

BOOK REVIEWS

Book review 1

Title: *Democracy and Development in a Globalized World* (2008). Several authors. Stockholm, Sweden: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. ISBN 978-91-85724-58-1.

Reviewed by: Daniel B. German, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, Appalachian State University, USA.

This book is the result of an International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) Round Table held in New Delhi, India, 2008. The book is an invaluable report on the state of democracy and the relationship between democracy and development in the world. It has the merit of bringing together eminent scholars, politicians, media people, and social activists to address a possible link between democracy and development. Academics often develop grandiose theories about world trends, albeit sometimes very useful, and refuse to consider undocumented facts, while policy makers have to grapple with the everyday responsibilities of facing one crisis after another frequently without time for reflection, analysis, and verification of facts.

At the outset it must be noted that IDEA is dedicated to the development of democracy and is unalterably opposed to authoritarianism although Vidar Helgesen, the Secretary-General of IDEA, indicates that democracy needs to come from a cultural underpinning and should not be imposed by an external actor. Along the lines of democracy is favorable and authoritarianism is not, Pranab K. Bardhan – an economics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, USA – notes that the checks and balances inherent in democracy is an “uncontested” mechanism for avoiding “catastrophic mistakes” such as the “fatal mistakes” of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in China. This seems like the perfunctory Western negative jab at China found in China analysis. However, he goes on to point out that democracy exposes itself to endless pressure to avoid “events like those of contemporary Chinese history – where more than 40 million Chinese farmers have been uprooted from their land for the purpose of commercial development and where, between 1996 and 2001, 35 million workers were laid off from the Chinese state-owned enterprises.” In India he states similar circumstances would produce a political response of “upheaval, demanding justification.” (pp. 17-18). As if referring to the democracy vs. authoritarian conundrum regarding development Bardhan points out that recently China’s road system was less developed than India’s (around 1990), but within a decade China constructed the second-longest express road system in the world. In India a similar attempt would probably have been impossible being obstructed by continuous

“land disputes, lawsuits, and agitation, impeding the decision-making process.” Perhaps, but the state even in a democracy has eminent domain capabilities which allowed the United States to build an enormous system of interstate highways. Bardhan’s presentation shows the often even handed look at the democracy and development connection in the book since he states that there are positives and negatives in this connection. He states, for example, that “democratic processes are often captured by an exclusive circle: this is a well known phenomenon in US politics where corporate lobbyists and the most generous donors in electoral campaigns influence law-making.” He interestingly goes on to state that in India “Despite a movement towards local self-government, India is still at the local level more of an oligarchy than a democracy.” (p. 18).

A central theme of the book is that the democracy component of development attempts not only to promote economic development, but also human rights development. Maria Amparo Caspar, at the Political Studies Department of the Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas, A. C. (CIDE, Economics and Research and Teaching Centre), Mexico points out that economic development can be obtained under any type of political system, but that simultaneous development of rights “is inconceivable without democracy.” (p. 20). Gloria Somolekae, Botswana citizen and a development management and policy analysis academic at the University of Botswana states that no longer does “development” refer only to economic development. “Today, development refers to a much broader concept and includes people’s quality of life, respect for human rights, and equitable and inclusive systems of governance.” (p. 37). Indeed Helgesen, a Norwegian national, refers to going beyond the traditional definition of liberal democracy, i.e., representative democracy to participatory democracy and social democracy which translates into people (grassroots) power and equality. This position, of course, tips the hand of IDEA, which appears to be a proponent of Scandinavian “social democracy.” Participant Larry Diamond a well known development theory professor at Stanford University, USA, presents an extensive definition of democracy which among numerous dimensions includes “... an open and vigorous civil society... equality of all citizens before the law... an independent judiciary... counter-corruption commissions... auditing agencies... a high degree of transparency...” (p. 27). Often, these democratic characteristics are absent from many nations in the world whether democratic or authoritarian.

That the development–democracy idea has problems is well brought out by participant Aruna Roy who set up Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, a peasants’ and workers’ grassroots non-governmental organization (NGO). As she states “While we [India] boast of 8.5 per cent growth, other indicators reveal a situation that is worse than that in the Sub-Saharan region. How do I as an Indian react to the fact that millions of my own people live on less than a dollar a day, with no access to literacy, education, health or employment? Not only is this a personal dilemma, it is a dilemma for democracy.” (p. 53).

This book has a balance sometimes absent from purely academic “ivory tower” writing, as well as politician’s occasional pandering to popular appeals. As Roy indicates, uneven development in a global world may present as many problems as it solves. In fact, development is very uneven in India. For those who might be left behind “democracy” may be no more than a hollow promise.

A final focused topic of the book is the impact of globalization on democracy and development. Helgeson thinks of this as an opportunity and a problem. He states that one of

the challenges of the Round Table is to address: “[T]he impact of globalization on democracy – as an opportunity for building more open democratic societies whose citizens are aware of global challenges, but also as an external force that is DIFFICULT (emphasis added) to control through established national institutions of democracy.” (p. 4). As Saskia Sassen of Columbia University and the London School of Economics puts it “the nation state is under attack, or at the minimum that it is suffering the erosion of its territorial protections.” (p. 64). To put it more bluntly, the nation state decision making process is often replaced by international bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), which makes decisions about trading practices. What happens to a nation’s labor force when jobs are outsourced to another country because WTO pushes to it to lower tariff protections making it attractive, if not necessary to cost wise compete, to ship production to a country where the costs of production are much less expensive? This process is precisely why India, China, and Brazil dramatically are rising stars in international economics – these nations frequently are able to produce a product at a much lower cost than in highly developed nations. Sassen refers not only to organizations such as WTO, but also of private frameworks such as “a private law developed by the major engineering companies in the world to establish a common mode of dealing with the strengthening of environmental standards in a growing number of countries, in most of which these companies are working.” (p. 64).

