SOME DIRT IN THE TALK

NORMAN MAILER

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WILD 90 IS THE NAME OF A FULL-LENGTH UNDERGROUND MOVIE which a few of us, soon to be cited, filmed on four consecutive nights in March this year. It was done in 16-millimeter and recorded on magnetic sound tape, and since the raw stock costs of processing 16-millimeter sound and film run about thirty cents a foot or ten dollars a minute of shooting, we shot only two and a half hours in all, or $1,500 worth of film. Obviously we couldn't afford to shoot more.

Still, for reasons one may yet be able to elucidate, the two and a half hours were not so very bad, and from them was extracted a feature film which runs for ninety minutes. It is a very odd film, indeed I know no moving picture quite like it since there are times when *Wild 90* seems close to nothing so much as the Marx Brothers doing improvisations on *Little Caesar* with the addition of a free run of obscenity equal to *Naked Lunch* or *Why Are We in Vietnam?* It has the most repetitive pervasive obscenity of any film ever made for public or even underground consumption, and so half of the ladies are fascinated because it is the first time in their life they have had an opportunity to appreciate how soldiers might talk to each other in a barracks or what big-city cowboys might find to chat about at street corners. But then the ladies are not the only sex to be polarized by *Wild 90*. While the reactions of men in the audience are more unpredictable, a rough rule of thumb presents itself—bona fide tough guys, invited for nothing, usually laugh their heads

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off at the film; white-collar workers and intellectual technicians of the communications industries also invited for nothing tend to regard the picture in a vault of silence. All the while we were cutting *Wild 90*, we would try to have a preview once a week. Since the projection room was small, audiences were kept to ten, twelve, or fifteen people. That is an odd number to see a film. It is a few too many to watch with the freedom to move about and talk aloud that you get from watching television; it is on the other hand a painful number too small to feel the anonymity of a movie audience. Therefore, reactions from preview night to preview night were extreme. We had banquet filmings when an audience would start to laugh in the first minute and never stop—other nights not a sound of happiness could be heard for the first forty minutes—embarrassing to a producer who thought just yesterday that he had a comedy on his hands. Finally we had a formula: get the hard guys in, get the experts out.

That makes sense. There is hardly a guy alive who is not an actor to the hilt—for the simplest of reasons. He cannot be tough all the time. There are days when he is hung over, months when he is out of condition, weeks when he is in love and soft all over. Still, his rep is to be tough. So he acts to fill the gaps. A comedy of adopted manners surrounds the probing each tough guy is forever giving his brother. *Wild 90*, which is filled with nothing so much as these vanities, bluffs, ego-supports, and downright collapses of front is therefore hilarious to such people. They thought the picture was manna. You could cool riots with it, everybody was laughing so hard.

Whereas intellectual technicians had to hate it. Because the tip of the tablecloth was being tilted, the soup was encouraged to spill. There was a self-indulgence in the smashing of Hollywood icons which spoke not only of an aesthetic rebellion (which some of the media technicians would doubtless approve) but *Wild 90* hinted also of some barbarity back of it—the Goths had come to Hollywood. Based on the gangster movies of the thirties, the movie nonetheless had a quasi-Martian flavor, a primitive pleasure in itself, as if it had discovered the wheel which made all film go round.

Testing this brand-new little American product, cutting it, shaping it, serving it to samples of audiences, made for an interesting summer. *Wild 90* was not the greatest movie ever made, no sir, and the actors would receive no Academy Awards (because they swore too much) but the picture, taken even at its worst, was a phenomenon. There was something going on in it which did not quite go on in other movies, even movies vastly superior. It had an

insane intimacy, agreeable to some, odious to others. The dialogue was sensational. Where was a scriptwriter who wrote dialogue like this?

BUZZ CAMEO: I ain't gonna get killed here.

THE PRINCE: Look. You're gonna get killed, or you're not gonna get killed. But you don't know shit. You don't know when you're gonna get killed or how you're gonna get killed, and you just shut. Shut.

BUZZ CAMEO: The Prince. The Prince tells me.

THE PRINCE: You're nothin' but a guinea with a hard-on in your arm. That's *your* hard-on. (A sound of disgust.) Unhh.

BUZZ CAMEO: How about my short arm? How many guys I put away for you, daddy-o?

THE PRINCE (*mimicking*): How many guys I put away for you, daddy-o. Unhh. Unhh. Unhh. (*Three derisive punches to his own biceps.*) I'll tell you how many guys you put away for me. One and a half! One and a half!

TWENTY YEARS: Right. The other half I had to take care of. That's how good you are.

THE PRINCE (*keeping up the tempo*): Punk. Unhh. (*The arm again.*) Punk.

TWENTY YEARS (*jeering*): What a mistake. What a mistake. Cameo, he says he can handle Thirty-fourth Street. (*Scream of derision.*) Hah! Thirty-fourth Street he can handle. He can't handle his own joint.

Yes, where was the scriptwriter? Who was he? And the answer—is that no hat could fit his head, for he did not exist. The dialogue had come out of the native wit of the actors*: Wild 90* was a full-length film for which not a line of dialogue was written.

Well, explanations must now be promised—we may even intimate that closet history is about to be disclosed, and of an underground film! Gather near! Listen to the subtle events which preceded the shooting.

Last winter, while the play of *The Deer Park* was having its run at the Theatre DeLys, some of the cast of *The Deer Park* used to drink together at a restaurant named Charles IV in the Village. Actors like to fill the tank after a performance. It is not only their reward, and their sedative, but it is possibly a way of accommodating their soul back to the place from which it was

vacated by the more meretricious lines of their script. Now, *The Deer Park* was not signally meretricious, it was after all well-written, but perfect it was not, entirely honorable, no, it was not, lacunae of intent had collected, and since devils and demons rush to inhabit every gap, there were lines in the script the playwright could not necessarily defend to the death. Those are the sort of lines which turn actors subtly, even unconsciously, to drink. Because they have to use the best of themselves to conceal the worst of an author.

