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CHECKING GLOBALISATION: SOME TRICKS FROM THE BOOK TRADE

By Claude Alvares
(*Editor, Other India Press*)

I come from a not-for-profit institution – Other India Bookstore – two decades old, devoted exclusively to books and located in the tiny, tourist state of Goa, along the west coast of India. The historical events within whose vortex we – and our books – find ourselves today were first set in motion in Goa 500 years ago, after Alfonso Albuquerque landed there in 1510. So it is not entirely coincidental that the Other India Bookstore and Press should find their origins also within the same space.

Multiversity is a more recent foray, initiated by the Other India Press and the Citizens International Group located in Penang, Malaysia. Penang has also been the focus of international tourism for several years. But one should not forget that it also hosts the legendary organizations started by Mohamed Idris, winner of the Alternative Nobel and which include the Consumers Association of Penang, Third World Network and Citizens International.

I have been invited here to speak on the two decades-long experiences of Other India Bookstore and the more recent projects of Multiversity. This is a great group to be speaking to on these matters. It is not often one gets kindred spirits in the audience, people who have got together or have been brought together because of a commonality of

interests: ensuring that the cultural diversities of our region, reflected partly in our books, are not swamped under the mindless forces of globalisation and their blandishments. I congratulate the Korean National Commission for UNESCO Korea and Asia's Future Initiative for taking this trouble. I am pleased to be here. I am hoping that at the end of it all, we can do something practical as well, as book sellers and as publishers who have a niche on this small planet that is rightfully theirs and which cannot be taken away by anyone or by any corporation. Mahatma Gandhi always said that freedom is never taken away from people but it is the people who agree to enslave themselves. So long as we decide to continue to be free beings, and to keep our freedoms, there is hope for optimism and for working towards desired futures.

Though the Other India Bookstore is run by a non-profit trust, it is also today a commercial success. Its origins, however, are rooted in politics. Ever since the late Edward Said wrote *Orientalism* and Rana Kabbani, *The Orient: Devise and Rule*, readers in our part of the planet have recognized that the printed book has been a handy tool for propagating orientalist discourse; in fact, a mechanism for keeping the orient under political control. Though some of the most powerful and soul-inspiring works of literature have arisen from our part of the world – most notably under the rubric of classics and philosophical treatises – the overwhelming impression that has prevailed during the past several decades is that the word that comes from the West or from a Westerner has greater sanction or authority than even our own most intimate personal experiences which we know to be true. In fact, our experiences – and those of our

societies as well – are, more often than not, completely discounted, as being of no use at all.

The educational system installed by colonial powers laid the basis for this unparalleled assumption of exclusive genius or wisdom on the part of the West. That system and the values it promotes, alas, still continues to hold sway. Many of us acknowledge its real contribution to be the systematic destruction of our own unique cultural worldviews and their replacement with substandard substitutes. However, being schooled ourselves, and often with no roots either since these were effectively cut by the educational system, we continue to maintain a mechanical attitude towards the schooling system and its texts. We will argue endlessly about trivial matters, but we will rarely allow discussions on the assumptions on which the present education system is based. It is so taken for granted.

What the modern schooling system has done is lay the foundations for a construct or a perception that knowledge is to be found in books of the kind that are to be generally found burdening our bookstores nowadays. These are consumed hungrily by people, from academics to company managers, in the hope that their personal deficiencies or lack of success can be mediated by learning from the accounts of the powerful and the successful, particularly stories by corporate COs and their ilk. Western civilization and its discontents occupy almost 80-90% of the actual physical space of bookstores all over the world, particularly at places like airports, sitting smugly in the company of imported liquor and cigarettes. These latter toxic goods continue to occupy space far in excess of their actual support in a world that has already moved away from consuming them due to

health concerns. The dominance of the trivial is unsettling. It cannot get any worse. This conference should obviously find ways to ensure that things get better.

Other India Bookstore was initiated in the wake of the setting up of the Third World Network in Penang, Malaysia. The TWN was founded on the refusal of Third World intellectuals to permit the countries of the south to simply remain consumers of the products (including intellect products) from the countries of the north. One happy consequence of our visit to Malaysia in that year (1984) was that it opened up to India the immense literature of the environmentalists and consumer activists of Malaysia, which is really unique in the world. We literally went crazy. Our first visit ended up with suitcases filled with ordered titles. The customs at the Mumbai airport looked askance at the piles in our baggage since Indian tourists to Southeast Asia are famous for shopping for electronic goods, not printed words.

