

The Lament of Little Orphan Annie

William Morrison

FOR OVER forty years the comic strip of "Little Orphan Annie" with her dog "Sandy" has graced the comic page of newspapers from coast to coast. Almost every week Annie, aided only by her perpetual virtue and her total ignorance of worldly ways, casually blunders into a seething pit of human misery, decadence, and pathos. Carefully, she analyzes all involved with the entanglement, and then comes up with a solution that delights everyone except the "bad guys," who, revolted by her radiant goodness, flee the scene and are later eliminated by her guardian, "Daddy Warbucks."

This is a typical example of stereotyping in a comic strip, because Annie must be good, sweet, and pure—she has no choice. Over the years the American public has drawn a mental picture of Annie, and anything that would destroy their image of her would also cause the circulation of the strip to decrease. That is why Annie is a forty-year-old teenager, because the cartoonist has been forbidden by the public to let her grow up and have real eyes instead of a pair of empty sockets. That is why Annie cannot walk down a street with a cigarette in one hand and a beer in the other, kicking warm, cuddly, sad-eyed puppies out of her way. She is so stereotyped that she cannot move out of her image without the permission of the public, and they like her the way she is.

"Little Orphan Annie," then, must continue in her role as a pure, sweet, homeless urchin whose only mission in life is to perpetuate the ideas of goodness, temperance, pluck, and mother.

Civil Disobedience, or Obeisance . . . ?

Joy Steinmetz

WHEN THOREAU stated that, "There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men," he displayed an intellectual kinship with Socrates who said, ". . . they (the many) can do neither good nor evil. . . ." When Socrates said that a man "ought to do what he thinks right," he established the principle of individual freedom of conscience which Thoreau defended so magnificently 2,200 years later. In their disdain for the expedient—whether expediency meant to save one's life or pay one's tax—when principle was the issue, both men's opinions coincided. Both were true philosophers in their concern for Truth and Justice, Right and Wrong. But Justice and Truth and Wrong and Right did not always wear the same faces for each of them.

It is interesting to observe how two wise men—geniuses if you will, albeit from widely different ages—can start with basic prem-