Well, drink they did then, and on any given night it was better than even you could find much of the company in their more or less civilized cups, eating a little, drinking away. We were a nice company, relatively free of jealousy, intrigue, or liaison due mainly, it might be submitted, to the fact that *The Deer Park* was full of passion, jealousy, intrigue, conniving, etc., and so the actors could be relaxed of that by the time drinks had come. (Indeed it is exactly in those wholesome family comedies the critics love so very much that you will find the actors rife in the green room, and everybody banging everybody up the back door.)

After drinking sessions went on awhile, they took a particularly modest form. Hugh Marlowe, Rosemary Tory, and Rip Torn had the longest parts, very long parts they were, so they were naturally the ones most in need of regular hours. Usually, they would be the first to leave, and Buzz Farbar, Mickey Knox, and myself would go drinking into the closing, while my wife, Beverly Bentley, and her friend and colleague, Mara Lynn, would talk at the next table on whichever subjects blond sorceresses find of moment at three in the morning. Whereas Knox, Farbar, Mailer (later to be known as Supreme Mix) slipped each night into a game. We used to play at being Mafiosos. We would try to talk like Dons. We would go on so much as twenty or forty minutes at a time talking about any subject at hand in the allusive use of metaphor you can catch a hint of now and again when one or another Italian in the rackets will lay it on the line. We even picked up names. Twenty Years, Buzz Cameo, the Prince.

Of the three of us, Knox was the only real actor. He had been acting for twenty years and more, and had been in two dozen movies, half of them gangster films, he had experience on the stage and television, was a member of Actors' Studio, had worked on the production of half a hundred Italian films in Rome in the last ten years, he spoke Italian fluently. Buzz Farbar, however, had never acted but for a stretch as Don Beda, the orgiast, in *The Deer Park*, a part which began as a stunt after work for him (and remained

a stunt in the sense that the part of Don Beda is one of the theatre's most difficult small parts to play). Anyway, Buzz had done his best. He was a good team man, a former Golden Gloves boxer, a football star at Dartmouth, then publisher of Legacy Books at CBS—he had not been a great Don Beda, but there was probably not an actor in New York who could have been—the part requested Porfirio Rubirosa or some Castilian with Persian silk. At any rate, Buzz Farbar may have made no immortal Don Beda, but he certainly did wing a good shtarker as Buzz Cameo in each late-nightly round of the Maf Boys, and yr author who had never acted at all in any way (except every day of his life—a quip to be examined further, close readers) did his best to hold up his end as the Prince. We played the Maf Boys. It was our answer to the Chelsea Girls.

We even got good at it. How close we came to portraying any mobsters of certified class, I do not know, but we had experiences. Drinking our booze and acting for ourselves in the restaurant, we would get good enough upon occasion that the room would seem weightless, and the air ready to spark. There was a tension afterward to judge the value of the moment. We were either getting up a mood which was more accurate and quintessentially witty than anything worked on by actors or game players before about the subject of the Mafia, or we were merely whacked up on booze and the mystery resided in the supernatural properties of grain spirits, their ability to fog all perception of creative value, and inflame the positive judgments of misperception. Say! I conceived the idea it would be fun to get a good cameraman and film a half hour with sound of the three of us sitting around a restaurant table. So we talked about that for a time. And as the winter went by, as Supreme Mix, which is to say, Farbar, Knox, and Mailer, did the Maf Boys on the unphotographed wing a couple of times a week at Charles IV, the picture got discussed with the savor of get-rich-quick schemes worked on in a Brooklyn kitchen, and so showed promise of becoming a project you talk about with too much enjoyment ever to undertake. But we had fun. Night after night. There is a dialogue in the movie which captures a little of the style we had when metaphor was in flower.

BUZZ CAMEO: I'm goin' down to the Beach.

TWENTY YEARS (*to Cameo*): Ya know there's one thing about singin'—it leaves ya hoarse.

THE PRINCE (*to Cameo*): If you leave, ya know what you are? You're the prunes.

BUZZ CAMEO: Prunes? You're the dunes.

THE PRINCE: Yeh. You're the real prunes.

BUZZ CAMEO (*a reference to burial grounds*): Ponds 'n dunes?

THE PRINCE: You're prunes. The Cream's comin' out your ass.

TWENTY YEARS: You got no feels.

Farbar did not let the movie go. Calling me very early one morning, he pointed out that Mickey Knox was leaving for Rome in ten days. In the following week we had to make the movie if we were ever to make it at all. When he was reminded that we had no photographer, no lights, no set, no properties, nothing but my steadfast promise to immolate a thousand bucks (with five hundred more to burn in reserve), Farbar promised to bring together the rest of the ingredients. (That, gentlemen, presumably, was how the old two-reelers were made.) He arranged a meet with D. A. Pennebaker (of Leacock Pennebaker, inventors of portable sound-film cameras, makers of *Don't Look Back*). Pennebaker had four nights free, and he would film us for four nights. Since Knox was still playing Collie Munshin in *The Deer Park*, we could start only after his performance each evening, which meant acting must begin at midnight. No problem. Those were our drinking hours. Acting and drinking could get together like kissing cousins. There persisted, however, the problem of locating a set. For we had taken on one more ambition. We had decided to try for more than a short film about three hoods disporting in a restaurant, we would rather take off from a contemporary piece of local history in Brooklyn. A year or more ago, the Gallo gang had undertaken a war with Joseph Profaci, by repute a *don capo* of Cosa Nostra. For self-protection the Gallos finally holed up in a little building on President Street, while the police put the block under crash surveillance to keep them from getting killed. Well, Supreme Mix knew nothing about the Gallo gang, in fact had no desire to take a page from their material, no, Supreme Mix was looking to be another gang, the three characters created before anyone was reminded of the Gallos. Yes, we would be our own three characters holed up in a loft, down by the beginning of the film from a company of twenty-one men to three men, living alone. That would give us the situation on which we

could improvise. But where could we find an empty loft, and over the weekend? No, we had to settle for a big and empty room in an office building.

