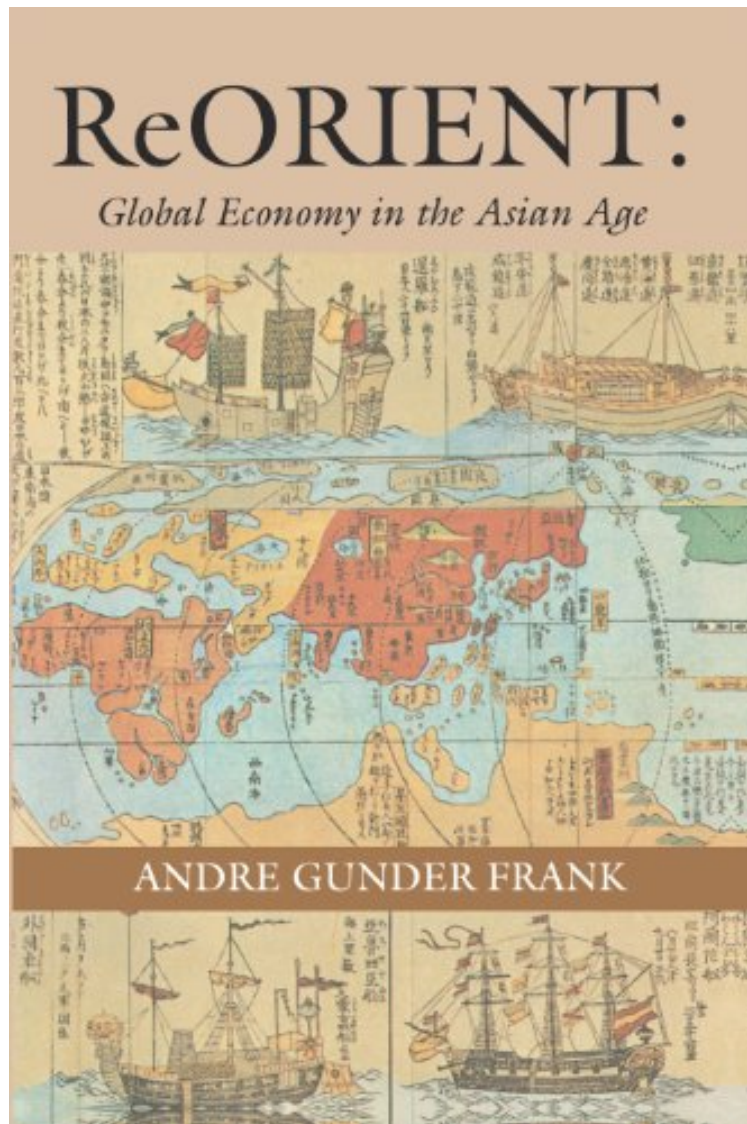


ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age

Andre Gunder Frank

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Andre Gunder Frank : ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age:

3 of 8 people found the following review helpful. How Asia Once Won (And Could Again)By John D. CofieldAndre Gunder Frank wrote ReOrient to demonstrate that the present Western predominance in the world economy is fairly new. It began when Europe gained control of the New World's natural resources, particularly silver, and used it to "buy a ticket on the Asian train" (Gunder Frank's apt metaphor).Gunder Frank also speculates that East Asia's present economic growth and potential will eventually help it regain economic hegemony in the not too distant future.0 of 0

people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Ambalavanar SomaskandaExtremely well written,authentic.48 of 57 people found the following review helpful. Interesting but FlawedBy R. AlbinAn interesting and very ambitious book by a distinguished scholar. Frank challenges the views of a number of important thinkers about world history including important contemporary historians such as Braudel and Wallerstein, and seminal 19th century theorists such as Marx and Weber. Briefly, Frank attacks a 'eurocentric' model of world development that sees capitalism emerging in Europe and then enmeshing the whole world in a Europe centered world economy. Instead, he emphasizes the vigor of a well established Afro-Asian capitalist economy that Western Europe was able to participate in only belatedly and only by extracting precious metals from the Western Hemisphere. He shows convincingly that up until the threshold of the Industrial Revolution, Afro-Asian trade remained the greater part of the world economy. These points are an important corrective to the existing model. He goes too far, however, in asserting that the world economy was not created by European activity. This is a simple point of logic. A world economy means literally that, an economic system that encompasses the whole globe. It is only with the European expansion of the early modern period that the Western Hemisphere and Oceania were incorporated into the world economy. While the Afro-Asian trade networks would remain quantitatively substantially larger than trade involving Europe, the European additions to the world economy introduce a qualitative difference in world trade networks. Nor is it likely that China, Mughal India, or any other Afro-Asian economic power would have discovered the Western Hemisphere. Another flaw in this book is the somewhat rambling style. At times this can be a real obstacle to following Frank's arguments. There are 2 chapters on economic cycles that are poorly organized and at times seem contradictory. Frank's use of what appears to be a rather nebulous literature on cycles is unclear and he resorts at times to the poorly defined idea of Kondratieff waves as an explanatory force. The book finishes with a sketchy attempt to account for the Industrial Revolution. For those interested in this important topic, I recommend Kenneth Pomeranz's *The Great Divergence*, which covers some of the same ground in a more logical and systematic manner.

Andre Gunder Frank asks us to ReOrient our views away from Eurocentrism—to see the rise of the West as a mere blip in what was, and is again becoming, an Asia-centered world. In a bold challenge to received historiography and social theory he turns on its head the world according to Marx, Weber, and other theorists, including Polanyi, Rostow, Braudel, and Wallerstein. Frank explains the Rise of the West in world economic and demographic terms that relate it in a single historical sweep to the decline of the East around 1800. European states, he says, used the silver extracted from the American colonies to buy entry into an expanding Asian market that already flourished in the global economy. Resorting to import substitution and export promotion in the world market, they became Newly Industrializing Economies and tipped the global economic balance to the West. That is precisely what East Asia is doing today, Frank points out, to recover its traditional dominance. As a result, the "center" of the world economy is once again moving to the "Middle Kingdom" of China. Anyone interested in Asia, in world systems and world economic and social history, in international relations, and in comparative area studies, will have to take into account Frank's exciting reassessment of our global economic past and future.