We began with Malaysian book imports and found that the vast Indian market, also preoccupied with environmental and consumer issues, was in fact looking out for such literature which was hardly available from the West. Within the year, we bagged a travel grant to visit all the southeast Asian countries, everyone of them, and their principal bookstores and publishers: the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, to look for books that could be marketed for sale in India. This was in 1990, more than 16 years ago. We pored over titles and catalogues, talked to publishers, made selections, took individual copies for annotation, went back to India, placed larger orders.

Within another year, we procured a similar travel grant to visit western Africa (including Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). Then we ended up at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair at Harare at which most African publishers, especially from the south of Africa, including Zambia, congregate.

In all these places we were greeted sometimes with amazement, sometimes with curiosity, sometimes with amusement. This was the first time in living memory that anyone from India had stepped into these countries looking for their books! Since all these countries were considered “developing”, it was presumed they had no story to tell, and if one wished to learn anything, it could only come from the West.

So we were very conscious that we were some kind of pioneers even if others looked on us as some kind of strange new species. We were not visiting because we wanted to sell Indian titles: we had taken none, except sample copies from Other India Press, as presentation items to various university libraries. We had gone visiting because we wanted to import African and Asian titles. We were indeed surprised to note that despite political independence, most interaction in the book trade was still firmly under the control of the individual mother colonial countries which continued to hold a vicious grip over what was bought and what was sold, and with no relenting on the high prices, printed in dollars or pounds sterling. There was absolutely no book trade between India and the countries of either Africa or south Asia or southeast Asia.

We were firmly informed by African publishers that though they published African editions of some of their books to enable their own readers to buy them, we as Indian booksellers would not be able to import them since agreements with their London publishers prohibited this and we would have to purchase such titles from London publishing houses located in London at London prices, after paying the salaries of printers in England. So what did we do? We asked our African friends whether we could buy directly from them and pay cash. Which publisher will refuse such an offer? The Queen of England be damned. We purchased bulk copies then and there, as African consumers buying in Africa, and had them shipped to India where a huge market for African books simply gobbled them up.

Nowadays, Robert Mugabe has achieved a rather painful reputation for driving out white settlers from Zimbabwe and attaching their properties. But we found that the Zimbabwe international book fair was controlled completely by whites and so were the publishing houses. You could not even order African food at the fair, only Danish pastries. Anaemic western music wafted through the stalls. To sample the throbbing African music, you had to travel by the public transport, all of which had booming sound. Africans who visited the book fair could not afford any of the books published by their own publishing houses with colourful European illustrations and imported art paper. They simply moved from stall to stall, did window shopping and collected free brochures. Indian books they found affordable, so they bought some. What does a country do in such circumstances, except perhaps get angry sometimes.

The most amazing aspect of our business was our discovery that books we ordered from Africa or Asia were readily purchased by the vast Indian audience. We had done no market survey because we hardly had the funding to do things in the corporate manner. But our best survey was the cash counter. Over the years, we have continued to import books, though in the last couple of years, we have found ourselves more preoccupied with our own publishing and the earlier emphasis on imports has weakened somewhat.

At the same time, though, the flow of books out of India through our bookstore has continued. Last year alone, we sold more than 7000 copies of Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*, to Malaysia. But together with Gandhi books, we also exported literature on yoga, nature cure, natural food, and a number of titles that Malaysians find of far more practical use than the offerings from UK or US presses; and, of course, far cheaper as well. In the last year, we have exported books also to Pakistan. Our flagship book, written by Japanese ecologist, Masanobu Fukuoka, *The One Straw Revolution*, is only printed and published from Goa and went this year into its 14th edition.

Despite our commercial success as a bookstore, we have had no desire to grow beyond our natural size in terms of staff and turnover. Being fierce opponents of the view of life that forces human beings to compare themselves with efficient machines, it would be inadvisable for us to submit to the same processes of soul destruction that the West has routinely offered to us (as it did to its own citizens) as a superior way of life. So we take

it easy, consciously refusing to grow more than the demands of a healthy organism would permit.

Early in the life of the bookstore, we made a critical decision that has helped us in good stead twenty years down the line. *We simply refused to permit into our store any book that had been written, printed and published either in the US or in the UK.* That is why we call ourselves the ‘Other’ India Bookstore. While in many bookstores in India, you still find a preponderance of books imported from the West – and you can see this also in Manila, or Bangkok or Singapore – in our bookstore you find that domination refreshingly absent. No wonder our bookstore was voted the ‘most unique bookstore in India’ by the National Federation of Indian Publishers based in Delhi.