An important theme expressed in the book is that political executives within nations are exercising increasing power to the exclusion of legislatures. Summit conferences dealing with big topics like climate change are often dominated by heads of state where important decisions are made affecting nation state policy. Furthermore, small national legislatures often lack the resources to gain knowledge compared to the executive as So-molekae points out. This might be especially critical in understanding, in this case NOT comprehending, emerging global trends. It could be that training in access to information on the Internet might help mitigate this problem. An interesting statement by Diamond is that the time has come to get rid of some outdated global structures. He states: “Influential forums such as the UN Security Council and the Group of Eight advanced economies (the G8) must be urgently reformed and cease to exclude the many potential candidates who have so far been ignored without sustainable arguments.” (p. 89). Consequently, existing and emerging global political institutions may need a broadened base to include a diversity of national input.

Book review 2

Title: *Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish Society*. (2005). By Daniel Bar-Tal and Yona Teichman. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 0521 80797 Hardback, Tables, Drawings, Figures. 483 pp.

Reviewed by: Christ'I De Landtsheer, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

This book by two scholars from Tel Aviv University is very much to my liking. The work seems to clarify the difficult concept of prejudice and besides, it is socially highly relevant as it may contribute to advancing the peace process in the Middle East.

This work focuses on the acquisition and development of the Arab concept, image, stereotype, and prejudice by Israeli Jewish children and adolescents. It includes interviews, questionnaires, task performance, and human figure drawings. The last method was developed by the authors. It allows an implicit multidimensional assessment of social perception, attitudes and emotions- that is of stereotypes and prejudice.

The book is highly relevant to several fields within political psychology, including the study of prejudice, the study of conflict, the study of perception through mass media, and not to forget the study of propaganda. The work, that recently received the Alexander George Book Award in fact, deals with propaganda, and it significantly contributes to what Alexander George wanted to say. It is in the heart of political psychology. The book is clearly making its argument and it is fairly well written.

The authors formulate an alternative to studies in traditional social psychology that aim at eliminating prejudice by focusing mostly on individuals. It argues that a reconciliation on a societal level is necessary in which the change of the representation of the enemy is essential. It comes to this conclusion after elaborate case studies of various formats of public speech (political mass media rhetoric, literature, film) in combination with data gathered through surveys, interviews and the new method of the interpretation of figure drawings.

This book, that is the work of a lifetime, is in any respect a work of high scientific quality. The book contains a broad state of the art, it is well structured and coherent, and the chapters and cases talk to each other. This is, in any respect, a very important book. It aims at contributing (and it does) to a solution for citizens that live in regions that are affected by an intractable conflict. It, scientifically, details the very nature of prejudice.

Book review 3

Title: *Birding & Mysticism: Enlightenment Through Bird Watching* (two vols.). (2009). By George E. Lowe. Xlibris, \$34.99.¹

Reviewed by: Russell F. Farnen, Storrs, CT, USA.

Introduction

George E. Lowe has been writing for a living all his life: as teacher at all levels of education, as a student in college and graduate school, as a Foreign Service Officer (Paris), US Naval Intelligence Officer (Hawaii/ Japan/Pentagon) and Civil Service Bureaucrat in OE/Dept. of Education as a speech writer during the Reagan Years (for Secretary of Education, Ted Bell).

Along the way, Lowe had the occasion to write numerous books on a variety of topics including: the prevention of thermonuclear war through “simple/true” deterrence and transparency while preventing a right-wing Christian takeover of the major seats of power in all three branches of government and the across the broad perils which the Bush-Cheney administrations created when it raped and pillaged the economy, the environment, the courts, the UNO and other opposition NGO’s, as well as threatening world peace itself by imposing its brand of permanent war in politics, the middle east (western Asia), the the war on terror, international and US-Russian relations and on every other conceivable facet of un-democratic governance known to the mind of man.

The major books Lowe has produced over the years include: *Of The Age Deterrence* (1964), *It Can Happen Here: A Fascist Christian America*, (2000, 2 vols), *Truth Seeking: Travels in the Time of Terror/Wars and Religious Fundamentalists* (2006) and now *Birding and Mysticism: Enlightenment Through Bird Watching* (2009, two vols). (With a work in progress: *Yet Still the Bulbul Sings: My Stalking of the Anti-Christ’s, Their False Nuclear prophets, Nuclear Gladiators and Spirit Warriors* – 1 Oct. 1952 – 21 Dec. 2012). He also published numerous government reports, journal articles, position papers, commentaries and many letters to the editor on military policy/strategy, nuclear weapons, education and the environment. However, by far his greatest achievement concerns philosophical issues, birding, competing strategic nuclear doctrines, mystical religions and spiritual insights in nature via birding. He also instructs us on how to become inspired and initiated in the “mystery of mysteries” in nature on Intensive Bird [IBW] Walks by a Bird Spirit Person Teacher [BSPT] – who skilfully combines the modern empirical scientist with the ancient Shaman to identify and find (and yes, communicate with) the Bird Nation. Thus experiencing, by crossing the two species – The Avian with Homo sapiens – mystical moments/sparks on the way to the “dawning” of bird consciousness eventually leading to the way of cosmic consciousness. He is helped along his path-way by a series of synchronicities or “meaningful coincidences”.

He shows us how to avoid the dreaded “Curse of the Bird Nation” which Lowe placed, during a trip to Dublin, on what he calls the environmental Vandals and ecological

Huns of the Bush administrations. Lowe also describes the bellicose foreign/military policies of Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld distinguished by programs of death/defiance/defeatism and decadence which they spread – broadly speaking, at home and abroad.

Birding and Mysticism is a two volume, 1225 page work which is broadly expansive in scope and universally inclusive in its coverage of both familiar and exotic subjects. Birding, for example is a widely practiced pastime. Lowe goes into the details of bird-watching, bird lists, bird consciousness, a birding epiphany and birding observations, bird guides and bird inspired teaching. Additionally, Lowe discusses the detailed behavior of North-American birds along with other esoteric subjects such as the following: Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism, the cosmic Christ, cosmic wisdom, cosmic consciousness, creationism, Eastern religions and finding one's own religion, religious fundamentalism, global warming, I Ching, Taoism (Lao Tse), memes, New Apostolic Reformation, Nirvana, nuclear weapons, Sarah Palin and "revelation", The Tao of Physics, William James, Dr. Richard Bucke, the Tao of Psychology, Zen and Haiku. This is truly a remarkable sample of topics discussed in Vol. #2 of B&M.

