

20 January 2009

Dear Commissioners

**Submission on Copyright Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books**

I have an interest in parallel importation as an Australian author. I have written two novels of literary fiction. Both have been critically reviewed here as well as overseas. At this stage of my writing career, I consider myself an emerging author.

I have an Australian publisher as well as overseas publishers. My second novel has been accepted for publication overseas (in the USA and India) after it was edited in Australia. My main editor is based in Australia.

I am concerned that parallel importation will force Australian publishers to reduce the prices on books they publish here, which would force them to reduce their staff and printing costs. This would lead to fewer resources, such as good editors, available to authors such as myself. Without a good editor based locally who works with me on manuscripts, it will be difficult for me to find willing publishers overseas. Whilst it is possible to work with offshore editors, I do not believe that they can substitute for the value added by a local editor.

Parallel importation must be good not only for consumers but for the producers - publishers, editors and authors - as well. The Indian edition of my book will obviously be cheaper than the Australian edition if it is imported and sold freely in this country, however, it would not have been printed had not my Australian publisher edited my manuscript in the first place. If parallel importation is allowed, whereby domestic and overseas publishers compete on price alone, many of the small, adventurous houses that dare publish books that larger and commercial publishing firms do not care for will be forced to reduce in-house resources available to authors or will only take on commercially successful authors at the cost of new and emerging ones.

I therefore believe that is in the Australian public's interest not to allow unfettered parallel importation of books.

Yours sincerely,

Azhar Abidi