CHAPTER-I
Introduction

Human desire for a peaceful and orderly world is as old as the history of conflicts and violence. Little wonder, then, that thinkers and visionaries across times and cultures have contemplated on how order could be obtained and maintained. In our own times, it was in the late 1960s that the question of world order began to draw huge attention of scholars once again. They came from diverse fields, but more particularly from social sciences and law. What was new was the collaborative nature of their endeavour. With active encouragement and support from the United Nations, they formed a major transnational research enterprise, World Order Models Project (WOMP). WOMP set out to draw a roadmap that would lead to a just and humane world order, and published over the next two decades a number of thoughtful studies on the theme of ‘Preferred Worlds for the 1990s.’

Even in its rather brief history, WOMP went through several quick phases. The project was rather restricted in its aim and outlook when it started off. Order was conceived narrowly to mean only peace, peace was defined negatively as war prevention, and the approach adopted was ‘legal-institutional’. In the subsequent years, however, goals came to be more comprehensively defined. Economic well-being, social and political justice, and ecological balance were included as integral ingredients of a desirable world. This broadened vision was the result of several non-Western theorists joining the project, who lent insights into Third World concerns and aspirations.

However, as the perspective widened, it also became more diffused. Internal differences showed up between the ‘Northerners’ and the ‘Southerners’ within WOMP, especially on strategies of economic development and the role of state and civil society institutions. Another area of disagreement was how the ‘preferred world’ should ensure unity and cohesion without risking over-centralisation and causing loss of autonomy to its constituents. This dilemma applied equally to the organisation of the worldwide movement which had to be built in order to pursue the goal.

These differences were not easy to resolve, and they were responsible, at least partly, for getting WOMP activities bogged down in the early 1980s. But what sent WOMP into near oblivion were the unanticipated events of late 1980s and early 1990s. Collapse of the Soviet bloc, end of bipolarity and Cold War, onset of unipolarity and U.S. hegemony, and the intensification of neo-liberal economic globalisation forced fundamental changes in the very terms of world order discourse. The WOMP spirit tried to stage a return in the changed circumstances by redefining its aims, focussing now on issues of governance in a globalised world.

In the chapters to follow, we revisit WOMP to assess its true worth. In doing so, we choose not to focus on concrete and material changes which the project naively hoped would be brought about within a stipulated time frame, but the enduring relevance of the alternative ideas it projected as a counterpoint to the scepticism of the dominant Realist/Neo-Realist thinking in International Relations Studies.

Such attempts at recovering WOMP appear particularly worthwhile when we realise that contemporary literature on World Order is unabashedly positivist in nature, not only ignoring but also abhorring normative concerns. It uncritically accepts that obsessive pursuit of material interests and power is normal, and it rationalises hegemonic ‘universalisation’ of Western, predominantly American, norms. Surely, WOMP too had universalist aspirations but, as we shall see, its universalism was multiculturist. It explored the value frames of different cultures in the belief that within each of those cultures there were some universalisable values. It banked on these
‘universalisable values’ in the trust that conscious and consensual human effort could turn them into ‘universal values’.

We should perhaps clarify the sense and the spirit in which we use the term ‘critical analysis’ in the subtitle of this study, for there are two fundamentally different ways in which the word ‘critical’ can be used. The more common use implies an unsympathetic and negative assessment. For example, when a perspective is criticised, it is shown to suffer from serious flaws in its assumptions, analysis, inferences, implications and prescriptions. Often enough, such flaws are also shown to be irremediable. A case is then built that the perspective be altogether rejected and replaced with an alternative.

It is not in this negative sense that we use the term ‘critical.’ Rather, we employ it for the connotations it has in the ‘Critical Theory’ tradition. Here the term ‘critical’ is derived from ‘critique’ rather than criticism. Critiquing is done in the spirit not merely of sympathy but also solidarity. When a perspective is critiqued, it is believed to be fundamentally sound and valuable. Critiquing only suggests how its strengths could be further strengthened and its shortcomings overcome. Critiquing seeks to enrich a perspective by bringing out its hidden potential. It is a form of collaboration.