Lowe demonstrates his passion for an active life of travel, public service, teaching, work, scholarship, birding, research and writing. These products also prove the worth of keeping a personal journal on a daily basis since in the meagre publishing world of 2010 even a well versed commoner can become king of letters if one has the time, talent and interest in doing so.

My personal perspective on George Lowe goes back over half a century. We worked together on several US governments projects such as a major Citizen Education Conference in Kansas City (summer 1976), set up by Logan Sallada and President Ford's then Chief of Staff – Dick Cheney, midst the Ford-Carter presidential campaign (I did the evaluation of that successful conference for George and Logan). During the summer of 1966 which I spent in Washington D.C., teaching in one of George's summer workshops on how the federal government works. George arranged for his students to meet with Hubert Humphrey (HHH) and his staff (George even wrote a few speeches for HHH on oceanic deterrence).

These occasions allowed us to become close colleagues with similar world views/political issues on the nuclear arms race fighting limited wars – especially in the counterproductive, perpetual Cold War nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. The central topics we then discussed were overkill and the so-called "merchants of death" in the unfolding national security state (see, for example, Fred J. Cook's *The Warfare State*, 1962, defense socialism/MIC – military industrial complex, and the enigma of "Deterrence and Deterrents" in the Nuclear Age – 'rational deterrence'). Our personal and professional relationships have continued over the years. I have written two major reviews of his previous books – *It Can Happen Here: A Fascist Christian America* (2000) and *Truth Seeking* (2006). These reviews have appeared in Germany and remain on Amazon.com. In my review (2006) of *Truth Seeking*, I particularly focused on the value of *synchronicities* ("meaningful coincidences") in all of Lowe's work. This phenomenon was significant enough – and fascinating in the extreme – to see if he would repeat this "aspect of his inspiration" in his two new "birding books". Happily – I think – he does so "in spades", as in our favorite Pinochle card game. He mentions this "mystical" phenomenon, especially its strong influence on his discovering key in his Cold War and deterrence books/insights/ideas or vi-

ral memes, no less than forty-five pages in vol. #2 and thirty-nine pages in volume #1. Thus, synchronicities remain currently key/vital in his recent work.

The Cold War, Nuclear Weapons, and Deterrence

In his strategic nuclear thinking – going back to his years as a Naval Intelligence Officer in Japan/Hawaii (1954-1957) – ABM/SDI/STAR WARS/BMD are actually offensive weapons systems, not defensive systems as touted by the Pentagon and its think-tank allies, like RAND/AEI/Heritage/Hudson Institute et al. In George's view, the Bush BMD was designed to add credibility to the Bush doctrine of pre-emption (September, 2002) or a first nuclear strike versus the Russian's (or previously USSR's) great nuclear deterrent (Bomber bases and ICBM silos). And any surviving Soviet retaliatory missiles/weapons would be seriously impeded from hitting their American targets – the US would *only* lose 20 million Americans on a *bad hair day*! Well, Obama ditched the Poland and Czech Bush BMD interceptors and went with/adapted the NAVY's AEGIS system, which Lowe has been writing about since the winter of 1970. It was the idea of his mentor's Admiral George H. Miller's SABMIS, which would be sea-based and destroy "rogue" nation's ballistic missiles in their boost phase. Lowe provides us with a clever alternative to Bush's and the neo-cons offensive thermonuclear war-winning BMD. He regards the timing, early in the Obama administration, as a current *synchronicity*, related to another of his strategic views, namely "finite deterrence" versus "overkill" and very compatible to the new Russo-American START talks re warhead reduction in 2010-2012 – and hence a tempting political issue in 2012. On these points, see his work in progress (Vol. #2, Appendix #2 "The Bulbul & The Anti-Christ" – 1952-2012). This view is forthcoming in his enhanced memoir on the rise and fall of "nuclear imperialism".

While researching the great nuclear arms race of 1945-1991 and the entire post-WWII/Cold War commentators by Traditionalists and Utopians (Lowe's terms from *The Age of Deterrence*, 1964), as a revisionist historian, he renewed his interests of 1957-1965 and affinity for a group of revisionist scholars, mainly academicians. Numbered among them is my own nuclear strategy mentor, Professor Denna F. Fleming, a long serving member of the political science faculty at Vanderbilt University, Nashville Tenn.

In what must be regarded a significant synchronicity, Dr. Fleming – eminent cold war historian – congratulated George Lowe on his *The Age of Deterrence* (1964) for making an important contribution to understanding the roots of the cold war. Dr. Fleming's letter, Lowe told me was the only academic comment on his book, which was dismissed as just typical "inter-service rivalry."

Dr. Fleming was an avid (leading) pre-1941 prophet of the Nazi menace. He was also a post-WWII revisionist extraordinary. His stance began with his denunciation of the anti-Russian post – 1945 cabal in DC consisting of such important policy makers as Harry Truman, Winston Churchill, and George C. Patton, not to speak of Senator "Scoop" Jackson/LBJ/Paul Nitze – author of the very influential NSC-68 (1950) and founder of the equally influential "Committee on The Present Danger" (where Nitze eventually hired Richard Perle & Paul Wolfowitz to carry out Nitze's decades long hard line anti-Communist campaign during a good share of the Cold War years). He devised nuclear

strategies designed to guarantee that the US would have a “preponderance of power” throughout the cold war. And that meant, more than anything else, thermonuclear power and the means (bombers/missiles) to get those weapons to Communist targets and to create/design the narrative of the Cold War which justified nuclear weapon “overkill.” Which is what Lowe calls nuclear imperialism in the service of the new American empire, actual or virtual?