Monday night, we moved into the set, sat drinking very carefully for an hour or two, looking to recapture the style of Charles IV, and finally began shooting. But we could not recover that mood. Charles IV was a drinking spa with agreeable food, it had an attractive hat-check girl, moderate lights, soft booze, you slipped into *ambiente*. Now we were in the empty office, in a square room, twenty-five by twenty, with packing crates, clothes hung on pipes, fluorescent lighting, and one light bulb supported from a cord. Mood oscillated in the illumination of prison. We weren't three hoods at a restaurant. We were holed up, riding each other's nerves. It was obvious we would never find an objective correlative to the question: did we do a good imitation of three topflight hoods having drinks? No, we were in a different game—the camera on us now, and the knowledge of ten dollars a minute clicking away in film and sound. Our first dialogue was wooden, aware of itself. Action lagged. As a reaction, we weren't out at sea two minutes before the picture prematurely began. After a statement by Knox that we had been holed up in this place for twenty-one days, Farbar suddenly came back, "Twenty-one days you been sucking my joint!"

It will be remembered we were working without a script. We were going to talk back and forth. In absolute freedom. Out of it, went our premise, would come the action. No one was necessarily ready, however, for this action. Knox is a hard self-centered man who likes to keep his dignity unruffled. People were in no hurry to go around calling him names in his daily life—suddenly he was getting it in a movie. It was wrong. Mafiosos rate themselves on their own brand of elegance. The director thought of stopping the camera, but something in the action had come alive. Next, the director reasoned—the film going on this while, of course—that if three Mafiosos were indeed holed up for twenty-one days in a loft, they might not have the use of metaphor available on happier evenings—no, they might be snarling on the bone, not kingpins of the rackets now, but rather back to adolescence, hoods on the corner. The feel of that was real. So obscenities continued—they took on love's own patina of wit. Verbal action between Mickey, Twenty Years, Buzz Cameo, and the Prince flourished. Insults winged like darts, dignities rose, vanities fell—a style came out of it. The actors had an action which carried out of that first insult and went from line to line without undue self-propulsion. This action was to carry the cast

through the night and the next three nights, the visits of ten other actors, nine of whose performances were finally to be kept. "A motion picture grew out of it," as they say on Puffs Avenue, although in truth you could say a motion picture staggered out of it, while toe-dancing over the bottles, and then kept its balance—although the disconcerting angle at which it careened was yet to be seen.

But we have to depart from this sketch of a narrative. It does not tell the real history of what was going into *Wild 90*. That is private, personal, subterranean, and buried in the psyche of the actors and the director. Since this director is an intellectual of sorts he could not engage in a creative act without a set of major theses to support him. While he thought he was merely engaged in a $1,500 junket out to movieland for four nights in a row, he was actually delivering some old and close-to-forgotten experience which had been perhaps more obsessive than he realized, obsessive for years. He had thought he was making the movie as an exercise in a few nuances of a very special brand of Camp, gangster-movies-Camp—he was actually being more serious than he knew, although indeed he was not to discover this until he had spent months cutting the film and had begun to write about these matters. Then he realized that under the bed of the making of *Wild 90* were some dusty themes of singular complexity: themes such as Hollywood, acting, existentialism—no less—and the logic of the real disease of the film—no less. Not to mention old wounds of the ego.

BUZZ CAMEO: Twenty years. Twenty years of shit, that's what you are. You're twenty years of nothin'. You're the prince of what?

TWENTY YEARS: Listen, big mouth . . .

BUZZ CAMEO: The prince of my pickle, that's what you're the prince of.

THE PRINCE: That's what I'm the prince of, your pickle—your pickle with its dirty little warts. French tickle, Buzz Cam.

Item: Do you know that back in World War II, a few of us used to walk those Army legs with this thought: someday I'm going to write a book and expose the fugging Army. And yea and lo, that was done, thanks to James Jones.

Item: Then in the postwar, we used to see movies, and flushed with the confections of new ego status, used to say to ourselves, "Someday I'm going to make a movie and expose that fugging Hollywood." And you know what happened?

Two of one's books were made into movies, The Naked and the Dead *and* An American Dream *were the names of these movies, and the first was one of the worst movies ever seen, and the second was inferior to it, or so I hear, because I couldn't get myself up to go and see it. And had nothing to do with these movies except get paid for them, in fact both of those movies were made without the author receiving a postcard from the producer, and so author could plead* mea non culpa*, but for the additional fact that Hollywood paid very well for those two books, and nobody forced the author to sell them. So the author is helpless when some snaggletoothed goat-hair-bearded very late adolescent comes up in a bar, clears his throat, and says, "Mr. Mailer, how could you violate your ideals by allowing* An American Dream *to be sold to the people who made the movie?" Mr. Mailer must then button up and roll with the nausea implicit in the rhythms of his interrogator's adenoids, because there is no right reply left. You cannot say, "I have become a little more corrupt than the last time you saw me," to every adolescent around. Besides you have to be over forty to appreciate the good Hemingway's remark that a man once past his own last point of terminal honor, can from there on proceed only to lose more and more of his soul, and the trick is thus to sell your soul dear, to fight a tough rearguard battle and take as many of the enemy as you can. (Which presumes a God back of your soul, and devils to slay) Well*, An American Dream *was sold and I didn't take any of the enemy. They took parts of me.*

Now, what can you know, Under-Thirty, of these passions to write a book which will expose the Army, or make a movie which will put a light to the gas in Hollywood's leaky oven? These are unnatural passions when you, young reader, have cut your reflexes on Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni, and everybody can see through the Army by now. You don't want to reform Hollywood. It has its thing, you have yours. Let Dick Van Dyke shake hands with Debbie Reynolds any day.

