

favor of specialized research. Junior faculty members don't become full professors by giving inspiring lectures or preparing for seminars in the great books. As all know well, their time is more wisely spent researching monographs and scholarly articles that will make the case that they are leaders in their fields. Once teachers receive tenure, competitive pressures evaporate; they don't have to teach or publish. Although students generally like great books programs, tenured faculty avoid them like the plague. They lack prestige, and require a great deal of preparation that doesn't double as research for a teacher's next monograph.

The increase in the number of college departments is equally pernicious. At most schools, the number of accredited fields of knowledge has doubled or tripled over the past 50 years. Some of these disciplines have more merit than others. But under the present arrangement, every newly ratified academic field is born with a lobbyist attached at the hip. The department protects the subject's full equality. If a university allows one of its teachers to offer a spurious course like

"Feminist Frameworks"—another Amy Carter near-miss—it can be abolished with great effort. But if the school recognizes it as a major or department—Women's Studies—with an office and staff, forget ever getting rid of it. Since the rising power of departments has coincided with a decline in the power of university presidents, no one is in a position to refuse citizenship to the new subjects banging on the door. The entire framework bears remarkable similarities to party politics, in which pressure groups representing special interests undermine the public good. In academia the public interest being overridden is that of the students.

Statesmanship at today's university means arbitrating between essential and inessential. We need deans and presidents with the courage (and power) to abolish the journalism majors, decertify the semiotics departments, and find some better use for the film studies centers. None of this will be easy. But there is no reason why we shouldn't retrace our steps. Bloom is right that the great books are still the best way to examine our lives. Why not just get back to them? ■

MANILA FUDGE

How the U.S. tries to have it both ways in the Philippines

by James Fallows

These two books* are about two different countries. William Chapman is mainly concerned with economic and social problems in the Philippines; Raymond Bonner with policy-making in the United States. Both books are valuable and well worth reading—and, I should make clear, both authors are friends of mine. Chapman's book probably tells us more about the future problems we're likely to face in the Philippines. The contrast between his approach and Bonner's helps answer the question around which Bonner builds his book: Why does America so often end up embracing the Somozas, Duvaliers, and Marcoses of the world, the thugs and dictators who mistreat their people while they're in power and embarrass us for our complicity when they are finally overthrown?

James Fallows is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly, and has reported for the Atlantic from Asia since early last year.

**Waltzing With a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of Foreign Policy.* Raymond Bonner. *Times Books*, \$19.95. *Inside the Philippine Revolution.* William Chapman. *Norton*, \$18.95.

To call Bonner's book a polemic is not to insult it. Bonner has a case to make—that Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos were corrupt and wicked, and that until nearly the last minute the U.S. tolerated and even encouraged them, thereby putting ourselves on the wrong side of history and making Filipinos who hated Marcos hate us. He lays out the evidence as relentlessly as a prosecutor working to bring in a guilty verdict.

Obviously he has a lot of raw material to work with. His case is summed up by the pictures in his book; they show Nixon, Kissinger, Reagan, Mondale, Bush, Weinberger, and so forth, most of them decked out and ridiculous-looking in "barong tagalog," the Philippine national shirt, and all of them fawning over Imelda or toasting Ferdinand. (The picture section is valuable in another way. Philippine accounts of the Marcoses's rise invariably dwell on Imelda's "beauty" as a crucial ingredient. I've studied pictures of even the sleek young Imelda and have never understood what all the excitement was about. But one picture in this collection, taken in 1965 when Marcos was campaigning for his first term

THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

Journalism Award

as president, shows Imelda smiling lewdly at on-lookers like a Manila bar-girl. The woman in this picture could have gotten Lyndon Johnson's attention—as Bonner says she did. Nothing Hart-like came of the encounter between them, but through the sixties and seventies Imelda was serenely confident that she could wrap Yankee statesmen around her finger.)

The episodes Bonner describes flesh out the relationship shown in the photos. William Byroade, the U.S. ambassador when Marcos declared martial law in 1972, heard about the plans in advance, Bonner says, and raised no objection at all. Walter Mondale went ahead with a visit to the Philippines, despite clear warnings that Filipinos would see it as an endorsement of Marcos when martial law was still in force, when the human-rights record was getting worse, and when corruption under the “conjugal dictatorship” was moving into high gear. George Bush told Marcos that Americans loved and admired him for his “adherence to democratic principles and to the democratic process.” And of course Ronald Reagan made his idiotic “there’s been cheating on both sides” remark while Marcos was trying to steal the election from Corizon Aquino in 1986.

Bonner alternates between document-based analysis—he has extracted a prodigious number of internal memos through the Freedom of Information Act—and Halberstamesque short biographies to amplify and dramatize his points. From each successive American administration, he selects key figures to depict. Bonner gives us Richard Holbrooke and Patricia Derian fighting for the Carter administration’s soul. He gives us Michael Armacost switching from chumminess with Marcos, when Armacost was the U.S. ambassador in Manila in the early Reagan years, to a gradual effort to remove him when he came back to the number-three position in the State Department.

As a journalistic device, the use of profiles is a success—this long, heavily detailed book is vivid and fast-moving—but the biographies themselves sometimes seem polemicized. From what Bonner says about each player’s appearance, personal bearing, and motivations, it’s often easy to guess whether he approves or disapproves of the official’s policy.

The most heartfelt writing in the book concerns the Carter administration. Derian, the assistant secretary of state for human rights, keeps pushing the administration to scold or punish Marcos as he settles deeper into despotism. Holbrooke, the assistant secretary for East Asian