George Lowe has re-discovered his own intellectual ties to these anti-cold war warriors, a group to which I have long belonged. So if this is just another of many such synchronicities or “meaningful coincidences” then let them continue to appear and mystify or even inspire us – whatever this phenomena is – or means. In the final analysis, the reader-you – after giving this powerful “meme” it’s fair due-will make up your mind about the validity of Lowe’s and C. Jung’s insight into this alternative form of causality. The key word is “meaningful” coincidence. And Lowe’s definition of this as something which causes one after experiencing a synchronicity to react to things in a different way, to think differently, or to experience new thoughts. In other words, you just do not dismiss the event/happenstance as being meaningless and simply forget it! (Believe me, after reading George Lowe’s books you will examine all of your meaningful coincidences. Furthermore I will bet you will find many of them are synchronicities – I sure did!).

Volume #2 of *B&M* has five main parts with sections and sub-sections conveying the substantive ideas of the volume, namely: the myriad/many forms of mysticism, previously introduced in volume1 as themes and separate narratives. The contents of volume #2 contain a summary of the insights and synchronicities which inspired and shaped the writing of *B&M*. This includes Lowe’s discovery of his personal mystical strain/inclination during a post-dinner walk/talk midst migrating wood warblers in a Pennsylvania oak forest. Other key insights came from a PHD theologian (Dr. Harry Gardner) and MLK classmate in Washington (during the fundamentalist-infested RWR years) which helped to confirm the religious/spiritual/mystical nature of birding sacred rites and rituals.

The usefulness of such insights is related to the relevance of these cyclical themes to nature, the environmental tempo of the seasons, God as first cause or the big bang’s mysterious/mystical force and the resultant ever-expanding cosmos and universe. All in all there are an additional 24 insights/synchronicities to explain (Vol. #2, pp. 31-87), which are merely summarized, not analyzed here. These include the shared insights of William James such as cosmic consciousness, along with Dr. Richard Bucke who wrote a key book on the subject; many synchronicities in book findings in the most unlikely places: Nova Scotia’ used clothing stores; bird songs; “warbler waves”; mysterious/magical and mystical migrations of birds; the influence of the mysticism of Eastern religions on Emerson/Whitman/Thoreau; F.Capra’s attempt to fuse/conflate western science (the new physics) with ancient Eastern religions; the sources of numerous epiphanies, visions, illuminations, and synchronicities emanating from Jung/Pauli/ Koestler and Bucke.

Other content areas presented in vol. #2 include the following themes: religion versus science, an Introduction to mysticism in all of its many faces – religious/spiritual/rational/ personal and practical (including The Fourth Great Green Environmental/Ecological/Awakening, 2000-2025), “The Way of Birding” and its mystical connections to Eastern religions (including Tao, Zen, Buddhism), and Jewish mysticism (including The greening of Judaism and contributions of the Kabbala to the impending “Solar Age.” Wherein the

Jewish principle of Tikkun Olam helps move society from the dangerous rape/destruction/exploitation of Gaia/Nature toward the repair/restoration of Gaia/Earth and God's creation to healthfulness/sustainability in the 21st Century of a Green Third Millenium).

George Lowe concludes vol. #2 with a series of conclusions and postscripts which encompass key ideas reconciling science and religion through birding. Then he adds six appendices which speak to "How to live in history – today and every day; "The Bulbul and the Anti-Christ (a work in progress); UFO's revisited/redux, a new Seder for Tu 'B Sha'vat (combining trees and birds), Practical Mysticism and birding rites/rituals, Christmas Bird Counts – St. Lucie and and Martin County, FL. and TR's 1908 White House bird list.

Now to summarize key appendices, with emphasis on "The Bulbul and the Anti-Christ" and the continuing fascinations of UFO's, fantasy/hoax/reality? Politics? Military threat? Lowe's first/initial list of key Ideas/memes (viral ideas) in both volumes contains subjects previously discussed above, such as: Intensive Bird Walks (IBW's) and the Bird Spirit Person Teacher (BSPT or "Birding Guru" or Master Birder), The Dawning of Bird Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness, Cosmic Wisdom, the relentless, historic struggle between the shaman's role (first 3.000.000 years and during the last 10.000 years in conflict with religious priestly war-mongers), "Gott Mit Uns" and US Air Force Academy's Fundamentalist chaplains, Rev. Billy Graham (who never met an American war he did not like) and Christian Zionists' agitating for wars for Greater Israel (the current Israeli prime minister's allies), the eternal conflict between man and the environment – Whose? How to protect our Mothers Nature/Earth-Gaia and God's Creation/body? The last 400 years of masculine reign/ruin versus the impending counter-point feminine inspired era/Solar Age (from the *Kabbalah*), man the destroyer versus man the restorer (a function of his new cosmic wisdom and Matt Fox's New Living Cosmology), the coming of the Cosmic Christ (religious) and/or the advent of the cosmic wisdom (secular), a new global mysticism re-defined and expanded for the 21st century and the Green Third Millennium (which may well include God as process/as stem cell) in one of many/manys universes, and perhaps the final Restoration, as it was in the beginning? Or must we finally be content and agree with Dr. Paul Davies regarding "the mystery at the end of the universe"? Or Lowe's favorite paradox: "God is mystery."

In these final pages George Lowe returns to his discussion of rational mysticism, the unbreakable link between what he calls certain holy or sacred sites and birding suggests a truce between science and religion, (enlightenment) his "real" conclusions about the "way of birding" and the current environmental awakening and (accepting the great conclusions of conservatio) cosmic consciousness, the collective unconsciousness of Jung (his recently published *The Red Book*), synchronicities and a new beginning for mankind in harmony with Nature and the Cosmos.

Lowe continues his concluding sections and finds that the 2008 Republican Debates provoked him to "go political" for a moment in his writing of *B&M*. Why? That there were a pack of potential anti-Christ's and first-strike nuclear warmongers all together on one stage was almost too much for George to ignore (see Vol. #2, p. 431).

