confrontation with privileges and an engagement with the realities of those who live in foreign countries, particularly countries which have been shaped by tourism from the west.

The themes and topics of which Hiyate writes are important and interesting, and clearly ones with which she is familiar. Unfortunately, she fails to satisfactorily explore these themes. The language lacks sophistication and ease, preventing the reader from becoming fully immersed in the story. The stories often feel disjointed, and themes that are promising are not explored in any depth, leaving the story hanging in an unsatisfactory way. With a defter skill for language and a clearer focus on the purpose of the stories, this could be a compelling and fascinating collection. As it stands, they make the effort of the author far too obvious and fail to linger in the reader's mind for long after reading.

Strongest Stories

- Jaime and Alice
- The Monkeys of Songkhla

Weakest Stories

- The Package
- The House Across the Way