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	Hans Richter	III.A.32

People often wistfully speak of love and beauty as if they were things imposed on the course of their everyday lives through some chance, felicitous circumstance. But in art (which is meant as a mirror of their lives) beauty and love are constant, and it is the beauty of Dreams that it is, above everything else, a labor of love and an affirmation of life in a medium that has all too seldom been itself "in love", being content to deal in it as a well-paying commodity - that substitutes titillation for affirmation, and the multi-colored lie for the clear, colorless truth... that runs, to show its fleetness, and running, crushes the laurel heedlessly underfoot...that tastes the grape, yet does not see the vine leaves hanging there...

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In the ineterst of the originality of each sequence I tried to follow up as close as possible any su ggestion of any of the *my* five friends. But it is selfunderstood that the ready product can't be but *my* conception of the "wish-free" of Calder, Duchamp, Ernst, Léger and Man Ray, because I produced the film from begin to end. I believe nevertheless that the product shall ~~never~~ *yet* be a sample for the large pool of imagination NOW ~~used up today~~ in the movies.

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RE: DREAMS THAT MONEY CAN BUY

June 3, 1948

Six weeks with a rather willing audience at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse encourages me to sustain the point about my film DREAMS THAT MONEY CAN BUY, which might be of interest to your readers as well as to professionals.

As you stated correctly in your criticism about my film DREAMS .. I have "plunged into the subconscious", but I did plunge, not without a kind of life belt: with a plan, I knew what I was up against and I was willing to risk the consequences.

Since I made my first (experimental) film twenty-seven years ago, I sincerely doubted whether the usual naturalistic way of storytelling in film was the one and only way. As I was born about the time the film was born, I do not forget that our usual way of storytelling today is based upon many abstractions (closeup - crosscutting - cutback - pars pro toto - dissolve, etc.), a film language full of abbreviations and conventions which my grandparents would have considered just as much mumbo-jumbo. We are today, it is true, mentally and emotionally so completely adjusted to this convention that we take it for granted.. as much as a shuttle train at Grand Central.

But since Griffith created his "first letters of a film alphabet" many inventions have changed our intellectual and emotional experience. Discoveries in the natural sciences, in the arts, in psychology, etc., have given us new thoughts. We are willing to consider the irrational in human behavior as just as important as the rational; we accept the unconscious as an inseparable part of the conscious. We look in a different way at a lot of things. Why do these changes not reflect in the gigantic mirror in which we see ourselves nearly every day; in the movies? They reflect in all the arts, but not in film. They have influenced the boy who brings me my laundry; the little girl who explains to her mother that she has "inhibitions" and why; the typist who writes this letter - but not the film. I don't call ~~himself~~ it "influenced" when a psychanalytical story is superimposed upon a Hollywood cliché.

If we want to deal with facts of our inner life, and we certainly are interested in them, we can't but accept the ways and forms in which our unconscious acts, the way it flows in spontaneous, seemingly unrelated images.

Some of these ways, as dreams reveal them, are: the sudden change of time and space, - spontaneous actions seemingly without reason but obviously loaded with a hidden meaning, - no chronological continuity of facts, instead ~~me~~ a continuity by associations, (already used by Eisenstein, for instance) etc. All these qualities could become elements for new "letters" in the film alphabet or at least could be used as methods which might lead to such "letters". Example: the climbing of a ladder is normally a way to get to the hay on the second floor but in a not naturalistic film it can be used also for the desire for adventure or just a desire to climb upwards, or, according to one's emotional situation, the desire to escape, and so on.

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I don't see a reason why an audience could not finally accept such "indication" as readily as it accepts the indication of a closeup of a head or a pair of isolated feet for the whole person to whom these cutoff details belong - whether the sudden change in a man's color from normal pink to deep blue (in the Narcissus sequence) is accepted exactly in the way I planned it or, as some onlookers saw it, as an indication of the race problem (consciousness of isolation, feeling outcast, etc.) that I cannot guarantee, but I also don't care. Important for me is that the onlooker feels the shock and that this shock makes him suddenly realize a situation of equal urgency from his own experience. That may be sometimes farther, sometimes nearer from what I meant the scene to be, but as long as I am able to move the emotions of the ~~viewer~~ onlooker towards his own inner experience, I can leave understanding in its rational meaning to psychologists or other professionals.

Of course, not everything will contact something in everybody. Many points might be lost completely. But when, as it has happened over and over again, somebody from the audience comes to me and starts telling me: "It is like an experience I had once.." then I know that the story has been told and point made.