So many white, male heirs of General Le May, advocating – "get it over with, Nuke them now" in a final "clash of civilizations" in Armageddon (WWIII) or in any of its many Satanic manifestations as anti-Russian, anti-yellow peril (China), anti-Iran (get Israel to help), pro-Georgia. All potential anti-Christ's for the murder of millions of inno-

cents hiding behind the usual GOP-oriented false nuclear prophets and their favorite nuclear gladiators, lusting to use the first-strike nuclear option lying at the heart of the nuclear war codes of the “Armageddon football” hidden in the Pentagon’s contingency plans deeply lodged in The SIOP abetting a nation still in thrall to the “temptations” of nuclear imperialism.

Lowe also reveals in these final pages his four blisses: birds, books, bridge, dogs and cats. He also details his lifelong battle (1952-2009) against what he calls the Anti-Christ’s and the false nuclear prophets’ (vol. #2, p. 437) who have repeatedly—often just for a mess of pottage, like Esau (Genesis 25: 33-34) sold mankind’s “birthright” here on our planet Earth. These “wizards of Armageddon” have tried to figure out a strategy to take advantage of America’s nuclear superiority in the service of nuclear imperialism (1945-2010), thus precluding either the coming of the cosmic Christ or the advent of cosmic wisdom. Like the Magi (“Wizard’s of Armageddon”) of a *A Canticle for Leibowitz* whispering into the Prince’s ear to strike first and the whole earth is his, as in most of the RAND Corp. scenarios’, the inevitable result was and will be a new dark ages, the planet of the apes, nuclear winter, or doomsday!

Lowe also adds a list of his personal beliefs and a catechism of faith (Vol.#2, pp. 438-39), which includes inter alia, a personal interest in things biblical, love of gothic and Baroque churches, appreciation of Roger Williams role as a Christian seeker and democrat of religious truth and falsity along with a personal accommodation and belief in nature qua nature/Gaia and the master concept of “practical mysticism”, rooted in the Kabala, plus “God as mystery’s” infinite creation (Vol. #2, pp. 438-39).

He also points out, near the end of his many conclusions the deep connection between the ways of the Tao, Zen Buddhism, Haiku, and birding. This insight helps us unravel for ourselves some of the the unfathomable secrets of nature, the “Mystery Of Mysteries” (Charles Darwin’s term). It is there where Lowe comes closest to revealing details of his personal journey, which others have followed. One was W.H. Hudson and another of these seekers was Robert Presig’s who wrote the now classic *Zen the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

All of Lowe’s books/volumes are less inclined to deal with with the art of maintaining motorcycles or the deep secrets lodged in a grain of sand. No, Lowe is more concerned with the inherent natural symbioses and man’s necessary accommodation to the needs of maintaining the health and sustainability of earth and repairing God’s creations while preventing the DOE/DOO by a doomsday device or ICBM exchange or through climate warming, over-population, pollution or destruction’s of earth’s eco-systems.

The very last part of volume #2 consists of a series of six appendices variously entitled: life in the Summer of 2006/07 (local life in S.W. Cove and Loon Landing/Port Medway, Nova Scotia). The constant threat to bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities by the US or Israel, finding your own religious way (without drugs), a discussion of the doctrine of deterrence, a new threat of a Christian fascist theocracy to American democracy – which only the green Vital Center can resist – this dangerous takeover of the venerable GOP of Lincoln/TR/RWR by God’s Own Party of fundamentalist Christians. The successors of Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld have captured what’s left of the traditional GOP and turned it into the “Party of NO”: white , northern European fundamentalist Protestant, based in the old cotton-picking, slavery states of the Confederacy, who voted in greater numbers for

McCain (2008) than they did for GWB in 2004! We can expect to see more of the GOP's openly self-aggrandizing goals. There is a scary nuclear coda to these appendices (especially Appendix #2 "The Bulbul & The Anti-Christ") in the forthcoming elections of 2010/2012. We can anticipate a heightened climate of national security hysteria issues dominated by Russo-American new START talks, extreme criticism for Obama's rejection of Bush's BMD bases in Poland and the Czech Republic, and replacing them with the oceanic-based Aegis-missiles (on CVs/DDs), designed to destroy "rogue" nations' ICBM's in their vulnerable boost phase assisted by multi-lateral manned smart drones. This re-introduction of bitter nuclear politics into the 2012 presidential campaign may rival that poisonous atmosphere of the 1964 (General Goldwater versus LBJ) campaign. Recall the little blonde girl picking daisy petals?

The Traditionalists will have to mount a major campaign to challenge Utopian plans to turn the sands of Western Asia into glass and melt Afghanistan's icy mountains into water.

The Utopian warmongers are still, after nearly fifty years, trying to find political uses of America's continuing superiority in first strike thermonuclear deterrent weapons (our secret default strategy) at the heart of American nuclear imperialism (1954-2012). We traditionalists will be sorely tried by the mass hysteria ginned up by the end of the Mayan calendar on 21 December 2012. This end of time neurosis will be supplemented by neo-McCarthy and neo-fascist groups which began their emergence, after being in hiding since Tim McVeigh's Oklahoma City Bombing (in 1995), in the 2009 early summer, with the election of America's first black president. We were given a preview of the elections of 2010/2012, by the angry white mini-mobs of August and the related white tea-baggers. Sarah Palin and her fans will try to ride this white, middle/lower middle classes' populist anger and grievances versus "the coloured ones" into the Oval Office in 2013.

The author continues with his analysis and discussion of US nuclear imperialism and the high crimes it encourages such as Hiroshima/Nagasaki and/or Abu Grabi. Or use of extraordinary rendition by the CIA (George Orwell and the German SS/Gestapo would be proud of that phrase).

Finally Lowe asks the key question of the nuclear era: what did the use of the atomic bombs on Japan in August, 1945 do to the USA's sense of morality and ethics? Furthermore he wonders how these events still contribute to the long standing debate over a future first strike or first use in a preventive war (The Bush II doctrine of September, 2001). The US ICBM's if ever used in a total war with Russia/China would escalate into a global conflict, as the smaller nuclear powers will have to take sides. The end result would be mutual annihilation or mutual suicide ending in nuclear winter. Indeed the direct result of the most evil set of deeds ever wrought by the hands and minds of men – yes, mostly white, macho, blind men and their amoral advisers – the "Wizards of Armageddon". WW III would see three billion innocents with the entire world's cities reduced to radioactive cinders. These horrors would make the Holocaust's 6.000.000 victims and all the other historical mass murders pale by comparison. That's why we ought to be terrified by the nuclear politics that Sarah Palin and her advisors are planning to make this the key issue in 2012.

