

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