The principle of ‘delinking’ or exclusion is important for a bookstore like ours which was born out of a struggle for intellectual independence. It was also a pragmatic necessity.

Small bookstores always have a problem with space. If we allow the West and its authors uncontrolled rights to come in, we will be swamped with materials, all slickly produced, expensive (so we earn good commissions), and with fairly no scope to market any other source of literature. Even if we attempted to discriminate and to select only the so-called ‘good books’ of the West from the large volumes of trash that it generates, we would still be flooded. They generate a huge volume of titles on every country of ours and are ready to manufacture books explaining us and our culture to ourselves, in addition to the vast number of narcissistic titles they generate about themselves. So we preferred instead to go for a complete delinking. The advantage of such a policy was that we no longer had to

think. We made the ban effective by even refusing to stock books published by so-called ‘sympathetic’ publishers like Zed or Pluto Press. If a person from Africa or Asia had published a book in London, reinforcing the existing structures of dominance reflected by the UK publishing industry, we refused to market his/her book as well even when they came to plead with us.

The result is we came up with a very interesting bookstore which had a good collection of titles the other bookstores didn’t. And this proved to be extremely good business strategy as well. Everyone knows that customers always want to visit shops that market something unique, something you cannot get elsewhere. Why would anyone from any part of the world want to walk into a bookstore in India if it only carried books imported from the West which they could find anyway in their own towns and cities?

Mail Order

One of the most important features associated early with Other India Bookstore was the system of mail order sales. As per the present policy of book sales all over the world, bookshops are normally located in a few urban centres and generally cater to well-established and better-off communities. In India, for example, bookshops can be found in the major metropolitan areas like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. In dozens of smaller towns one will not find bookshops of any quality.

The mail order system started by the Bookstore enabled a whole new range of consumers from very small towns and even villages to actually receive a quality bookstore right at their doorstep. This was a boon to many of them and through the Other India Bookstore selection, they were able to access quality publishing which was sometimes not available even to urban bookstores. Thus, the Bookstore took its books via the mail and through its printed catalogues to every nook and cranny of India. These catalogues themselves were based on an editorial selection from the large quantities of books published in the country and were interestingly produced.

Only books that were well written, well produced, had something significant or original to say and which were also affordable were selected for the OIB catalogue. Since people would be purchasing a book simply from the annotations given in the catalogue, it would have been bad business sense for the bookstore to provide misleading annotations or promos for the books displayed in the catalogue merely to induce their customers to buy. We could not fail the consumer's expectations. A customer disillusioned would not rely on the catalogue or its annotations for sound advice on purchasing in the future. That requirement ensured that the OIB catalogue would not only select good books but that their annotations would be reasonably accurate so that persons ordering them from even far away places would be confident that the book was worth the money since OIB said so, since we did not have a policy enabling book returns.

The innovation of the mail order is something that can be tried out by any publisher to expand his or her reach outside the immediate city in which their bookstore is based to

regions right across the country and the countryside. India of course has a very efficient postal system. The situation is even better today with a significant number of expensive couriers adding their services as well. I do not know what is the condition in other countries in Asia. The bookstore also concentrated on packaging its books professionally, so that they always reached their customers in mint condition.

Such efforts to reach consumers outside the walls of the bookstore can be enhanced with the use of computers and the internet for ensuring wider dissemination of the titles a bookstore has in stock. Today, the each bookstore can market its titles globally, simply by maintaining an interesting website. If the world is to come to your bookstore, you better have something worthwhile to offer! It might not visit again!

Co-Publishing

Another major innovation of the Other India Press was in co-publishing. Nowadays, it is assumed that only multinational corporations can ensure that a book is published and circulated simultaneously in different countries of the world. However, this need not be necessarily true and smaller publishing houses can get into the business of co-publishing and thus extend their reach outside their countries as well.

Co-publishing enables small publishers from different countries to join together and share a title. Sharing a title has many benefits. First of all, costs split as many times as there are publishers. Editing and printing costs are absorbed by only one of the publishing houses

and the others do not have the headache of wasting their time on these operations. With today's speed in transmission of data, it is possible to circulate editorial content simultaneously to 5 or 6 centres where it can be printed simultaneously, reducing the costs of trans-boundary transport and also bypassing import taxes in those countries where these are applicable.