UFO's and Strategic Nuclear Planning

Before we take up the personally more interesting topics of UFO's and strategic nuclear planning (appendices 2 and 3 in Vol. 2), we can conclude our summary/critique of appendices 4 and 5 before returning to the aforementioned topic. Appendix 4 focuses on Judaism. Some of the major themes of these two volumes are "the greening of Judaism" from the perspective of a new Tu 'B Shav'vat Seder for the festival of the "trees and birds", that speaks to all our senses to the soul through the "tree of life" and the Bird Nation. Here Lowe returns to the previous Darwinian discussions while restating these "mysteries and miracles of life" which are at the very core of both volumes of "Birding and Mysticism." They are "at the very heart of my rationale", he says, "for writing *B&M* in the first place."

He then takes us through the blessings, order, and fruits of this revised Seder with its prompts for participants and the congregation, meditations, the leaders' script, responses, sacred drinks, and food for eating. Then the conclusions and after blessing ending with the classic greeting "next year in Jerusalem." This latter display of adapting these ancient Jewish traditions to birding and mysticism illustrate, I believe, Lowes' desire to include rather than exclude other religions and spiritual traditions which are accommodating to his own secular religion and personal mysticism. This process is self disclosing of his basic humanistic and non-discriminatory bent in his conception of mystery and spirit. We can easily see how much of his level of abstraction is uniquely universalistic rather than quotidian, parochial, petty or ordinary.

Appendix 5 provides us with two case studies of south Florida intensive bird walks. During the Christmas bird count of 2007, George Lowe served as the equivalent of the leader/guide (complete with Haiku, synchronicities, and I Ching, with a bald eagle sighting and a caracara found among the turkey vultures to boot. George's younger brother, Bob (now deceased) went along this time as a neophyte student of birding. By the end of the walk and the CBC he admitted to being a three quarters committed birder and ready to go at it again. Such is the practical power of an IBW!

This book then goes on to discuss the nineteen basic aphorisms of Roger Shattuck, e.g., "Everything has been said. Therefore, it has to be said over again – only better." In these pages the author reminds us of just where we are living in 2009: just behind an eight year stint of G.W. Bush's Fundamentalist Christian inspired faith-based policies such as abstinence, anti-abortion, pre emptive warfare, no arms reductions, etc. We were, Lowe says, heading towards a Fascist-Christian America. At this point the author sets up for the first time some guidelines for IBW's, including rules such as not too much politics, no limits on birding talk or ecological matters, but cover the territory. The fruits of the 2008 IBW (including another bald eagle sighting in downtown Stuart, Florida), and other contacts noted, more bird observations, good and bad identifications, highlights, and conclusions about religious, spiritual, and mystical matters stemming from each CBC, including more "Haiku".

Finally, in Appendix 6 we have a list of Teddy Roosevelt's 1908 White House bird sightings, e-bird, and other Bird Nation citizen science surveys. These are all part of what Lowe calls "practical mysticism." He also discusses his personal birding epiphany of May 1940 while encouraging other converts to the cause email him re their birding epiphany.

The amazing statistic is that in the 2006-2007 CBC over 57.000 US birders participated in the task. This means that birding is one of the largest citizen science projects in the world and it also contributes to the growth of civil society in the US and Canada. And this figure does not include those casual or occasional bird watchers (perhaps three out of four of us). Such people discuss birds at work, home, on the golf course, at the beach and elsewhere.

In his Appendix 3, Lowe focuses on two UFO incidents, one in Roswell AFB, New Mexico (July 1947) and the Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia event (October, 1967). At the time Roswell was the only place in the world where huge atomic bombs were assembled (by 39 persons working over two days) and then loaded into thirty specially modified B-29's. UFO synchronicity anyone?

Lowe's views on the existence or sources of UFO's have more to do with perceived synchronicities than with empirically proven facts combined with a suspected US or Canadian government cover ups of such details (including others in Texas, at sea, in Britain and Montana, and elsewhere). He believes both of these governments deliberately misled their publics and lied about them not being a security threat. This sentiment is shared by Nick Pope (author of *Open Skies, Closed Minds*) who has documented UFO sightings in Britain ever since he served as a consultant to the UK government from 1991-1994.

In Appendix 2, Vol. 2, pp. 500-558, Lowe takes us through arrows, bullets, and Cobalt bombs to explain how he became a revisionist of cold war historian. Also included is his story of how he continued with his study, research, and writing on strategic thinking and deterrence theory for over half a century despite the threats and actions posed by his bureaucratic superiors in the US government. He constantly and behind the scenes worked to stymie the advocates of counterforce and first strike weaponry and planning who wanted, for example, to target opponent's weapons, not cities for obvious reasons. This plan revealed that their goal was to destroy the enemy's weapons in a first pre-emptive strike by Le May's SAC, to prevent a retaliatory response. So killing people qua people was a useless diversion since deaths were not important in this calculus and fallout was often not included in the expected mega-deaths estimates. Obviously the first US pre-emptive strike targeted fixed Soviet bomber airfields and ICBM silos, not the "hostage cities."

In this same section, Lowe gives us a summary/outline for his next book called *The Bulbul and The Anti-Christ's* (1952-2012, the end of the Mayan calendar). Here he wants to share his thoughts on how to forestall Armageddon-WWIII, false nuclear prophets, nuclear gladiators, spirit warriors, and Utopians whom he has battled so long. The organization for his new book is chronological from 1940-2012. Each of the seven sections/decades uses the same format, namely, part a: Historical overview, b: Key events, c: Selected fiction/film on nuclear topics and Armageddon-WWIII, and d: An evaluation of potential "anti-Christ's" (US Presidents) and their allies, advisors, minions, and advocates of implied nuclear terrorism, blackmail and coercion, which Lowe has labelled Nuclear Imperialism.