But for those of us who grew up in another time, and got to hate Hollywood intimately ... do not despair of explanations. Hollywood was like a mother-in-law's mother-in-law. Locate your time historically. This was before Kerouac. Eisenhower was just beginning to hump the rhetoric to our respectful attention, Life *magazine was still confident it could show people how to live, the CIA was then invisible but for a gleam in the secretary of state's eye, the corporations were still manufacturing products which were not wholly inadequate to their uses, and packaging was dull. Newspaper editorials reflected no quiver of doubt. Harlem was still a place to visit. And Hollywood was committing hara-*

kiri with a blunt knife. For those were the years when they got the communists out of Hollywood. All those poor writers and directors who had written all the patriotic movies in World War II—they had been the only ones who believed in Hollywood, they thought of her as a peasant queen with monumental capacities for reformation. Of course a character in a novel once said of Hollywood communists that they have the strength of big-breasted women, and these movie writers and directors were stuffniks. Which is to say they were stuffy with old platitudes which had rotted in old sentiments and they loved to try to stuff such stuff into everybody's head. Once they were exiled from Hollywood, or squeezed down into black-market work, the town lost its balance wheel. Under the pressure of television, it went all the way over to what it had promised to be at the beginning—an undifferentiated androgynous daisy chain, a victim of sexual entropy. Film power passed on to Europe. These communists had been the moral center of filmland, the bourgeois ever-living ever-loving family center, or at least in combine with the analysts they had been, and they had striven to make box-office pictures about social problems with middleclass answers. "Maturity" was the word they loved. Cigars used to glisten like wet turds when they intoned maturity.

That was the Hollywood one wanted to dynamite. That silly monstrous cancerous country which ate at the best of oneself. It is just about gone now.

As a young man soon after the publication of The Naked and the Dead *I tried to work in Hollywood for a spell. I did my best, I wanted to amass experience for a novel, and so wished to succeed in the movie business in order to have the richest novelistic experience. But I wasn't very good at succeeding. There was something about the process of scriptwriting which did not fit with any reflex of mine. Like most young writers I was a hint phonier than I had to be, and borrowed influences at large (where would* The Naked and the Dead *have been without John Dos Passos and James T. Farrell?), and the upper reaches of my novelistic brain were mixed with the heavier greases of the lower academic literary apparatus, to wit, I thought in terms of symbols, forms, allegorical structures, classical myths—you know like many another touted young talent I could barely write a sentence if there was no way to convince myself it was not on five levels. Nonetheless, I still sensed that under all the Associated Merde and Dreck incorporated into my literary system, there was still a way to create, which was the only way to do it. And that was to keep the act of writing simple. If you wrote a thousand words on a morning and they proved later to be a good thousand words, and not a single formal thought entered your con-*

scious mind while you were writing them, well, all the formal thought in you had gone then into the writing—none of it had been fed back into the ego-pool thinking box, there to be wasted.

That was the good way to write, and presumably the good way to act and direct, and conceivably to box—it took even longer to learn that it might be the way to make love. Doubtless. The nature of anything life-giving, like a good movie or a good word, must remain secret for the simplest of reasons. For every lion of our human species there is, as we all know, a trough of pigs, and the pigs root up everything good so soon as the superhighway is laid out for them. So the best stays hidden. It must be that way.

And out there in Hollywood, I learned what pigs do when they want to appropriate a mystery. They approach in great fear and try to exercise great control. Fear + Control = Corporate Power. Corporate Power applied to art produces a product which is on balance equal to Liberace stripped of his virility.

Now, readers, we have not been treated to this much language for me merely to beat old Hollywood on the head with my stick. I want rather to underline and soon try to analyze the fact that the process of commercial film-making has a natural tendency to liquidate the collective human entity of the film, and so it is a living miracle, nothing less than a miracle, when a good big-budget movie is made, once you know, as few do, how absolutely deadening is the productive machinery of the cinematic full-length feature film.

Consider the movie script. A man or a team of men, who have the habit of regarding themselves as writers, begin by discussing a story. It is ninety-nine to one that the story originates not with them but with a book, magazine piece, play, former movie—we can skip these steps. Working on someone else's story is like raising another man's child. The moment a writer moves away from his basic connection to that unconscious which gives original words to the pencil in his fingers, art in its turn has given up a half-life. Witness, then, these Hollywood writers, singly or in team, who hobnob with producer, director, story editor, hordes of labially directed anxiety types who talk all the time. Large fear and large control—those are the protagonists who write the script. It bears the same relation to real writing, these endless discussions about form, plot, twist, and rooting interest, that a medical examination in the Army bears to the act of love.

Then comes the director and the producer, an ugly jealous passionate fecal marriage of bitch and stud. That overworked scenario is ignited into its first roar and flame when producer and director set out to bugger one another. Indeed

that's how agreeable bad movies sometimes get made. It's art by act of war, however, and the actors get ground between them.

