a dogma of their own. Their view was that when status quo powers such as the United Kingdom and the United States are faced with a radical power determined to upset the established order, they must pay attention to the military balance. If the liberal democracies allow their guard to fall because of fond hopes that restraint will be reciprocated and a spirit of goodwill created, they will simply find themselves at a chronic disadvantage should the crunch arise.

Patrick Glynn worked in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency from 1986 to 1989 and is now at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think-tank. In this book he provides the most developed version of the realist thesis. It is much more than a polemic or a memoir (of which there have been a number recently). It is a well-researched analysis of the history of attempts to use controls on weapons to ease political tensions.

Glynn starts with Sarajevo — the 1914 rather than the 1992 version. The start of the First World War is often cited as the classic example of how catastrophic wars can be the product of arms races (in this case the Anglo-German naval competition) and mobilization plans that allow little time for effective diplomatic management of crises. Drawing on the weight of contemporary historical research, he demonstrates that the basic problem was the German determination to overturn the status quo and that deterrence failed because expressions of liberal sentiment gave German hawks hope that Britain in particular would stay on the sidelines. He then follows this through by looking at the more familiar story of the paths full of good intentions that led to the Second World War, and then the shift of gear as the Western democracies came to terms with what they judged to be the long-term intentions of their erstwhile ally, the Soviet Union.

In the process of all this, Glynn marshals his evidence effectively, makes several novel and interesting points, and writes clearly. The difficulties with his approach lie more in the second part of the book where he applies this analysis to the Cold War. He assumes that power politics have continued to be in play throughout this period. Thus he takes the variations in the military balance to be of considerable importance, to the point where the collapse of the Soviet Union is traced to Gorbachev's stark realization that he could not cope with the challenge posed by Reagan's military build-up, including the Star Wars programme.

Here the narrative becomes too synoptic and the context too blurred. By stressing the continuities with the past, Glynn ends up missing the discontinuities.

The power politics of the first half of this century was followed by a period in which the political order congealed, at least in Europe. Without any real threats of war, the nuances of the military balance became far less important than was claimed by both the hawks and the doves.

The Soviet Union ceased to be a radical power but instead developed its own stake in the status quo and feared US radicalism. But the key instrument of this radicalism was not the arms race, but the strength of the economic system it represented and the political values it espoused.

Ironically, given the conservatives' distaste for *détente*, it was the stress on human rights inserted into the 1975 "Final Act" of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe that eventually undermined the Soviet system, as much as any other external pressure

imposed by the West. Glynn does not mention this conference, perhaps because he finds it difficult to accept that anything good could have come out of the Kissinger era, though he acknowledges the importance of the West's demands for human rights. When Gorbachev began to face the need for reform, he acted to gain Western support by offering concessions on the key areas of Western concern — arms control, regional conflicts (such as Afghanistan) and human rights. In each case it suited his own purposes. But what finished him was an area in which no demands had ever been made — the cumulative inefficiencies of state socialism, which had reached the point where they were beyond reform. □

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Promethean prescription

Timothy O'Riordan

Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism.

By Martin W. Lewis. *Duke University Press*: 1992. Pp. 288. \$24.95, £21.

FOR Martin Lewis, radical environmentalism rests on four essential postulates, namely that primitive or primal people exemplify how to live in harmony with the natural world and with each other; that thorough-going decentralization based on autarchic self-reliance is necessary for ecological and social health; that technological advance, if not scientific progress itself, is inherently harmful and dehumanizing; and that the capitalist market system is inescapably destructive and wasteful.

In its place he advances the cause of promethean environmentalism, arguing that enlightened sophisticated people can learn to come to terms with nature and their own existence; that cooperation based on trust and scientific understanding should underpin future government; that technological development can be made environmentally benign if the right signals are put in place; and that a socially guided, more strategically caring capitalism is vital for the transition to sustainability. A healthy society, he concludes, is one characterized by simultaneous advances in general prosperity, social equity and environmental stability.

The text itself is a well referenced analysis of the radical view and a less convincingly argued case for prometheanism. But Lewis falls into the trap of setting up stereotypes to represent

what are really fragmentary minority positions. Few intelligent analysts of environmental values espouse what Lewis characterizes as radical environmentalism. True, there are some biggish names such as Murray Bookchin, Rudi Bahro and David Pepper who write about deep greenism and the sociology of the commune. But the heartland of modern environmental theory is closer to Lewis's position than he is prepared to admit. Indeed, his analysis smacks of a flexible and adaptable environmentalism that most social democrats, or old-style liberals, already proclaim as their territory.

In many ways, therefore, Lewis is tilting at windmills when the real target lies uncomfortably in his own stance, itself dangerously off balance. No one seriously believes that any of the four postulates is either 'true' or a blueprint for the future. Even the most woolly of the Green Party activists see a role for benign technology, for some sort of social contract with commerce, for carrying degrees of national and international intervention in the otherwise corrupted capitalism of the modern environmental age, and for ensuring that indigenous peoples have dignity as well as a degree of political independence.

Nevertheless, Lewis's argument is a goldmine of thoughtful assessments of a wide range of social reasoning in the modern environmentalist debate, and he incorporates text that will probably be new to even the most well read of readers. Of special value are his insights into the relationship between capitalism, the state and the longer-term public purpose. Here is one arena where mod-

ern environmentalism may well be creating genuine social and political change.

After the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro earlier this year, it is evident that neither democracy as we currently know it, nor international diplomacy as presently practised, is ready for the constellation of adjustments that will be needed to form the simple but ungraspable trio of ecological health, social justice and guided enterprise on a degrading world stage. The problem for Lewis is that he devotes most of his effort to knocking down the straw people he has comfortably but misleadingly created for himself, and said too little about how to shift to a sustainable future based on the structures that plague us today.