It is in this spirit that the present study tries to raise and seek answers to the following questions:

1. What was the historical background of WOMP? What was its genesis and how and why did it develop in the late 1960s?
2. What were the philosophical foundations of WOMP which bound together theorists of WOMP?
3. What were the ‘universalisable values’ according to the WOMP theorists? How could these be turned into universal values?

---

4. What kind of processes did the prominent WOMP theorists like Falk, Kothari, Mazrui, Mendlovitz and Kim envisage for making the transition from the 'Real World' to the 'Preferred World'?

5. What kind of theoretical departures were made by theorists in the 1990s from the positions they held in the 1960s? What are the possible consequences of these departures for the WOMP as a whole?

6. What were the reasons for the marginalisation and eclipse of WOMP? Was such an outcome inevitable?

7. What are the prospects for the recovery and revival of WOMP, keeping in mind the geopolitical and geoeconomic changes in the contemporary world?

8. What kind of transformations and modifications are necessary for such a recovery?

II

It is customary that a doctoral thesis begins by reviewing the existing literature on the subject. However, meeting this 'requirement' posed an awkward problem for us. It has been already suggested that world order studies fall into two broad categories: normative and positivist. Ordinarily, we should review both the traditions. However, bulk of the normative theorisation comes from the WOMP thinkers themselves. Should one attempt a quick review of WOMP literature right here? Doing so appeared akin to jumping the proverbial gun. This literature is precisely the subject matter of our study. Separate chapters have been devoted to prominent WOMP theorists in which their publications are taken up chronologically as well as thematically for detailed analysis and comment. It appeared more logical therefore to concentrate here on the literature emanating outside the parameters of WOMP. Yet this literature bore no relation to the theme of our study, except as a study in contrast.
Finding no satisfactory solution to this dilemma, but wishing not to abandon altogether the task of reviewing literature either, we have struck a compromise. We do not take up individual works separately but construct a typology of the literature to gauge its range.

A good starting point for this appeared to be a proposal made by Robert E. Harkavy. In his article ‘Images of the Coming International System’, he suggests that the literature on post-Soviet international relations appears to offer seven discrete images, models or paradigms. He lists them as:

1. The three-bloc neo-mercantilist thesis, a.k.a., geoeconomics
2. The multipolar balance of power model hinged on the traditional “realist” and/or neo-Realist frameworks.
4. The unipolar dominance model related to the traditional geopolitical “long cycle” theory and to theories of “hegemonic stability”.
5. The “zones of peace” versus “zones of turmoil” model based on the apparently widening gulf between the developed and the developing worlds.
6. The “global village” model based on the apparent shift of power and sovereignty from nation-states to international or non-governmental organisations, and the growth of functional global regimes.
7. The bipolar-redux model anticipating either a future challenge to the US dominance by China, Russia, Japan or Europe, or a return to some sort of bipolar bloc structure.

For our purpose here, the sevenfold division can in fact be reduced to two more basic categories. The first category consists of Realist and neo-Realist studies. Common and central to them are questions of material interests, power and hegemony, not just as they obtain today but also as they are likely to obtain in the foreseeable future. The Realist school would include

---

4 ibid, p. 570.
the first, second, fourth and seventh types listed by Harkavy, suggesting respectively tripolarity, multipolarity, unipolarity and bipolarity as the basis of the emerging international system. Harkavy lists among contemporary Realists theorists such as Richard Rosecrance, Walter Russell Mead, Jeffrey Garten, Edward Luttwak, Lester Thurow, John Mearsheimer, Henry Kissinger, Charles Krauthammer, George Modelski, Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro.5

We should note, however, that these are images of ‘international system’ and not of world order. This is a crucial distinction. The reason obviously is that hardcore Realism would not even admit of a notion such as world order. Realism believes that there is no real possibility of transcending the state system. To visualise a ‘world’ order would therefore be futile. Secondly, Realism has a rather restricted view of order, reducing it to the maintenance of peace and stability. Thirdly, Realism believes conflicts cannot be eliminated, they can only be controlled or managed, and this is best left to a hegemon or to balance of power and deterrence. Finally, there is no commitment to shared values in Realism’s notion of order; for, it believes that values play no role in the foreign policy. Neo-Realism is no different when it comes to values. It also depends on structural constraints rather than on shared values for ensuring peace. Hence its preference for the term ‘system’ rather than ‘order.’

