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**RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**


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these nine Cornell specialists, state and federal policy-makers will soon have to make hard decisions about how fresh water is to be allocated in the United States.

While an individual drinks only 1.8 to 2.7 quarts of water per day, industry and agriculture boost daily U.S. water use to 1,900 gallons per capita. About 62 percent of fresh water used each day comes from reservoirs and other surface sources, 20 percent is pumped from underground, and the rest is desalinated. About 77 percent of the water withdrawn is eventually recycled; the other 79 billion gallons per day are "consumed." Of that amount, only some 63 billion gallons are replenished by rainfall, the authors estimate, leaving a 16 billion gallon per day "deficit."

Industry's demand for water is high—manufacturing a single glass bottle requires up to 660 gallons—but it returns most of what it uses. Farm irrigation accounts for 83 percent of the water consumed, most of it lost through seepage or evaporation. Seventeen western states account for 93 percent of the irrigation water used. Because surface water is scarce in these states, they rely heavily on underground water, which is naturally replenished at a rate of less than one percent annually. The continental United States now pumps 25 percent more water from underground than can be replaced.

Water shortages in the west could grow far more acute by the end of the century. Farm production is expected to grow by 30 percent, agriculture's water consumption by 17 percent. And if large-scale synthetic fuel production, a heavy water user, begins soon, total U.S. consumption could increase by up to 64 percent. Moreover, western farmers (and farm products) would suffer in the battle for scarce water: \$1 of water yields \$5 of corn, but \$250 of synthetic fuel.

Fresh water can no longer be taken for granted, the authors warn. A national water policy is needed before the taps in the west run dry.

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**ARTS & LETTERS**


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### *Portraying the Handicapped*

"Pity and Fear: Images of the Disabled in Literature and the Popular Arts" by Leslie A. Fiedler, in *Salmagundi* (Summer 1982), Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866.

A spate of popular plays and movies, such as Broadway's *The Elephant Man* and Hollywood's *Coming Home*, has put the handicapped in the spotlight. The effect, says Fiedler, a literary critic at the State University of New York at Buffalo, has not been entirely beneficial.

Up to the time of Shakespeare, the disabled were the butt of jokes. In Greek mythology, the god Haiphaistos, lame and a cuckold, was an object of ridicule on Mount Olympus. In *Richard III*, however, Shake-

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speare made the king's hunchback frightening, not funny, an outward sign of inner evil.

It was not until the 19th century that the handicapped regularly appeared in literature as major characters. At one extreme were the "twisted avatars of villainy": Quilp, the horrible dwarf who stalks Little Nell through Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick*, Long John Silver in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. At the other extreme were such idealized objects of pity as Tiny Tim in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.

Such characters evoke in audiences both fear and its companion, pity—and force them to confront their complex feelings about "subhuman" beings. The evil cripples of the 19th century have their counterparts in today's horror movies, notably in Goldfinger and other sinister folk in the James Bond movies who use their artificial limbs as instruments of mutilation and murder. But the modern-day Tiny Tims, Fiedler says, are the "super-beautiful super-jocks and jockesses" seen in such television dramas as *The Other Side of the Mountain* and *Ice Castles*. Such superhuman characters "turn upside down" the "sense of immitigable difference which lies at the root of our troubled response to the disabled," evading the issue altogether.

In an ideal world, the arts would represent the disabled not as "some absolute, unendurable other," but simply as one pole in the spectrum of human variety. Meanwhile, Fiedler concludes, "we will have to exorcise our ambivalences toward the afflicted . . . by turning not to *ersatz* paeans to the heroism of the crippled, but to [the] disturbing mythic literature" of the past, which forces us to recognize our range of negative emotions.

### *The Fop's Role in Society*

"A Few Kind Words for the Fop" by Susan Staves, in *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* (Summer 1982), Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Tex. 77251.

To today's theater-goers, the fops (or dandies) who appear in 17th- and 18th-century English comedies seem absurd. Yet Staves, a Brandeis literary historian, argues that fops were "early champions of new values," whose roles reflected changing attitudes about masculinity.

The typical fop—Sir Fopling Flutter in George Etherege's *Man of Mode* (1676), Sir Novelty Fashion in Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696)—was obsessed by fashion in clothes and manners. He refused to "kill, brawl, curse, consort with lewd women, or get stinking drunk," says Staves. Stage fops were effeminate and likely to faint at the prospect of violence, but they were not homosexuals.

The dandy was not just a theatrical character. Real-life fops paraded daily on the streets of London. Actors and playwrights took pains to keep their characters in tune with the latest fashions. Critics chided the stage dandies for failing to capture such details of the fop's life as the