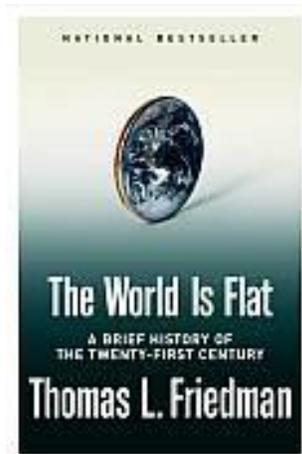


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Book review

Friedman, Thomas: “The World Is Flat – A brief history of the twenty-first century” Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York, 2005

Thomas Friedman won a Pulitzer Prize for his 1999 book “The Lexus and the Olive Tree”. His latest book comes three years after his 2002 publication “Longitudes and Attitudes”.

The dawning of the realization that the world is indeed flat came upon Thomas Friedman while engaged with Indian CEO Nandan Nilekanni at his conference room at Infosys Technologies in Bangalore. Like Christopher Columbus before him, who announced to the world that he had discovered that the world was round when he discovered the American Continent in search of a western route to India, Friedman goes all lengths to explain how the world has since been flattened in a metaphorical sense by traversing a similar journey in discovering the Westernized India and finding American influences over the rest of the world. The logic certainly applies, though scientific minds like Galileo and Columbus would turn in their graves at this new discovery.

God made the world round, mankind flattened it by his persistent nomadic instincts that did not permit the human mind to stay confined within geographical and political boundaries. The wandering nomadic corporates who wander the globe in search of green pastures and booty to take home, do drop anchor and put the seeds of their souls in other lands. The merging of workplaces in a huge melting pot called Earth, makes the world go round and the economies ticking and sustains demographics at a scale that Christopher Columbus couldn't have even imagined in his wildest dreams. Ten milestones in this

journey caught the bend in the river and brought home the flattening called globalization. The breaking of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Communist way of life gave impetus to the flow of capitalist urges that make humans economic animals. Parallel events that led to the enduring epidemic of internet usage when Netscape went public and browsing became the friendly neighborhood pastime, added another milestone. Development of Work Flow software made the nightmares of the trade unions come true. Outsourcing, offshoring, globally placed supply chains defied the time zones of a latitudinal and longitudinal planet. Insourcing happens when guys in funny brown shorts driving funny trucks delivering goods just in time who are the front-end of a hugely complex logistics that ensure a totally aligned synchronicity that would reinforce the discoveries of Carl Jung and the existence of a collective unconscious, and a flatter world on a micro-circuit board that spans the globe. IT breeds a generation of information seekers and retrievers from Google, Yahoo and websearches empowered with technology that fits into your palm.

As the triple convergence happens, technology overrides cultural differences and familiar anchors of identity blur. Resultant: multiple personality disorder compelled to belong to a universal civilization governed by market imperatives. The great sorting out will pitting India VS Indiana and decide who is exploiting whom, where do companies stop and start, where to collaborate and connect, and who own what. Among the complications of this huge global epidemic will lie the forgotten remains of the salesman and the trimming of all the fat in a flat world.

America and its life in the flat world is a major concern and the rest of the developing countries is the only other issue that matters. The unflat world will have no place for the weak and underprivileged. The divide between the haves and have nots will be yawning under the pressures of capitalism and the predictions of Carl Marx will see the light of day.

Its all about Imagination. Can you imagine how it will all go? Can you imagine a world without oil, can you imagine the future of Islam, can you imagine what will be the future of eBay? Can you imagine....