The farthest a Realist is prepared to go is exemplified by Hedley Bull. His notion of ‘international society’ is based on common interests, agreed norms and shared institutions. But these norms and institutions are prudential and minimalist rather than normative. Members of international ‘society’ agree

---

to norms of behaviour; for, these are mutually advantageous, not because they commit themselves to transforming the world. Thus, even Bull is averse to the notion of an ‘international community’ which would certainly involve shared values.\(^6\)

The second basic category which emerges from Harkavy includes the third, fifth and sixth types listed by him. Prospects of ‘world order’ in these models hinge on the possibility of creating an ‘international society’ in the present-day circumstances. Creation of such a society in turn depends on compatibility between religious, cultural and civilisational norms of actors participating in the system.

This category too has several variations. The ‘global village’\(^7\) thesis holds out the promise of a lasting world order based on the emergence of global consensus around free market and liberal democracy. It argues that the ‘end of ideology’ and the end of cold war amount virtually to ‘end of history’. The new era has rendered obsolete ideological divisions which had thus far prevented the emergence of such a consensus.

The image of global village is also to be found in literature on globalisation which argues that new information and communication technologies have rendered the world ‘borderless.’ Global mobility and networking of capital, manufacturing and trade have created one world economy from which no can insulate itself by raising protectionist barriers. Global reach of mass media is creating one global culture which profoundly affects and amalgamates local, regional and national cultures. These development have profoundly changed the role of state. Thanks to their positive and welcome effect, we need no longer to speak of an international order. For the first time in human history we have ‘one world’. For the first time too we can actually have a ‘world order.’

Diametrically opposed to the notion of global village is the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. It considers world order utterly unattainable in the present

---


circumstances. Order presupposes strong notions of legitimacy, authority and obligation. Yet, what is considered legitimate varies violently from one civilisational area to another. A cross-cultural consensus on the question has never been possible. What held the world together was Western supremacy in material and military domains. This supremacy is fast eroding. This thesis warns of a world pulling in contradictory and conflicting civilizational directions, causing upheaval, instability and disorder.⁸

The ‘two zones’ thesis falls somewhere between the two opposite perceptions mentioned above. It believes there is little sense in talking of world order because the world is sharply divided between two kinds of zones. On the one side are industrial democracies which have entered into a long phase of peace and prosperity among themselves; on the other side are the underdeveloped regions which continue to suffer from poverty and violent social conflicts. It would be more realistic, therefore, to speak of simultaneous order and disorder separated by zonal boundaries.⁹

Common to these ‘sociocultural’ perspectives is their focus on political and cultural values as a crucial factor in the making and unmaking of a world order. Yet this should not be confused with a normative concern for values found in the WOMP. The orientation of these theorists is ‘sociological.’ They are not interested in values per se, much less in their promotion. They are concerned merely with the presence or absence of values as a ‘fact’ or as a factor which conditions the behaviour of socio-political actors.

What is also equally common to all these models of international ‘system’ or ‘society’ is their West-centred orientation. Part of the reason of course is that almost all of this literature has emanated in the West. More crucially, however, this literature seems to have myopic and prejudiced view of the entire non-Western world, treating it as its ‘Other’. The West views itself as rational, restrained and responsible but considers the non-West to be

either lacking these qualities or possessing them in insufficient measure. The attitude towards this Other takes several forms, but, even in its most benevolent form, it is still condescending. It adopts the stance of a missionary and a trustee. In the main, however, the non-Western world remains a source of constant misgivings, anxiety and threat. In no case is the West in need of learning anything from the Rest. The universalism of this literature is very sectarian.

III

Altogether, the study is divided into seven chapters. In the present chapter, our attempt has been to briefly introduce the theme as well as the spirit in which the theme is explored in the subsequent six chapters. Some background comments on mainstream World Order studies are offered in order to indicate how the WOMP marks a significant departure from the conventionally defined discipline.