Other India Press has co-published books with small publishers in Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Finland and the U.S.A. All these publications have enabled OIP to bring out small series of its publications at far greater savings than if it had published exclusively for the Indian market. Thus, co-publishing is an excellent means of using books to develop an alternative form of globalization which excludes corporations completely and yet respects people's needs to access material from other countries.

One interesting innovation in raising funds for publication in our institution was our idea of the Social Investment Fund. We persuaded people that loaning their money to a publishing house that concentrated on producing socially useful books was far better than giving it out to blue-chip companies many of whom through their activities only succeed in making the planet feel blue with their polluting activities.

Low Cost Publishing

One of the aspects of publishing that ought to be considered seriously by publishers is the art of low cost publishing. In India, because of the high costs of paper, page designers

work backwards from the ream size of the paper. Thus the page design is rigorously controlled by the number of pages that can be accommodated on a printing format without loss of paper in the form of unnecessary trimmings. The advantage was converting it into lesser number of print runs and of course smaller paper bills.

The use of expensive film has also declined in the face of increased use of tracing sheets and appropriate plates which enable great savings. Today's DTP packages and the convenient technologies of tracing sheets, mirror image printing and adequately controlled page size enable the Other India Press to produce quality work while still being one of the most economic publishers in the Indian sub-continent.

In India many technologies bloom for printing purposes and this is a feature that can be used by publishers who find that the printing costs in their own countries are actually leading to expensive books and lesser consumers. I strongly advocate far greater use of printing facilities in countries like India where it is possible to print even small volumes at far lower costs than in countries like Singapore or even Malaysia.

Booksellers' Network

One practical offset of this meeting should be a simple network of interested booksellers who can sign a joint memorandum based on which they can exchange publications of each of their countries among themselves with no other costs but those of transport. This network would work far better among booksellers than among publishers since publishers

very often focus almost exclusively on sales of their own titles rather than the titles of others. Booksellers do not have that restriction since they are largely interested in turnover and in providing to their consumers a greater diversity of books, not just from their country but from the region as well.

One of the most successful bookstores in this area was the Select Bookshop at Oxford Street in Singapore, which was the only bookseller which provided access to titles from all the countries of Asia and S.E. Asia. The bookshop was set up because of the initiative of its owner, Ms Lim. The history of that bookshop would be worth recording and circulating as it met preeminently the objectives of this conference.

Today, with the support of organizations like UNESCO and a network which is made up of lively and keenly interested booksellers, it is possible to ensure regular exchange of lists of the best titles produced or on sale so that the network can place orders with each other and select titles can be exchanged and yet benefit both the bookseller and the reading public. There is a great deal of interest nowadays in subjects like organic farming, health and yoga, writings of spiritual teachers, creative storybooks, lives of people or successful stories, histories and tourism. These can form the basis of an initial attempt at exchange since books in these categories would appeal to readers in all countries. At least this is a perception I have after years of being a bookseller.

In any case, we have tried this out very well in India, which, as you all know, is a nation of many nations, languages and cultures. OIB has assisted more than a dozen small

bookstores to come up to help provide an alternative view of a globalised world. These bookstores have in turn enriched OIB's own selection of books for sale. All have benefited as a consequence, especially readers and clients.

Local Language Publications

One final aspect of this subject which needs to be highlighted is the issue of publications in languages other than English. This, in my view, is one of the most effective means to check globalization. Contrary to the impression given of an expanding use of English (which may be true), data on publications in important state languages in India, for example, indicates that these are also surviving and growing stronger by the day.

In a country like India, for example, the largest circulated newspapers today are in local languages and not in English. English language newspapers will remain a poor second in circulation when compared to circulations in Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, Marathi, etc.

Here UNESCO can certainly play a critical role. Unless the non-Western languages are promoted in diverse forms including the electronic media, globalization and its homogenization tendencies will continue to make inroads and may even prevail. The ground reality is more hopeful since it indicates that local languages are thriving despite the lack of active support and largely because of the continuing desires of people to speak in their own mother-tongues.

I think it is time UNESCO spends more time on this since the diversity of culture is primarily reflected in the diversity of language and its richness. If we fail to spend adequate money and time on this, the eventual success of a flattening and destructive globalization will be squarely laid at our doorsteps.

It appears to surprise many that today an institution like the Other India Bookstore has not only survived but actually thrived for more than 20 years. Just shows how we can sometimes unnecessarily burden ourselves with the wrong assumptions about reader/customer expectations. The West has created this bogey that unless it is physically present in all our activities, we will be deficient somewhat as human beings. Our activities will not be whole. Sorry to say, we have uncritically accepted that view.

