

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-

ises so much alike and, reasoning logically, draw conclusions so vastly different. "Philosophy is nothing but discretion," as John Selden said.

In the mind of Socrates the Laws, the State, were supreme; a man was "child and slave" of the State, and this was an agreeable condition to be preserved and cherished. He listed laws along with virtue and justice and institutions as "being the best things among men." He proclaimed love of country as holier and nobler than love of parents. "Doing wrong is always evil," he said, and clearly he implied that defying the law is the highest wrong. A man must obey the law, obey it with his life if necessary, even if it appears to him unjust, Socrates thought.

Thoreau, on the other hand, regarded the law and the government as "only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will . . . we should be men first and subjects afterward." The poet of Walden Pond also employed the analogy of patriotism and parental honor. True love for either must be a "matter of conscience and religion, and not desire of rule or benefit." Thus, he equated neither love of parents nor country with love of the *law*. On the contrary, defying the law, if justice and conscience dictate, might be the highest good. While Socrates apparently conceived of justice first in terms of the body politic, and of law as the proper instrument of justice, Thoreau understood justice as a matter for individual conscience when he expressed the thought that, "Law never made men a whit more just."

Civil disobedience, or obeisance—which shall we choose? "Every intellectual product must be judged from the point of view of the age and the people in which it was produced," said Walter Pater. He might have added that its *application* must be judged within the context of each present moment. Every man sees truth from a different angle and every man's own conscience must form his perspective.

On Worlds Apart

Gretchen Rhetts

IT WAS A hot, muggy day, and I was more than a little tired of sight-seeing. Swinging my camera over my shoulder, I began the walk toward the monument steps. As I approached I mentally noted that the outward appearance of the building was similar to that of buildings I had been looking at all day. It was white, limestone I believe, with pillars encircling its main walls. It is a statue I thought, only a monument to a dead man. The time is dead too, dead and forgotten. Brushing my hair back from my face, I started upward, toward the entrance of the building. The steps seemed endless, and my camera grew heavier while the stark whiteness of the building reflected the sun's rays, making an almost bearable glare.