About the Book
Literary Activism revisits and interrogates, and looks to renew, the force of the literary. It’s a movement that emerges from a radically altered landscape for both publishing and academia, where what Amit Chaudhuri calls ‘market activism’ has effected changes – on language, on the measuring of value, on the concept of influence – in ways we struggle to recognise. Encompassing the perspectives of the writer, critic, translator, academic, and publisher, the essays in this volume follow no single line of enquiry. Rather, they offer the beginnings of an analysis of the literary world at a certain moment of globalisation, while also questioning whether a literary world exists and, if it does, where its boundaries lie. The collection moves in many directions – from Arun Kolatkar and his near-herofic refusal of both marketplace and reputation; to Derek Attridge, who argues for a form of affirmative criticism which positions the critic as a ‘lover of the text’; while, from Amsterdam, Dubravka Ugrešić reflects on life in a literary ‘out of nation zone’, adrift in a territory where intellectual protest has been stripped of ideological impetus and subsumed by the voraciousness of the market.

Taken together, these essays initiate a series of conversations about who reads what and why, about the practice of writing and criticism at this particular contemporary moment, and about the activities and institutions that shape an understanding of what literature is and what it can do.

About the Editor
Amit Chaudhuri is the author of seven novels, the latest of which is Friend of My Youth. He is also a critic and a musician and composer. He is Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Awards for his fictions include the Commonwealth Writers Prize, the Betty Trask Prize, the Encore Prize, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction, and the Government of India’s Sahitya Akademi Award. In 2013, he was awarded the first Infosys Prize in the Humanities for outstanding contribution to literary studies. He is Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia, UK.