Then we have the actors who deal with existential situations like love, sex, disaster, and death, all those ultimates whose ends are by their nature indeterminable: you are in an existential situation when something important and/or unfamiliar is taking place, and you do not know how it is going to turn out. Whereas professional acting consists of getting into situations where the actor knows precisely just how everything in the plot is going to turn out. The script is there, and from it he cannot escape very far. Acting and existentialism are therefore at the poles. If existentialism is ultimately concerned with the attractions of the unknown, acting is one of the surviving rituals of invocation, repetition, and ceremony—of propitiation to the gods. Talk of ultimates, maybe the actor lays ceremonial robes on his back in order to allay our fear of the wrath which lives in the pits of metaphysics. Ceremony is designed, you can say, to mollify the gods, to safeguard us from existential situations precisely because ceremony is repetition. There is some quality primitive, powerful, and weight-free about the act of acting once you get into it, something so close to a real existential situation, yet not by real measure dangerous at all, that actors often know the delight of children, whose inner landscape you may remember is always existential, for the denouement of a situation is to a child unknown and dangerous until that moment when the outcome is perceived.

Actors have it well made then if they can enjoy the act of acting, for they may at once propitiate the gods of dread, feel the power of full men, and have the sensuous empyrean awareness of a child, not to mention his tact. Great popular actors are not called idols for nothing. They are revered as God, lover, and child all at once.

Now, of course, the model presented is too attractive. There is always for the stage actor the tension, horror, and most existential moment of the opening night, and there is besides, once the actor is not on the stage, the unspeakable insecurity of his life, the uncertainty of work, bread, love of his fellow actors, the existential (which is to say: dangerous) privations of poverty, the manic uprooting yaws of success which can propel him into a profound alienation away from the most rudimentary clues to his identity. It is not so easy to walk through life uncertain if you are god, fool, hero, or clown, or eventually some new species of man. Rich or poor, the likelihood is great that the actor has the most existential private life of any artist—if nothing else, he is obliged to live closer than other artists to the mystery of personality itself, which is—if you consider

it—related directly to the mystery of choosing one style of personality in preference to another, provided of course one possesses the power to exercise more than a single style well.

But we must follow this through. If I, living with a woman, choose a style for my personality which, crudely, we may say is not quite me, I am nonetheless in a real relationship, certainly I am if my adopted personality is sufficiently imaginative, cohesive, and convincing, that is to say, well enough acted, to make the lady think it is—forgive this—the real me. Because then the real emotions of my sweet mate with their real concomitants, her very gifts and blows, begin to rain on me, and I prosper or falter on the basis of my adopted personality. Yet if I had adopted a different style of personality for the same woman, the gifts and blows would have been different. Now think of the actor who commands a choice of adopted personalities. The particular style he takes on for any role becomes as much an existential choice as the pose of the lover—the actor is subtly rewarded and/or punished by the real reactions he arouses and disappoints in his audience, which audience becomes for practical purposes the next thing to his real mate. How disagreeable then, even brutal, is the situation of the actor when his role is not adequate to him, when he cannot act with some subtle variations of his personal style. But, indeed the actor, living uncomfortably in that psychic ground between the real and the unreal, consummate creature of modern anxiety, can find his reality only in a role worthy of his complex and alienated heart. What chance then has he in that abominable industry script we have already described or in that bucket of fecal passions swilled in by director and producer? Not to mention our patriotic apparatus of bullies, censors, and banks which hangs like insect repellent over the making of films.

No, the actor, if he is a good talented sensitive actor, is shoveled between the maw and the mangle. For if his personality now consists of a hundred personalities, they are nonetheless like a hundred fine tools. Even if he can find some relationship to the script, and be not contradicted fatally in his work by the other actors or the director, and be not betrayed by the producer, not cheated by the cameraman, nor the film editor, nor sickened too profoundly by his publicity, he, the actor, must run nonetheless into the most unendurable trap of them all which is that the magic of the relationship he and the other actors have breathed into one another despite the script is a magic which must soon falter before the tyrannical insistence of the script that all characters and events be funneled through the narrow orifice of committee solutions to aesthetic problems. So the exceptional tools of the exceptional actor, his ten hundred antennae, his blades

and springs, fine nerves and subtle heart, go all shuddering through the anesthetized fields of a commercial script: he must violate all he has learned about relationship and its thousand-footed sensitivity.

Taken even at its best in the occasional script which is first-rate, noble, fine, and good—you may look long for such a script—with a director and producer who are wise, sensible in the art of interruption, illumined with those proper fires which can light a fire in the actor, and with a budget not so enormous that every scene must groan with the pomposities and platitudes of money pressing its weight upon itself, in this ideal situation, even here, with the best of honest lines to speak, the actor must still warp his art and devour his liver and/or his soul to make his exquisite sense of relationship submit to the form. At its worst, the making of films for popular consumption is a liquidation center for talent—at its best it is still a rabidly unnatural act, and everyone connected to it is, soon or late, miserable.

Well, it is hardly our aim to give comprehensive listing of the efforts directors have made to break such tyranny; so it is not our intention to talk of Rossellini and De Sica, of Ingmar Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni, of Truffaut. Nor is it part of the agenda to try for a quick run through the underground film and artists so diverse as Warhol, Brakhage, Kenneth Anger, the late Ron Rice, a dozen others—their variety is extraordinary, their research into techniques, orgies, optical extravaganzas, animation, surrealism, exquisite photography and claustrophobically inept photography have slashed out a hundred indications of new trail. Nor pertinent to talk of documentaries: no discussion will be found here of the work of Ricky Leacock, Shirley Clarke, Helen Levitt, Emile de Antonio, the Maysles brothers.

