

and community concerns it was originally intended to serve.” He suggests revising estate tax laws and using other tax incentives to encourage “socially cohesive forms of [corporate] ownership—family, local, and employee,” instead of ownership by thousands of scattered and unrelated stockholders. The largest corporations, Rowe argues, should be chartered by the federal government—or, at the very least, there ought to be a federal minimum standard for state charters. “That standard should

include individual responsibility for corporate officials, of the kind that existed before Delaware’s lax and permissive regime. Charters should specify particular kinds of business, the way they used to. And charters should expire after a given period of years, for review under fair standards that ensure renewal except for egregious bad behavior,” he says. That, Rowe believes, should ensure that corporations exhibit “a minimum level of decent conduct—without a multitude of new regulations.”

SOCIETY

First Feminists

“American Women’s First Collective Political Action: Boston 1649–1650” by Mary Beth Norton, in *Arts & Sciences Newsletter* (Spring 1996), Cornell University, Binenkorb Center, Goldwin Smith Hall, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853–3201.

Women banding together to state their views about an issue related to reproduction is a familiar sight in modern America. And it has a longer history than many people imagine. Cornell University historian Norton has discovered evidence of what she believes is the first such political action by American women. It occurred nearly 350 years ago.

In 1649 and 1650, six petitions, four from women in Boston and two from women in Dorchester, Massachusetts, were submitted to colonial authorities in behalf of a midwife named Alice Tilly, who was accused of the “miscarrying of many wimen and children under hir hand.” No account has survived of the precise charges against her, but the male authorities apparently thought she had taken some unwarranted action in the course of her medical practice.

Three of the petitions, asking that Mistress Tilly be allowed to leave jail to attend her patients, were submitted before her trial. The fourth petition, written after she had been

convicted, renewed the request. “Led by the wife of the chief pastor of the Boston church,” Norton says, “26 female Bostonians begged the judges to ‘heare the cryes of mothers, and of children yet unborn.’ This time the court acquiesced, allowing Mistress Tilly to leave prison whenever she was needed at childbeds.” Then, in the spring of 1650, after her husband had threatened to move the family elsewhere unless, in his words, “‘her innocencie may be cleared,’” the women of Boston and Dorchester again submitted petitions, urging that she be entirely freed from custody.

“The astonishing aspect of the petitions,” Norton says, “was the total number of signatures (294), ranging from a low of eight and 21 on the first petitions to a high of 130 on the last.” Most of those who signed were women in their prime childbearing years or their mothers or mothers-in-law. In the end, the women apparently prevailed; the authorities seem to have released Mistress Tilly.

Psychoanalysis off the Couch

“Freud and the Culture Wars” by Yale Kramer, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1996), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

The two decades after World War II were the golden age of psychoanalysis in America. Sigmund Freud was a cultural hero and every analyst had a full case load—“and those with middle-European accents had two-year wait-

ing lists” regardless of professional competence, recalls Kramer, a practicing psychoanalyst and a clinical professor at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Then, in the mid-1960s, something happened. “Analysts’

waiting lists became shorter, then disappeared. Gaps appeared in appointment books, and fees stopped climbing.”

What had happened, Kramer argues, was that psychoanalysis had finally advanced beyond Freud’s early “dammed-up libido” theory—but the public had not. That simple theory traced certain neuroses to the frustra-

tion of sexual impulses. Introduced to America by Freud himself during a visit in 1909, this theory had a profound impact, first in intellectual circles and high society and later, after World War II, among the middle class. From there it was an easy leap to the notion that the repression of “natural” impulses, sexual or otherwise, was the root of all human problems. To everybody from Greenwich Village bohemians in the 1920s to restless college students in the 1950s, Freudian psychoanalysis represented all that was progressive and forward looking.

Meanwhile, psychoanalysis itself moved on. Freud jettisoned the “dammed-up libido” theory by 1926, and other thinkers, including his daughter Anna Freud, helped move the discipline in new directions. In modern psychoanalysis, Kramer explains, adaptation is the key to mental health. The healthy individual is the person who “has reached an equilibrium between the gratification of his instinctual needs, his moral needs, and the demands of reality. In modern psychoanalysis, old-fashioned attributes such as patience, fortitude, and common sense took on new value and new names, e.g., ‘impulse control,’ ‘frustration tolerance,’ and ‘reality testing.’” These were not the sorts of things that the popular American interpreters and lay supporters of psychoanalysis—including sociologists, literary critics, educators, and journalists—and even some analysts, wanted to hear, Kramer says. They remained “stubbornly attached to their oversimplified, anti-bourgeois sexual beliefs”—beliefs that fueled the youth culture of the 1960s.