On the other hand, we must remember that the West has never included us in its life project except as exploitable commodities, as dispensable adjuncts. This it has done systematically over the past 500 years. No one criticized the West for being insular and parochial in its outlook on life, history, science and technology or ethics or even its civilisational dreams (which have become mostly nightmares for the rest of us). But should any one from the not-Western regions of the world attempt like-wise, they are invariably denounced or roundly criticized for being insular or parochial, narrow-minded or even fundamentalist. This is because the West, in total control, persuaded the rest of the world that Western culture was the only universal culture and all other cultures were

ethnicities or parochialisms. It is only now that there are voices demanding the West itself been seen as an ethnic group, since that is what its own literary tradition manifests.

One major element of international trade that gave us a boost, though entirely unintended, were the fluctuations in currency. Korea has gone through this quite bitterly, so has Thailand, Indonesia and to a certain extent, Malaysia. In India, the rupee touched 80 rupees to a pound sterling and 45 rupees to the US dollar in the past decade. This effectively wiped out access to books from these expensive countries and made local books more competitive. Sometimes good things do come from such international movements over which we have no control whatsoever. We do not need to be careful any more, because with the steep rise in the value of the pound, automatic delinking has occurred since UK and US books have been simply priced out of the market. Now, from a position of strength, we do not mind ordering a title or two for some of our clients from the Western markets, but we will still not stock them in our bookstore.

Besides delinking, which helped us keep books printed in the West out of our bookstore, we were also forced to develop a critical eye towards a good deal of the output of our own publishing houses. I am highlighting this here, because it was one of the motives for the start of Multiversity. We had so little space in our bookstore, we had begun to grudge that space and would jealously hoard it only for those books that said something significant, new or inspiring and thereby justified the killing of living trees from whose flesh most paper is still made.

We found we could easily succeed in keeping a substantial quantity of books manufactured by the West from our bookstore, but what would be our attitude or approach to the piles of derivative, uncreative materials that were produced by our own writers and academics and which were really little more than carbon copies of what Westerners have written in their parts of the world? What should we do about the output of mimic men and mimic women, who really have nothing of their own to say, but will summarise, paraphrase and plagiarise the writings and thinking of Westerners? Much of what passes off as ‘academic publishing’ in our own countries is so execrable and dull, and so badly written, we should refuse to give it the nomenclature of ‘books’.

Here too, Other India Bookstore got some good guidance from the market. We found that besides academics – who need to be afflicted with a specific disease to be able to go through such academic literature – other classes of readers were mostly apathetic to such literature. In the first few years of our own existence, we managed to sell what we call ‘good academic literature’ to probably unsuspecting folk. But we noticed a gradual decline in demand for these categories of books. Today, we have practically emptied our bookstore of academic titles as well. Most normal people refuse to buy them. As former academics ourselves, we tend to agree. Only academics know how trivial, banal and turgid most of their literary contributions are. The only ones who probably benefit from academic publishing are printers as a class.

The problem we faced was a near complete absence of original thinking and writing in what today passes off as academic writing. If you take up a book on psychology available

in any part of the world, it will invariably be a book of American psychology. No one in his right mind should be reading that stuff, because American psychology has emerged from a perspective of mental disease as a departure from normality, but as we all know, American normality itself is today considered by the rest of the world as a serious pathological condition. Similar judgements could be made about sociology or political science. The dominant body of knowledge in these so-called social sciences or humanities is little more than what Ward Churchill, a native American thinker once dubbed 'white studies'. So the bookseller has to ask himself the question: how have I become an agent for distributing 'white studies' and its impoverished vision of the universe in the more wholesome society in which I continue to have the privilege to live and work?

I am not very much concerned here about the construction that might be placed on the term 'white' in 'white studies'. To my mind, it is merely a symbol of a way of thinking that ill-suits not just the planet and its health, but all the cultures in our parts of the same planet. The fundamental assumptions under which these social sciences have been created are so narrow, parochial and ethically reproachable that it would be unwise to associate with them, much less be involved in their dissemination, unless of course, we have people's ill-fare exclusively in mind. Not much can be gained from studying them for emancipating human beings from suffering, pain or unhappiness. They are largely related to the tenure of faculty and to their felt need 'to put their thoughts down to paper.'