No, the point rather to be made is that with every rare exception admitted, with all honor to the five or ten good commercial films a year and the fifty other such films which will seem better in twenty-five years than they do now, and with all homage to the wit of the Camp, its triumph in 007, with all credit to the technical innovations of the underground, and the occasional epic or quiet piece of genre from the documentary, the fact remains that the contemporary film does not do enough, it does not give enough of a mirror to the complexity of our century. The production of the high-budget film is too massive to be sensitive. Of course, there are rebels in revolt upon this operation and they have explored their innovations out to insanity, but they have tended to avoid the center of the problem which remains: how to get a little of the real life—always complex—of a good actor into a film. That still remains the accident rather than the rule. The

good professional actor succeeds occasionally against all odds—his eight or ten or twenty years of apprenticeship, his dedicated training, enable him to breathe a simulation of real life into the mechanical resolution of the commercial script. But at a predictable price: dead liver, soul a bit more in hock. Whereas, the greater liberty of the low-budget underground film is of necessity given to an unpaid actor who is therefore invariably an amateur, and so tends to project an agreeable, innocent, usually bizarre self-consciousness (much like the square and crazy flavor in the postures of a home movie). The underground movie tends for this among other reasons to become an inside joke, and looks for playful situations or nightmares which members of the club can appreciate out of the focus of their own games. But the average underground film is not rushing to give a mirror of the time, just an amusement-park mirror.

Now, the documentary, in contrast, is, of course, founded on our century, nowhere else, but since it substitutes legally real people for actors, the merit of the documentary still depends upon the importance of the situation, and not its subtlety or nuance. If we can conceive of putting the camera on a man in a witness box up on real trial for his real life, the possibility, although not the certainty, is present that the man may not try to act the way he thinks he ought to act before a camera. But Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty probably applies. Do you remember? The particle of the atom being observed by the recording apparatus is directly (unhappily for science) affected in its movements by the presence of the apparatus. So with the documentary. There is its flaw—right in the germ plasm of the documentary. The camera, recording a real man, creates a relative unreality. If I know the camera is recording me, the real Norman Mailer, playing Norman Mailer, then I am in the unhappy position of working directly for my own product, me. Consider this for a moment: it is almost impossible not to be false at some low level, false the way the president of a small business will be unctuous when he is interviewed about an item his company is making. Is the real-life manufacturer going to say the item is sleazy? Never. In fact, he may not admit even to himself that his new commodity is anything but good; nonetheless, the knowledge that he can only say it is good, that he has no option to do otherwise, infects everyone surrounding him, interviewer, cameraman, sound man, future audience. The fact that everybody knows what he will say, before he says it, produces that characteristic woodenness which besets the documentary, the television interview, and any photographic situation where the protagonist is there in his real name. The consequences are too numerous, the traps too consequential for the man who bears his own name to reveal a real theme to the camera.

We have then exhausted all the alternatives but the one which went into the making of Wild 90. *The assumption must now arise that the director has been saying all along that* Wild 90 *is his secret solution to all these ills. But it is not true. The director would swear it. He would even be forced to admit that it is worth a fight to pretend it is even a good movie. If it has its defenders, it has also its detractors and some of them would say that the first virtue of* Wild 90 *is that we get a good leisurely opportunity to see Mailer make an ass of himself.*

Nonetheless, one will pretend that Wild 90 *is good. In fact, the director, prejudiced, blown up with every imperative of self-interest, actually believes that his film contributes to no less than the general weal. So he will proceed to talk about its powers for uplift.*

TWENTY YEARS: There was once a guy an' he saw a little bird who was half dyin'. He was wounded. Hey, Prince, listen.

BUZZ CAMEO: Go ahead.

TWENTY YEARS: So he picked up this bird an' he said, "This bird gotta be warm." He looked in the field and there was a lotta cow flop steamin'—it was warm. So he put the bird in the cow flop an' he figured that's gonna make it right. And he left—left the bird there. And the bird kinda warmed up—felt good. Started to tweet. Went tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet.… And . . .

BUZZ CAMEO: What a long story.

TWENTY YEARS: There was a fox an' he looked over the cow flop an' said, "Geez, never heard cow shit tweet before." And he walked over—he trotted over—an' he saw the bird an' he gobbled it up. Now the moral is—listen—it may not always be an enemy that puts you in shit, and it may not always be a friend who's gonna take you out of shit, but if you find yourself in cow shit, never sing. Got it? Never sing. If you ever find yourself in shit, don't sing.

What did we end up with? A picture about gangsters? Not quite. It is hardly certain there were ever three Italian gangsters like this, or three Irish gangsters, or even two and a half Jewish gangsters. Farbar, Knox, and Mailer had all grown up in Brooklyn, but they were not Italian. Still, nobody grows up in Brooklyn without learning something about Sicily. And that is what comes through in the movie—our idea of the Mob, and that partakes of the noblest spirit of comedy, because twentieth-century reality suddenly appears

on the screen. It is not social reality, nor documentary reality, certainly not historical reality, nor even the reality of the Hollywood myth, no, it is a kind of psychological reality—it is our obviously not altogether perfect idea of what this movie should be like—and that proves to be very real, for it is at least evidence on the road to reality. Whereas most movies give indications only of the road to the void.

That is the nerve which illumines the picture. To everybody's surprise, Twenty Years, Cameo, and the Prince became more complex than characters usually become in a film. The picture took on that intricacy of detail and personality which is reserved usually to the novel or the extraordinary foreign film. It did not happen because the prime players were necessarily so talented, so improvisational, nor so deep, but because they were engaged in a way of making a movie which—considerably more than the average movie—had something to do with the way people acted in life. Yet the way people act in life is so general a notion for purposes of discussion that it may provide a superior means of focus to consider instead how people live in their dream.

