

metaphor and as symbol, as ways the ancients found to explain and talk about their own systems of power and values. They are not central as *truth*. Klingaman's intellectual world is a world in which metaphor is constantly literalised, in which he and his like collude in treating symbol as reality, in strategically *misunderstanding* any rhetorical complexity and trope. The parodic account of the first century AD that is offered here is all too frighteningly close to an American foreign relations view of the 20th century.

It would certainly be possible, even useful, to apply an experience of our own contemporary world politics to the world of 2,000 years ago. For all the obvious, undeniable differences, the first century AD was (as Klingaman cannot help but reveal) a period in which two major powers (Rome and China) were attempting to establish and define a *world order*.

It was also a period in which the claims of at least one growing religious order were to come into conflict with the imperialising ambitions of rival political powers. But this is the wood that Klingaman simply does not see through his trees of biography and high-level gossip.

Spaced out

HUNTING MARCO POLO: THE PURSUIT AND CAPTURE OF HOWARD MARKS

Paul Eddy and Sara Walden

Bantam, £14.99

Duncan Campbell

Both Howard Marks, the drug-dealing Marco Polo of the title, and Craig Lovato, the American Drugs Enforcement Administration agent who successfully pursued him, owned dogs called Rocky. "Howard's Rocky was a golden labrador, delightful, reckless and incorrigible. Craig's Rocky was a pit bull terrier, indomitable, persistent and utterly loyal. When Howard's Rocky became too difficult to manage, Howard gave him to someone else to care for. When Craig's Rocky became too senile to manage, Craig took him out into the garden and shot him in the head." Craig was, as the comedian Arnold Brown might say, that kind of guy.

This is the story of how that rather different kind of guy, Howard Marks, a charming, intelligent, Welsh-born Oxford graduate, was hunted, phone-tapped, arrested and finally jailed in Miami for 25 years for his multimillion-pound cannabis smuggling operations. What is it about Marks that attracts such attention? This is, after all, the second book about him (the first, *High Time*, by David Leigh, led

indirectly to Lovato's determination to catch him). Why is he the only drug smuggler most people have ever heard of?

Charm is the word that springs to the lips of both his admirers and detractors. As his one-time lover, journalist Lynn Barber, once put it: "Waitresses in the Kardomah and Fellows of All Souls would greet him with equal affection." His brother-in-law and co-conspirator, Patrick Lane, explained: "He makes most people feel sharp and witty and those with a problem feel less alone. Each of his many intensely personal relationships are mini-conspiracies."

Paul Eddy and Sara Walden wrote the excellent *The Cocaine Wars* and are former members of the *Sunday Times* Insight team. The book reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of that style of journalism: strong on narrative, detail and the telling anecdote; short on analysis and depth. Hence, in the midst of vivid tales of Lovato's derring-do with gun-toting American dealers, we are instructed: "The experience was one that Lovato can never forget because he'll always bear the scars. They act as a permanent reminder that marijuana trafficking is not, as some would argue, a benign occupation." Four pages later, we are told: "It didn't matter to Lovato that Howard Marks was personally not a violent man. Somewhere down the cannabis pipeline, *every* cannabis pipeline, there were men ready to use violence."

This is police-speak. Some highly successful cannabis pipelines have operated entirely without violence for the very simple commercial reason that violence attracts attention, and attention attracts chaps like Mr Lovato.

For all its admirably researched readability, this is in many ways a sad book: sad that someone as gifted as Marks should be so daft as to carry on dealing after one mighty escape at the Old Bailey, where he bare-facedly convinced the jury he was acting for the intelligence services; sad to learn of the part played by seedy playboy fink Lord Moynihán; sad to read the letter from Mark's daughter, Amber (of course), to Judge Paine in Miami: "Please, sir, don't give him long. I will wait for him forever, but please don't make me."

But perhaps it is saddest of all to discover that "if Craig Lovato made the rules, all of them (drugs) would be legally available to adults (though selling them to children would be a capital offence). He said he believed it was not the government's job to dictate which drugs people could, and could not, ingest into their bodies."

So that little pit bull terrier, Lovato, has spent years of his life and millions in government money to lock a man away from his family (Judy Marks is forbidden by the terms of her own deal with the law from visiting the US) for something he does not believe should be a crime.

Now that really is spaced out.

The wound and the bow

WARRENPOINT

Denis Donoghue

Jonathan Cape, £12.99

Owen Dudley Edwards

"When", demands Professor Denis Donoghue, "have I ever been heroic?"

He may not know it, but the answer is: when he is lecturing. Six feet seven inches of him, broad, magisterial, a great face now solemn, now with a schoolboyish grin, the great hands turning pages with a surgeon's delicacy, the scientifically paraded procession of hard-hitting words. Iconoclastic Irish students worshipped his expositions and dissections. His lectures on Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* rivalled Beardley's illustrations in their insights on the finest details, while holding the grand totality. His celebrations of the ironies of Henry Adams comprehended with an irony equal to Adams himself.

He has the surgeon's nerve. With no mention of Adams, he is taking him on in this account of his own education, and he is big enough in all senses to do it. With much invaluable mention of Eliot, could he avoid a silent thought of this as his own quartet? Burnt Norton. East Coker. Warrenpoint. The book is as seminally artistic as that, and as self-analytic.

But however heroic his nerve, Donoghue permits himself only one hero—his father, Sergeant Denis Donoghue of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, admitted at that rank by virtue of his former status in the preceding Royal Irish Constabulary, retired in 1946 with a "very good" citation after 24 years without promotion. The Sergeant was a Roman Catholic, and hence by definition a security risk.

Donoghue pharmacologises Freud's statement that "a hero is someone who has had the courage to rebel against his father and has in the end victoriously overcome him" as "a claim as vulgar as it is insidious". Damn right, too.

It is an extraordinarily economical work, and the sergeant dictates that. He was an uncommunicative man, and his son, while finding order and certainties in him, knows there is much he himself can never know. One of the finest ways Donoghue helps himself and us to discover the sergeant is in showing how that unliterary man dominated his son's discovery of writing. "I am sure the authority of a written sentence and the authority of my father were one and the same." By the end of the book, if there is a reader who has not welcomed the sergeant as another friend,