Appendix 2 discusses the growth of the realization that there will be no nuclear winners only losers after a nuclear first or retaliatory strike. So, it is foolish to fight a war that cannot be won with weapons that can never be used since to use them would prove your policies have failed. Any survivors would surely envy the dead. In the past the enemies of

mutual assured destruction (MAD) such as General Le May and his former, initial ally, Secretary McNamara (counterforce-no-cities) believed it was possible to fight and win such wars using the US strategic arsenal. Not to forget is the more recent G.W. Bush II plans for pre-emptive first strikes (The Bush doctrine of September 2002) as well as breaking out of the ABM treaty, while he stalled START negotiations, all of which Obama has pledged to reverse.

Under Bush, over eight years not one significant arms agreement was reached whereas by using Polish and Czech radar and missile bases and expanding NATO the Russians felt they were once again encircled. The strategic thinking used against 'Red' fascism for fifty years was also under Bush II simply transferred to Islamic Fascism whereas Obama's early re-evaluations/re-thinking of the war in Afghanistan were denounced by Dick Cheney because they took too much time. It ended as a thoughtful re-appraisal, even if the result was not unexpected, except for the beginnings of an exit strategy in 2011. Bush II treated nuclear weapons as ordinary weapons even in these days when napalm, cluster bombs, drones, CBW's, bunker busters, and landmines are new generation and anything but normal. This short sighted view, which emphasizes the "nuclear as conventional" is called in *B&M* the Utopian view. Whereas those who accept the abnormality and uselessness of nuclear weapons, except as a deterrent are called Traditionalists. The US spent 6-7 trillion dollars over sixty years, or about one years' total GNP, from 1945 on to protect its Great Deterrent to World War III. The US was dangerously close to WWII on a few occasions especially in Berlin [1961] and Cuba in 1962. But disaster was averted because Khrushchev blinked and JFK kept his rational resolve without any dangerous escalation. The first use, pre-emptive strike against Cuba or Russia, were what the Utopians wanted to encourage in the White House's decisions. But Kennedy and Khrushchev reached a missile compromise: Russian would remove their MRBMs from Cuba and the US would later remove its MRBM's from Turkey and Italy.

These same years saw the rise of the military-industrial complex, the CIA, and a professional military establishment, defence elites, tax exempt, right wing foundations such as the CISS, ACU, RAND, the Committee on the Present Danger, AEI, etc. There was also the rise of Christian Fundamentalists (Theo cons) with their all too familiar Armageddon-WWIII and end times predictions. They also preached a wild nationalism, American exceptionalism, the blessings of corporate selfishness and greed, big media, the birther movement, and promoted the Manchurian candidacies of Reagan, Bush II, and Palin for examples. There were also many opportunities for the Anti-Christ's to appear, such as predicted by Hal Lindsey in his *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), the best selling non-fiction book of the 1970s.

Lowe also explicitly details just what he means by the term anti-Christ's as well as listing his roster of those who fill the bill. This group includes the false nuclear prophets, select Theo-con foundations, as well as some famous politicians with more than a million civilian deaths to their names. These people include Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger, Randites et al., the nuclear gladiators (such as Nitze, Le May and Perle). General Le May had a simple war plan for WWII: launch everything, all 2200 megatons at his command during the Cuban Missile Crisis (see Neil Sheehan's *A Fiery Peace, In a Cold War*).

During the early Reagan years a new 'old strategy' was revived: this plan targeted demonizing the Soviets as the "evil empire", build a new civil defence program/retarget for counterforce (under guise of Mutual Assured Survival), build the SDI Star Wars system (Reagan's "own idea"), rearm at a cost of \$1.9 trillion and then wait for an Incident (or cause one), all the while protecting our first strike capability, adoption of a posture for a war fighting or war winning strategy to triumph/win/prevail in any nuclear exchange with the Evil Empire (Jan 1981-Nov. 1983).

In opposition to all of these Utopian views/strategy stands the new Obama Administration which Lowe predicts "will usher in a new Green Vital Center." The 2008 election was fought between a conservative Utopian and a liberal Traditionalist, but neither wanted to blow up the world. Obama may well return America to the Western fold with a healthy respect for all other religions and cultures including Arabs and Islam. Actually Obama is more than likely to follow R.

Lowe then discusses an interesting recent development in this field. This is the doctrine of "extended deterrence" whereby any group having, sharing, or allowing the use of their territory for the launch of a nuclear armed weapon will be held responsible by the US (it is actually a rule which has already been broken by Dr. A.Q. Kahn, the Pakistani "father of the Islamic A-bomb" who was under house arrest for his crimes, until recently released). The true and new US strategy ought to update "Containment and Deterrence" which is the proper "conservative" approach, despite the opposition of the radical, militarist Utopians determined to ditch/reject both traditional strategies. Any doctrine of first use, pre-emption, or BMD is radically unconventional and dangerous to the extreme. Why? Because what those policies and related weapons systems imply is the use of Thermonuclear weapons in a war-fighting or war-winning strategy.

What the US needs is a broad and in depth discussion. A new great strategic debate as is now taking place in the UK about it's minimal sea-based Trident deterrent of four nuclear armed and powered submarines. This debate should take place in the media and in local citizen groups about just what does/should the SIOP *actually* authorize and the related role of nuclear weapons in America's New Grand Strategy, beyond the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld years. Whither "Nuclear Imperialism"? This will expose many new and useful alternatives to help us move toward a more peaceful, stable, prosperous world. This Public Forum would be the place to expose the private agendas of past war makers/militarists/warmongers/chicken hawks, such as the so called bomber generals General Le May/Powers/Twining who, with others of their ilk, looked upon the Cuban Missile Crisis as a US "defeat". Recall that during that high-crisis time General Le May launched an unarmed Minuteman missile from Vandenberg AFB across the far Pacific.

General Power unilaterally raised the Def-Con level to #2 just short of #1 which is a state of war unknown to the President/Secretary McNamara (see Neil Sheenan, "The Charlie Rose Show", PBS, 24 December, 2009). Just where was the Constitutional "civilian control of the military" during the CMC?