It seems we have come back to the making of the film only to desert the subject immediately. A further expedition remains to us: the director's most revolutionary notion about the meaning of the dream and—its country cousin—the art of the novel. Without it, he could not truly describe the critical difference between conventional professional acting and the existential variety presented in *Wild 90*, nor could he prove his case that the conceivable reason his actors are so good is that they do not have lines to remember.

THE PRINCE: You listen. How'd you get that cleft in your chin? Old lang syne, that's how you got that cleft in your chin.

BUZZ CAMEO: Ya know, I realize you guys resent me 'cause I'm the best-lookin' one here.

THE PRINCE: You're the best-lookin' guy in the what? In this filthy hole? I'd hate to be the best-lookin' guy in this filthy hole. Wha' do you got to say to yourself? I'm the best-lookin' guy in a filthy hole.

Freud saw the dream as a wish fulfillment. It is a grand theory, but it hints of the sweets and sours of middle-class life and bouts of nocturnal enuresis. For if you are in the middle class, you do not have to make out well on a given day,

you can brood about a loss, indulge a fantasy on the conversion of failure to success—yes, if you are middle class, the dream is a wish fulfillment. Art comes to the middle class on that bypass called sublimation.

But to the saint and the psychopath, the criminal, the hipster, the activist, the athlete, the stud, the gentleman sword, the supple stick, the dream is something else—a theatrical revue which dramatizes the dangers of the day—a production in which the world of the day is dissected, exaggerated, put together again in dramatic or even surrealist intensity in order to test the power of the nervous system to pass through shocks, ambushes, tests, crises, and pleasures—future impacts of which the unconscious has received warning the day before. In the quick blink of a friend's eyes, in the psychic plumbing of an odd laugh was disclosed to the unconscious a hint of treachery. So that night the scene is replayed in its complex condensation with other scenes, and the Navigator in the mind of the hipster delineates for himself a better map, figures a little more precisely how to chart a course through the possible rapids soon to be encountered in his life.

The metaphor is shifting. It now seems that everyone has not only a private theatre for dreams but is possessed of a helmsman, or scout, or Navigator, who uses charts drawn from the experience of the past, maps drafted out of the emotions, education, and miseducation of childhood, the nuances, surprises, and predictable patterns of social life. These charts—submits our proposition—are altered every day of our life on the basis of what the day's experience has brought. They are kept up-to-date in order to transport us from the present into the unexpected contingencies of the future.

What am I saying really? Nothing more or less astounding than that every mortal (but for an occasional monster or vegetable) is elaborating somewhere in his mind the conception of a huge and great social novel. That unwritten unvoiced but nonetheless psychically real and detailed novel is precisely the map and/or chart from which the Navigator plots his course and selects his range of acts for tomorrow. (Indeed the dream may be the creative process which adds new refinements to the novel every night.) Yes, we not only possess that great novel in the map rooms of the self, but we are forever improving it, or at least altering it.

Let us ruminate upon this magnificent news. In the unconscious of each of us is then a detailed conception of a vast social novel greater than most of the vast social novels which have been written. In every last one of us just about lives a great novelist. Better than that. The Navigator not only

dips into his fantasy or his dream for inspiration and information to serve up to the ever-evolving unwritten pages of his book, but he employs the goods he finds. He goes out the next day and walks the stage of his life as an actor. For we are not only novelists all, but we are actors all. Having a detailed conception of the world, accurate here, inaccurate there, we attempt not only to deal with the world on the basis of this conception or novel, but we push and press ourselves into styles of personality (like elegance or humility or graciousness or candor) which are not quite ourselves but will provide, or so believes our Navigator, a more effective mode for handling the events of our day. In short, we pretend to be what we are not. We are Actors. We are at least Actors a good deal of the time. Some of us are better than others, some more precise than others, or more passionate in our display of all-but-true emotion, but we are all vastly better actors than we suspect. At the least we are all more or less successful in seeming a little more or less sweet or powerful than we really are. Yet, and this is the horror of bad art, that social novel in the vaults of the unconscious, no matter how great, is nonetheless flawed in each of us by the misleading portraits of people and institutions we are fed via television and Hollywood. If the maps in this chart room of the unconscious are elaborate, they are also anchored on systematically induced misconceptions of society, and so are often as profoundly inaccurate as the maps with which Columbus set sail for Cathay. Of course a chart room with inaccurate maps is inviting its Navigator to courses of action which can plow a reef, and the actor who is serving as helmsman in the actions of the day may be psychotic in his lack of attachment to the reality of the wheel directly before him. Meretricious commercial art does not lead merely to bad taste, it pipes the nation toward psychosis. If you would look for an answer on why America—a conservative property-loving nation—is obsessed with destroying other nations' property, the answer can be found as quickly in bad movies as in bad politics. Which returns us to our quest: how does one get to the grail which blesses the making of a movie not entirely without honor?

Knock on door.

THE PRINCE: Who're you? Wait. Wait. Wait. *(Picks up gun, goes to door)* Carmela. How are ya? Carmela. Hey Mickey. Mickey, look who's here. Your wife.

Carmela enters with a carton of milk.

TWENTY YEARS: Carmela. Ahhhhh. How are ya, Carmela? Why you come tonight? I mean, we need the milk, but you shouldn'ta come tonight. Carmela, you look great. Ahhh. How're the kids?

CARMELA: They ask for their father.