In the area Lewis calls guided capitalism, there is a slim chance of progress. The major multinational companies have the capability and power to set an agenda for more-sustainable capitalism on a global scale. It would require a heroic shift in pricing, self-regulation, openness and management, and it would mean greater cooperation in terms of promoting broad principles and codes of practice than anything yet envisaged. But it is in this arena of international guidance and multinational support that the beginnings of a transformation could take place. Success would depend, however, on interventionist and radically equalizing parties at the head of government, and a citizenry that treated sharing seriously. There is absolutely no evidence that such ingredients are in place. The best one can hope for is a public debate around the preparation of national plans towards sustainable development that should emerge out of the Rio process. How far it will do so remains to be seen, and for now one must be very pessimistic. But as the world grinds into greater calamity and as each fresh generation takes the triple alliance of ecological health, social justice and guided enterprise more seriously, out of many ashes some form of modified phoenix, not Prometheus, could still arise. But it would be a leaner and much more devastated humanity that would have to adopt the mantle. □

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Environmental dictionaries

- *Dictionary of Environmental Science and Technology* (revised edition) by A. Porteous. Wiley, £9.95 (pbk).
- *Dictionary of Global Climate Change* compiled by W. J. Maunder under the auspices of The Stockholm Environment Institute. UCL Press, £19.95.
- *The Earth Report 3: An A-Z Guide to Environmental Issues* edited by E. Goldsmith and N. Hildyard. Mitchell Beazley, £9.99 (pbk).

Humble homily

N. A. Mitchison

Pietà. By George Klein. MIT Press: 1992. Pp. 297. \$24.95, £22.50.

GEORGE Klein will be well known to many biologists for his lifetime of research on cancer viruses as the founding director of the Department of Tumour Biology at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. His insight, pertinacity and imagination led him to create out of this specialized theme a structure of ideas that has deeply influenced contemporary immunology and developmental biology. The same qualities illuminate this, his second collection of memoirs and reflections (another is on the way).

Excluded from the executive arms of the state, the Jews of middle Europe gravitated towards intellectual pursuits. Their way of life was profoundly German in its orientation, and its destruction in the Holocaust is one of the ironies of history. Klein's upbringing in pre-war Budapest left him familiar with the main European languages, and with a love for the poetry of Rilke, Goethe, Baudelaire and (more curiously) Poe combined with respect for the ideas of Schopenhauer, Freud and the young Heidegger. He recounts the walks through the old city, the picnics on the island at its centre, the concerts and the fervid cafe discussions.

In 1944, at the age of 19, Klein escaped from the death train taking him from the city; many of his family perished. This book does not belong to the literature of the Holocaust, but its view of human nature is deeply influenced by that experience. It lets him sympathize with the poet Attila József, who dissociated himself from the bourgeois life of inter-war Hungary and who was condemned by others as schizophrenic. It underlines for him the desperate difficulty in the AIDS epidemic of changing human behaviour, especially in anything so basic as sexual practice. It prevents any surprise that the Central Intelligence Agency in the McCarthy era carried out experiments with LSD on volunteers.

Klein's main theme concerns the different ways in which individuals confront their own suffering and alienation. In some this generates creativity, a connection that is explored in some depth here, particularly in the instances of József and Nietzsche. The argument is of course not unfamiliar, and no doubt it needs the leisurely pace and breadth of an Edmund Wilson to do it proper justice; but the author's personal experience gives this account a special poignancy. The final chapter, from which this collection takes its title (loosely translated as

'compassion'), rounds up the argument and places it in the context of German philosophical writing.

Appreciating creativity in literature requires a knowledge of the language, a forlorn hope for most of us when that is Hungarian. Klein does his best, for instance in discussing József's provocative choice of a verb translatable as 'applaud' to describe what jasmine petals do. He succeeds within the limited space that he permits himself, and I hope will expand this line of thought in his next collection.

Klein tells a good anecdote. We learn in detail about an afternoon's conversation between François Jacob, Bruno Müller-Hill, himself and the now Canadian neuropharmacologist Rudolf Vrba. Vrba had participated in the first escape from Auschwitz, and had jointly written a report on conditions there that did much to save lives among the Jews of Budapest. These men's argument about the duty of the scientist, and the question of whether science itself has an internal ethic, will interest any reader of *Nature*. Klein is not at all egocentric, and in fact rather amusing about himself: totally confounding the officialdom of the airline Swissair, ferreting out the personalities that interest him, and defeating the efforts of his fellow citizens in Stockholm to engage him in chit-chat.

This collection also includes a little science. The brief histories of T-cell biology and of the AIDS epidemic will interest nonspecialists, but Klein's very lack of egocentricity leaves one unsatisfied. I would have liked more about how he felt at the time and what impression the rest of the community made on him.

One of the things that Klein is best known for is the tape recorder that invariably accompanies him on his aeroplane flights. Well, anyone who wishes to emulate him in that respect should leave this volume behind: once started, it is impossible to put down. More generally, no science library that aspires to more than the narrowest interpretation of its function can afford not to purchase this volume to place alongside its Jacob, its Müller-Hill and its Medawars. And a final note to the professionals: the European Community plans next year to make awards in the field of medical ethics, in the hope no doubt of catching up with Golub's Pacific Center for Ethics and Applied Biology. This volume, and its predecessor *The Atheist and the Holy City* (MIT Press, 1990), in my opinion make ideal background reading for those thinking of submitting applications (the closing date for which is January 1993). □

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