Alarms about the decline of the work ethic are old hat, notes Lipset, a Stanford political scientist. In 1495, the English Parliament passed a law regulating working hours, worrying that workers were "late coming unto their work, early departing therefrom." Today's complaints sound much the same, but the fact is that the average work week has remained about 39 hours per week since 1945. Add school and commuting time, however, and it has jumped from 40.6 hours in 1973 to 46.8 hours.

This is not the way prophets of the affluent society expected things to turn out. Americans were supposed to work less and play more. One reason they have not, according to Lipset: "Almost all surveys indicate that the vast majority of Americans—over 80 percent—are satisfied with their jobs." Indeed, 85 percent say they would continue to work even if they had enough money to retire. And the proportion of people who say they work primarily for the paycheck is declining; one's job is now an outlet for self-expression.

That brings us to the fabled workaholic. According to Robinson, a University of Maryland sociologist, the proportion of Americans who say they "always feel rushed" rose from 25 percent in 1965 to 32 percent in 1985. Diaries kept by his 5,000 subjects show that those who complain about feeling harassed do in fact spend more hours at work than the average person does. But they also spend more time caring for their children and bathing and grooming themselves. They devote more time to watching and participating in sports, and they spend more time on organizational activities (except churchgoing). They spend much *less* time in front of the television, and somewhat less time sleeping, eating, or visiting friends.

Demographics may explain part of the modest increase in the number of people who feel harried. Those most likely to feel that way are aged 35 to 54, a group whose numbers are increasing and whose members are especially busy. Another explanation Robinson offers is that Americans now have a much bigger menu of leisure activities available to them, and thus much less time just to sit around and do nothing.

Although Robinson does not say so, feeling busy is also a sign of the times. The group whose complaints about being pressed for time rose most sharply—from five percent in 1965 to 21 percent in 1985—was "nonemployed" men.

Petticoat Jeff

"Intemperate Men, Spiteful Women, and Jefferson Davis: Northern Views of the Defeated South" by Nina Silber, in *American Quarterly* (Dec. 1989), 701 W. 40th St., Balt., Md. 21211.

One month after General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, the *New York Times* reported that Jefferson Davis, the former president of the Confederacy, had donned one of his wife's dresses and fled into the woods of southern Georgia to elude federal troops. After he was captured (soldiers spotted his boots beneath his skirt, according to the *Times*), he was said to have complained indignantly about his pursuers' efforts to "hunt down women and children."

That legend—along with the willingness of northerners to believe it—exemplified northern attitudes towards southern men after the Civil War, writes Silber, a historian at the University of Delaware. Northerners depicted southern men as an emasculated, cowardly lot in order to assert the superiority of their own way of life and to establish "ideas of northern control over a weakened and submissive South."

The assault on southern manliness actually had roots in the antebellum era. The industrialization of the North, Silber argues, fostered new attitudes toward masculinity. The measure of a man in Yankeedom was his ability to get ahead, and that called for an emphasis on restraint and self-control. Southern men, and southern aristocrats in particular, seemed, as one northerner wrote, full of "pride, indolence, luxury, and licentiousness." The old masculine virtue of honor now seemed

mere "sensitive vanity," and chivalry nothing more than "cowardly swagger."

The South's defeat on the battlefield only reinforced northerners' contempt. "If there be any manhood among the ex-slaveholders," the *New York Tribune* editorialized, "we shall soon find it out. We mean the manhood which cheerfully attacks the difficulties of peace and wins victories not less renowned than those of war." But nothing did more to fuel northern insults than the legend of Davis's ignominious arrest. Mocking songs abounded, including "Jeff in Petticoats," which had the Confederate president saying, "To dodge the bullets, I will wear my tin-clad crinoline." P. T. Barnum welcomed visitors to his New York museum with a tableaux showing a hoopskirted Davis surrounded by Union soldiers. (In fact, Davis most likely was wearing his wife's cloak or shawl.)

Later, Silber observes, the "gender imagery" would change as the "remarriage" of North and South proceeded. But for a brief period northerners chuckled over what *Harper's Weekly* called a "new interpretation of the initials C.S.A.—Crinolinum Skirtum Absquatulatum."

Jeff in Petticoats *was a popular song in 1865. The* New York Herald *claimed that Mrs. Davis was "more of a man than her husband."*

Plug In, Turn On, Tune Out

Yuppies, asserts Laura Bergheim in *Dissent* (Winter 1990), are giving way to "pluggies"—people who huddle beside electronic hearths and shut out "the troubled world on the other side of the 'Welcome' mat."

More insidiously than any other decade in our history, the 1980s have delivered unto us (and into our homes) the promises of past futurists: sit back, relax, and let your fingers do the walking across the universe of simulated experience. Quietly, almost magically, the middle-class "home sweet home" has been transformed into an environment that now doubles as office, schoolhouse, shopping mall, health club, printshop, restaurant, even electronic bordello. Television has been born again through television preachers, teachers, endless cable channels, and do-it-yourself satellite dishes. The lowly telephone has been redefined as the conduit for dial-a-porn, Domino's Pizza, call-waiting, and conference calls. Fax machines, PCs, VCRs, and CD players cast their spells on the most reluctant of technological inductees . . . .

Pluggies—those who are plugged in but tuned out—are fast developing as the heirs to the yuppie. This new asocial animal is a creature of comfort and convenience, overstimulated by artificial intelligence and instant gratification, but underexposed to genuine experience and the virtues of patience . . . .

Once upon a time most Americans lived in relatively rural isolation. Self-sufficiency was a necessity, not a choice as it is today. Contact beyond the family and a few neighbors was minimal because of distance and smaller population centers . . . . Now we are on the verge of coming full circle: with even the simplest of errands and tasks being performed by home computers, the fabric of daily social contact will grow thin again.