Today, the job of President is to shrink the Bush conception of the American Empire by leading our allies using persuasion and good example, not through war, debt, and bloodshed. President G.W. Bush's short-lived New World Order was after all a coalition of the willing and it did not require/involve US "imperial overreach" or a radical G.W. Bush doctrine of "pre-emption". The US "strategic elite" must reaffirm that US nuclear

forces are only useful while we sit on them (unlike Napoleon's bayonets) and they must remain unused. If a US atomic weapon were to be fired in anger then deterrence will have failed along with our entire foreign policy – and probably our way of life.

Lowe stresses that US citizens also need to finally understand that BMD is not a defensive, but rather an offensive weapons system: an integral and essential component of the Bush II doctrine of pre-emption/pre-emptive war. It would only be useful to weaken or diminish a return blow after we had launched a first/pre-emptive strike against our enemy's Great Deterrent in perilous times.

Nuclear wars – all nuclear wars – are not “*winnable*” in the way that wars traditionally were. Because modern thermonuclear wars are in reality mutual suicide pacts, our very own Doomsday Machines. So that is why they must never be fought or planned for as if they were really just very big ‘conventional weapons’. As a matter of fact these weapons should be cut by 50% or more by Russia and the US which currently have 95% of them. This great reduction in such weapons is called “finite deterrence” versus “overkill” (1945-2010).

Furthermore, our nuclear armed submarine fleet should share much more responsibility for maintaining “The Great American Deterrent” in this respect because they are virtually undetectable and indestructible. They also have the virtue of being able to wait (before their second strike) in case of an accidental launch at stray flocks of Canada geese. Obama also needs to ditch The Bush II doctrine of pre-emption: the first use of nukes since it is destabilizing and un-necessarily threatening. Let us hope that our new President can correct some of his predecessors' mistakes, such as the America First sloganeering, pre-emption, anti-UNO policies, torture/Gitmo (Guantanamo Bay) rather, and again working with willing allies vs. the unilateralism of the Bush-Cheney years, use AEGIS as an effective ABM, instead of Bush's BMD, supplemented by the use of drone planes, assisted by satellites to destroy North Korean or Iranian missiles in their boost phase. And above all, try harder to containing the nuclear beast via new non-proliferation treaties, the number one priority for Obama's administration.

All too soon we may also have to deal with an Israeli preventive strike against its sworn enemy, Iran, which has threatened to vaporize the Jews from the face of the earth. We need, Lowe says to give Israel more accurate defensive missiles to supplement/complement the Aegis/Drones aimed at the Iranian missiles in their boost phase. Instead we need to accelerate their development (as they do not threaten Russia) as the Bush BMD did.

These new security policies could certainly create a true New World Order III of “finite deterrence”, arms control, and hopes for an enduring peace/prosperity in the decades ahead.

Some concluding remarks – with an eye on 2012

Readers of this book and review may believe that some of the positions George Lowe takes are extreme or even outlandish. My response to this unfounded claim is to ask: compared with what? With whom? With what alternative policy positions? Take, for example, the contrary views of a supposedly conservative and mainstream politician and

former governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin. Sarah is very cozy with the US rightist and nationalistic American Independent Party as well as with the ill fated reform Party when active in 2000. She invokes God's aid and sanctions for US policy in Iraq, says climate change could be cyclical rather than man made, supports creationism rather than evolution, participates as a family in a witch/demon banishment religion, resigns from her governorship without prior public warning, and chastises the liberal mass media, educated intellectuals, Ivy Leaguers, and Washington insiders as a plague on the national political scene. She is clearly a populist who panders to the disaffected and those (called the birthers!) who claim that President Obama is an illegitimate Kenyan communist? Palin also talks about using "spiritual warfare" in politics and blithely goes on her merry way managing her totally dysfunctional family while eschewing modernity for populism. She has other very strange beliefs. She says, for example, that the End Time Days, the Second Coming and Armageddon will occur during her lifetime. To compare her views on world events with those of George Lowe is to compare the ravings of a madwoman with the rational views Lowe presents on the major public policy questions of our time, namely nuclear weapons and nuclear winter, the threat of American fascism, climate change, evolution, "demonic spiritualism/witchcraft" of Palin's New Apostolic Reformation pals, and other issues discussed in these two volumes about which the most recent Republican candidate for the second most powerful position on earth has not a clue to understanding or appreciating (on these points, see Christopher Hitchens: "Palin's Base Appeal", Newsweek, November 23, 2009, pp. 30-33).

Contrast Palin's views on deterrence, deterrents and nuclear strategic politics with those of a great conservative statesman, Winston Churchill, who spoke in 1955 about the role of deterrence in world affairs:

"All deterrents will improve and gain authority within the next ten years. By that time the deterrent may well reach its acme and reap its final reward. The day may dawn when fair play, love for one's fellow men, respect for justice and freedom, will enable tormented generations to march forth serene and triumphant from the hideous epoch in which we have to dwell."

(Winston Churchill's "Farewell to the Commons", 1955, quoted on flyleaf of John Renaker, *Dr. Strangelove and the Hideous Epoch*, 2000, Regina Books, Claremont, CA).

This is an example of a great prophecy-for by 1965 (there was mutual deterrence) "The Peace of Deterrence" – brought about by invulnerable second strike deterrents, like the Polaris-hence "The Peace of Polaris". "On earth as well as in the stars".

Palin's new book is titled "Going Rogue; An American Life". Here she reveals her right wing fundamentalist idea as well as her distaste for moderate Republican Party members. Despite her widespread populist appeal there is little likelihood that she will win her party's nomination in 2012. Therefore, if someone asked me about which of these two books to read (Palin's or Lowe's), I would not hesitate to recommend the latter. Why? Because book reading is supposed to be personally edifying, expanding our minds, emotions and horizons as well as improving our character. You are unlikely to receive any of these benefits from reading Palin, but you most assuredly would benefit in these respects from reading Birding and Mysticism.