The second chapter explores in some detail the larger philosophical context in which WOMP is to be located. This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section attempts a brief survey of western political thought in order to explore the notion(s) of ‘order’ implicit in its various strands. The second section examines alternative meanings of ‘world order’ found in different versions of Liberal as well as Realist theories of international relations by way of seeking the theoretical context of the WOMP. The third section continues the discussion by referring to different forms of globalism. The next four sections take up successively the four values central to the WOMP project: peace, economic well-being, sociopolitical justice and ecology. In every case, the value is approached from alternative perspectives before an attempt is made to contextualise WOMP theorisation.

Whereas the second chapter explores the philosophical context of WOMP, the third chapter looks into the historical context of its genesis and development. It is divided into five sections. The first section traces the emergence of ‘international society’ from the days of the Westphalia peace treaty. It seeks to tease out the notion(s) of ‘world order’ implied in this
society. The second section goes more directly into the genesis of WOMP, locating it in the post-war political context of cold war, nuclear arms race and neo-colonialism as well as in the academic traditions of Peace Research. The next three sections sketch the evolutionary process of WOMP through different stages. The third section deals with the initial years of 1961-68 when theorists were concerned almost exclusively with the issue of peace and displayed a shared faith in the adoption of a legal-institutional framework for war-prevention. The fourth section deals with the years of 1968-78 when, thanks to the participation of non-Western scholars, the WOMP broadbased its concerns to include values of economic well being as well socio-political justice. This was also the period in which WOMP became increasingly conscious of the need to work out the strategies of transition to the 'Preferred World.' The final section deals with what might be called the third and fourth stages of WOMP in which interest shifted from governmental agencies to transnational social movements and grass-root initiatives. It also deals with the circumstances in which WOMP suffered from growing lack of internal cohesion and went into relative decline. The chapter ends with a reference to the newer forms of theorisation in the age of globalisation.

The next three chapters deals with WOMP theorists more directly. The fourth chapter deals with the ideas of Richard Falk, by far the best known WOMP theorist. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section deals with Falk's delineation of the idea of peace and the role which international law and international organisations could play in bringing about and maintaining a peaceful world order. In the second section, Falk's views on security, arms race, militarism and demilitarisation are brought out. His views on the other WOMP values such as economic well-being, socio-political justice and protection of environment are discussed in the third section. The final section deals with continuities and departures in Falk's thinking on the WOMP. Also, an overall evaluation of Falk is attempted.

The fifth chapter takes up Rajni Kothari and Ali A. Mazrui, the two most important Third World scholars associated with the WOMP. The first section introduces, in general terms, Kothari's Third World perspective and his
emphasis therein on values of autonomy and self-reliance. The second section contains a more detailed account of his discussion of peace as a prime WOMP value. The third section examines his notion of economic development as an alternative to Western theories of modernisation. The fourth section takes up his discussion of issues related to socio-political justice and ecology. The next two sections deal with the views of Mazrui. The fifth section deals with Mazrui's ideas on the importance of culture and traces context of his principal contribution in the form of World Federation of Cultures. The sixth section consists of a brief discussion of the values of peace, economic well being and socio-political justice in Mazrui's writings. The final section relates the previously discussed ideas to the development of a world language and the role to be played by creative and egalitarian education.

In the sixth chapter, we visit briefly the ideas of Saul Mendlovitz and Samuel Kim, two other theorists of WOMP. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, which deals with Mendlovitz's ideas on peace and socio-political justice, is rather brief. This is so for two reasons: one, we find that his views on these two values closely resembled those of Richard Falk, which have been already discussed in a previous chapter; two, Mendlovitz did not pay any notable attention to the two other values of economic well-being and ecological balance. The second section takes up Kim's discussion of war and peace. The third section deals with Kim's analysis of economic well-being while the fourth section deals with his views on socio-political justice, ecological balance and the question of transition to a Preferred World.

The study ends with a chapter which sums up earlier chapters and draws conclusions about the nature and relevance of the WOMP.