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DON'T FORGET NY IN '67!!!

Sure, and it's Dave Van Arnam himself and early for once he is, too.

This monkey of a weekly fanzine on my back does make things rough once in a while; it occurred to me it wd be nice for once to have the damn thing out of the way before Friday.

□□ I was talking last week about some aspects of my political and philosophical ideas, noting that I have a habit of finding it difficult to relate other people's ideas in these matters to my own, unless there is some striking resemblance or difference. It occurs to me that this same difficulty applies with me to other matters; yes, even to writing and to poetry, but far less here because these are, after all, my main fields of interest, in which I try to discover similarities/dissimilarities.

Another of these topics is that of Romantic vs. Realistic Love, a subject that has been Very Big offandon in Apa L for the past few months. My reasons for not commenting on the various discussions and subdiscussions there were not entirely that my Apa L zine has been in a state of hibernation; no, it was more that no one had spoken along lines that I could relate to my own views.

For instance, I believe in Romantic Love -- and I also believe in what we may as well call Realistic Love (tho these are both very loose and ultimately unsatisfactory terms, perhaps we can get along with them for a little while).

A realistic attitude is not simply that one is aware of the physical realities of sex and bodily functions (realities that so often disturb those who came to them with a wholly romantic attitude); that, I think, almost goes without saying. One must also be aware of the day-to-day confrontation with inter-personal realities, the intelligent give-and-take that the immature and the overly Romantic are so frequently unable to participate in. (If one's partner is a Twitch, of course, one will probably end up in trouble no matter how reasonable one is.)

Realistically speaking, for instance, I as a 30 year old bachelor can expect to have to Change at least a few of my Ways whenever I get married (no immediate prospects, I might add, tho I'd very much like to get married; 30 years, that's too many...). I am pretty careless about my personal effects, with the result that my apartment usually approximates the status of a Disaster Area; but I realize that if I were married I'd have to exert a certain amount of effort to keep things neat, there's no two ways about it. I don't exert that effort now because I cannot make myself feel the need for it.

On the other hand, I am a Night Person like my father; I find it so close to impossible to get to bed before midnight that it isn't worth discussing, and 2 AM is earlier than I like. Concomitantly, a requirement on me to arise before 7 AM is an almost unspeakable imposition, and I prefer an hour between 9 and noon. This is a simple (and recognized scientifically) fact and one which I can't change, any more than my father can (my mother is an Early Person, and finds it hard to stay awake after 9 PM). A realistic attitude takes these possibilities

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into consideration, a consideration which is apt often enough, I suspect, to lead to some occasional deep conflicts with the Romantic attitude.

As a Romantic, then, as well as a Realist, I find myself believing in two kinds of love, quite co-existable. There is the love that is, in effect, a kind of extension from friendship, that friendship that can and (I hope usually) does grow between two people after they marry as (relative) strangers; call it Friendly Love, tho that's hardly a very inspiring term. And there's the love that comes as a kind of inspiration and which has no specific provable cause, the kind of love that people often marry in, only to find it a myth, a chimera they cannot capture because they are not realistic enough to understand how little they can rely on it and how little strain it can take.

For there, I think, is the point -- one can be in Romantic Love with another, a romantic love that can last, if one is sensible enough to allow the natural and ordinary strains of life, of living together, fall on the innately stronger if less exhilarating bonds of Realistic/Friendly Love.

This is no crude mechanical doublethink I'm speaking of, tho now that I actually type the word I suppose it's possible that it is doublethink of a sort -- but of a non-harmful sort, I think. Perhaps it's like the attitude of a writer moved by a piece of writing, a poet by a poem; one is moved by a poem and at the same time can tick off the rhyme scheme, the meter, the similes and metaphors, can define the whole structure of the poem -- and still be moved by it. I keep rereading Doc Smith with the utmost enjoyment and enthusiasm and delight -- and recognize with a part of my mind at the same time that he really is technically a very bad writer indeed, with very much the tin ear for prose style. But why shd I allow my realization of his fallibility to destroy my appreciation for his work on the other level? I still occasionally reread the Oz books, and I do not complain that they are not THE LORD OF THE RINGS.

There are in fact no writers for which one does not have to make some allowances; this is a realistic attitude and quite true. But it does not account for the feeling of almost mystic awe I feel on approaching some certain passage in Shakespeare or Dylan Thomas or Christopher Fry.

The similarity between this situation and the two kinds of Love is certainly not overwhelming or point-for-point; still, I find a certain kind of metaphoric validity in there somewhere, if only to point up why I think the coexistence of Romantic and Realistic Love is possible. That I have not proved this in my own life, to myself, is true, and I am the first one to admit it and to forestall any criticism based entirely on that point. Still, I have come close, close enough to feel that the final proof would justify my view.

I am yet left with the plain fact that there is much unhappiness in the world traceable to a basic confusion about "love" and its nature; and I hesitate to be Smug about having found the key, the answer to the problem, because, after all, in the long run, there may be no answer at all.

But my one perhaps irrational belief, which is not in God but in Man, makes it difficult for me to believe this is possible.