So the question we began to ask was, it may be natural to expect to teach such academic writing to students in American universities. But why should the same stuff be pushed down the throats of students in Korea or Africa or even Singapore or Delhi? It could not be on the grounds that these social sciences were ‘universal’ and valid everywhere. They might be valid in their own cultural or societal context, but how could they be valid in others? Unless we were seriously interested in becoming third-class or fourth-class Americans, what could be the earthly use of reading such literature?

That’s when the idea of Multiversity emerged as a contrasting institution to the unwarranted ‘universalism’ of the Western academic tradition. We adopted for our inspiration and work the slogan of the Mexican Zapatistas: *One world in which all worlds co-exist*. Our website is therefore aptly captioned: www.multiworld.org. You may say we are in effect the NGO version of the spirit of the community of nations that set up UNESCO in the aftermath of the war. *Long live us all!*

Multiversity, as an institution, also commenced with an exclusion principle for its meetings. For all our discussions, we scrupulously kept out persons who were from the Western world and who we felt would not be able to understand what the world looks like outside the inherited framework of their own limited visions.

The first international meeting of Multiversity was held in Penang in 2002 and the transcript of that meeting has been printed in the form of a book for wider circulation. The second meeting was held explicitly on the idea of the ‘Redesign of Social Sciences’.

That transcript is now ready for the press and we should be able to have it out in another two months. The second meeting was also inaugurated by Prof. Syed Hussain Alatas who had, more than 20 years ago, come up with the idea of the ‘captive mind’. He used it as a metaphor to describe the crippling intellectual dependence exhibited by intellectuals who passed themselves off as ‘professors’ ‘readers’ and ‘lecturers’ in our academic institutions but actually made a living by denying the existence of their own brains.

Today, we all understand (and deplore) the ubiquitous presence of the captive mind. However, as this conference warns, globalization has already succeeded in creating a new category of human being, that is, the ‘captivated mind’, consumer animals for whom many of the concerns raised here are of no value or intrinsic worth. The concerns of UNESCO and groups like Multiversity and Other India Bookstore are to discover ways and means for ensuring that the civilisational ideals of our own societies do not get extinguished or obliterated in the glitzy, garish, jungle of consumer desires that globalization is unleashing everywhere mindlessly. How can books become a force that consumer culture must reckon with? In what way can we ensure that books play a crucial supportive role to those elements in our societies that are concerned about the directions our societies are investing in? Do we continue to sell the West in our bookstores or do we dare to sell what our own countrymen and women produce? Can we improve our publishing that our products can match any in any other part of the world?

One way is to celebrate our own histories in the form of our own printed words. We have for far too long declined to lend substance to our own cultural objectives, and allowed

these to be overridden by the flood of literature, images and words that bombard us daily through the media and other forms. Somewhere, we gave up insisting that we were as irreplaceable, as unique to the planet, as any other culture or civilization. Now, under the rising influence of the Asian economies, including China and India, and the impending demise of the Western world, we need to look to a future in which we will once again responsible for our own sciences and our own humanities. Unlike the West, we do have vast cultural resources in which our people believe and have their being.

This is bound to lead to a fresh new generation of books and writers. For example, we have ourselves either published or are in the process of publishing for the first time books written by young people who did not go to school but who interacted with life outside the medium of the text book and have marvelous experiences to relate. We are carefully documenting the life and experiences of organic farmers who are generating new knowledge on how to grow food without synthetic chemicals and toxic pesticides. (The established institutions like the universities and agricultural departments have neither the experience nor the knowledge of how to do organic farming: there are simply no teachers. One learns on one's own and thereby creates new knowledge as well.)

Gradually, as the Asian tigers or whatever get back into stride, we will find not much wisdom in what the West says or even practical guidance for our own futures. We shall see this wisdom and usefulness instead in experiences of our own people who have, despite tyranny, unimagined influence and power politics, remained steadfast to the culture that has kept them alive and well and peaceful. We can only hope this scenario

will come sooner than later. Those of us who use books as tools have a heavy responsibility to underwrite this emergence of our soul from the drugged influence of the West. We cannot be a resurgent Asia and yet find ourselves relying upon the theories or categories that came to us a long time back when we played second, or even third, fiddle to Western dreams of power. Books will have to match the new aspirations. The only discussion will be about how this would be achieved, without self-glorification, narcissism and arrogance.

These sites have over 400 books that can be downloaded freely.

<http://www.arvindguptatoys.com/>

<http://www.multiversitylibrary.com/>