Psychoanalysis fell out of favor not only with an American public bent on self-indulgence but with the left-wing intellectuals who had once championed it. It isn’t only the “adult” sound of modern psychoanalysis that disturbs the Left. Feminists object to its insistence that there are important basic differences between men and women. Gays dislike the “abnormal” label Freud

Being Poor in America

	Nonpoor Families	Poor Families
Total before-tax family income	\$55,394	\$8,501
% of income from:		
Wages/salaries	78.9	50.0
Self-employment	6.2	1.7
Welfare	0.2	20.3
Food stamps	\$65	\$1,392
Total family expenditures	\$36,926	\$11,596
% of expenditures for:		
Food	15.6	29.8
Shelter	18.6	22.3
Utilities	6.9	14.0
Transportation	20.1	10.3
Health care	5.4	2.8
Entertainment	5.4	2.8
Items owned or in home or building (%)		
Washing machine	92.7	71.7
Refrigerator	99.5	97.9
Color television	98.5	92.5
Air conditioning	71.9	49.6
Telephone	97.2	76.7
Car or truck	97.2	76.8
Owned home (%)	77.6	40.8
More than one person per room (%)	4.2	19.2

What does it mean to be poor in America? Government analysts drew upon nine national surveys conducted between 1988 and '93 in an effort to supply an accurate, comprehensive statistical answer. Some of their findings, reported in *Monthly Labor Review* (May 1996), are shown above. A mixed portrait of comfort and hardship emerges. (The fact that reported expenditures exceed income plus food stamps may be due to under-reporting of income, as well as to measurement problems in the surveys.) Single-parent poor families, not shown in the chart, with average incomes of \$6,794 (40 percent of it from welfare or other public assistance), are significantly worse off than the typical poor family.

stuck on homosexuality. And the psychoanalytic emphasis on individual responsibility goes against the grain of the leftist view that environment is almost everything.

Psychoanalysis never should have gotten

mixed up in politics, Kramer concludes. "With a little luck, it can do considerable good for an individual patient. Outside, in the world of values, it can only be debased, misunderstood, and misused as ideology."

Rome Lives!

"The Vanishing Paradigm of the Fall of Rome" by Glen W. Bowersock, in *The Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (May 1996), Norton's Woods, 136 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

For centuries, the Fall of Rome has been a handy, even irresistible, metaphor for thinkers who fret about the state of civilization. Have a social problem on your mind? Trot out a comparison to the last days of the empire. Today, however, observes Bowersock, a professor of historical studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, historians have a surprisingly different view of that oft-invoked example. Rome, they contend, never really fell.

The image of the empire's "decline and fall" was strongly impressed upon the scholarly and popular minds by Edward Gibbon's magisterial *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, whose first volume appeared in 1776. The traditional view then was that the Fall of Rome occurred in 476 A.D., when the invading Ostrogoths, a Germanic people, brought the rule of Romulus Augustulus, the last Western emperor, to an end. But that view was no more than a literary conceit, Bowersock says.

There was no "clear and decisive end" to

the Roman Empire, he asserts, and Gibbon knew that. Rome "changed and multiplied itself. Its centers of power and administration moved." After the fifth century, Italians regarded their sovereign as resident in the East, in Constantinople. It was there, under emperors such as Leo III and Basil II, that Hellenized Roman culture survived for a thousand years. That is why Gibbon ended his history of the Roman Empire in 1453, with the capture of Constantinople ("the new Rome") by the Turks.

Modern historians have gone much further. In his influential *World of Late Antiquity* (1971) and later works, Bowersock says, Peter Brown portrays the age after the supposed Fall of Rome "as the beginning of something grand and distinctive rather than as the end of the classical world everyone knew and admired." Cultures that seemed to Gibbon barbaric and alien in spirit to everything Rome represented now look to his successors like the legates of eternal Rome.

PRESS & MEDIA

Nattering Nabobs?

"Bad News, Bad Governance" by Thomas E. Patterson, in *The Annals* (July 1996), The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 3937 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

Why are Americans disgusted with their government? One reason is that the national news media are relentlessly, corrosively negative in their coverage of political leaders, argues Patterson, a professor of press and politics at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

In 1992, according to his content analysis, 60 percent of the news coverage given presidential candidates Bill Clinton, Ross Perot, and incumbent George Bush was negative in tone. In 1960, by contrast, 75 percent of the

news coverage of John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon was positive. It's not that Kennedy and Nixon were political paragons, Patterson says, because "the tone of election coverage became steadily more negative [after 1960] regardless of who was running." Politicians left and right alike were objects of the media's scorn.

In both TV and newspapers, he notes, "interpretive" reporting has come to replace "just the facts" journalism. As the narrator, the reporter becomes more important in the