TWENTY YEARS: Yehhh. (*Looks her over, frowns.*) Listen, I see you went to the hairdresser. What do you go to the hairdresser for when I'm here? I mean, I don't like you to go to the hairdresser when I'm here. What do you got to get the nice hair for?

CARMELA: For you.

TWENTY YEARS: For me? I haven't seen you in a week. What is that crap? What's happening out there?

Follow it, now. Farber, Knox, and Mailer had a datum—three hoods in trouble holed up in a joint for twenty-one days. For that much, they were in accord. For the rest, they had each their own idea of what was going on, just as in everyday working life, if three businessmen meet, for example, at lunch, their datum could be that they are meeting to discuss some particular business. Yet each man remains his own protagonist. Since there is no written script, each of the three businessmen tends to see is own problems and feel his own personality in the foreground. Each of these businessmen has his own idea how he wants the lunch to go, what he desires for a result. To the extent that the lunch drifts away from him, he tries to maneuver conversation back to where he thinks it should be. While he is working at this, he is also bluffing a bit, pretending to be friendly one moment, disinterested another, and all the while he is up to his ears in the lively act of shaping and trying to improve his existence by employing adopted, or at least slightly adapted, personalities. He is therefore acting. For—it is worth repetition—acting is not only the preserve and torture rack of the professional actor, but is also what we do when we enter into new relations with man, mate, associate, or child—we start with an idea of the situation before us and a project in our mind (or on occasion a vision) of how this situation can or should end. Then we work to fulfill our project. At the same time, the other man or woman is working to satisfy his plan. He is also acting. Acting in some degree at least. The result is not often geared to obey either project, but turns out willy-nilly to be the collective product, good or bad. That is about what

happens at every business lunch, football game, fornication, prizefight, dinner party, and improvised performance. The product is the result, the result of the efforts, hang-ups, cooperations, and collisions of exactly as many protagonists as there are people involved. In life—let us underline the fell simplicity of this—every man is his own protagonist, he is out there acting away on his own continuing project, himself. Whereas in scripts, in written scripts, the natural tendency of any writer who might be dealing with three gangsters in a room would be to present, for purposes of clarity, no more than one protagonist and one project: the other characters would be subtly or not so subtly bent to serve the hero and his grip on the plot. So the other characters would become abstracts, stock characters. So movies remain just movies, simpler in their surface than life. That is why they are enjoyable, that is why they are also unsatisfying to our sense of existence.

In *Wild 90*, however, we had no script to reduce us—we were able to play through a situation with our own wit rather than with someone else's. Therefore we had an enormous advantage over an actor who has rehearsed his lines. For he has to pretend he is thinking of the line as he speaks, when in fact he is trying to remember it. That is indeed why most amateur actors are wooden—in their need to remember their lines, they can do nothing else for they are made uncomfortably aware by the bind of another man's words in their mouth that they are up there acting, and therefore exposing themselves. In contrast, we were forced, as in life, to speak where the moment led us. We were, consequently, forced to use only our own idea of how and where we wanted the picture to go, and this made for considerable intensity and concentration—which is exactly what actors look for. Moreover, the three of us shared, as shooting progressed, in the direct recollection of what we had already put into the film. So, we were forced to draw upon that instinctively, build upon it, naturally, just as people collect their varieties of mutual or gang experience in any new operation. So we also developed an unspoken but not often dissimilar idea of how the movie should move ahead, and this idea was always in danger of being disturbed and in fact sometimes was dislocated by the new actors who paid us visits—wives, girlfriends, prizefighters, brothers, police—because they knew less about our life in that room than we did. Again we moved on some parallel to what the situation might be in life. If the three of us were constantly needling each other, fighting, setting up reconciliations, forming alliances of two against one only to shift again, forever assaulting one another's egos, or putting them back

together, it was different when the Outside arrived, when the police came, or our girlfriends came, for then our three separate little visions of the film tended to become one family project, we were metaphorically now more equal to a crew, we worked with the new actors to slip them, even force them, into our idea of what and where the picture should be, and the new actors worked to slide or yank the picture back over toward their idea. Conflicts, therefore, did not show via plot, or by the camera angles of hero vs. villain, rather from that more complex opposition which is natural to every social breath of manner, that primary if subtle conflict which comes from trying to sell your idea in company when others are trying to deny you. And, note this, with the same ambiguity attached to the moment, the same comic or oppressive ambiguity. For as a scene goes its way in life, we do not always know if our plans are working, or our scheme is about to be shot down, whether we are winning in our purpose or others think us a fool, we merely work to get our way and usually have to let it go at that.

That was about how our work went. We shot for four or five hours every night for four nights, never doing retakes, *never doing retakes*—for that would have gummed the experience on which we were building. Besides, we did not have the time or money. We rocked along for four nights, and finished with something like three hours of film, much in debt to the considerable skill of the lone cameraman. Pennebaker moved his twenty-four-pound rig through our scenes like an athlete, anticipating our moves, giving us fine footage to cut into ninety minutes of comedy, ambiguity, ease, candor, vitality, barbarity. Buy a ticket! But you may never get to see it. The instincts as a director are confessed to be deep and salving; the eye for editing, novelistically acute; the talents as an actor, swell, then monumental swell; financial courage as a producer, enormous; but common sense—no, I am void of that. For the last thing I said to the actors was: use any words you wish. They bathed their tongues in the liberty: obscenity pops from every pore of *Wild 90*. It evolved into the foulest-mouthed movie ever made, and is thus vastly contemporary and profoundly underground. If you live in a small town, you will not get to see it. Not if it's like the next small town. Which is a pity. For without a sound track this film is so chaste you could invite the bishop to a screening. Of course, he would be bored. Without a sound track, there's not much film to follow. Where was common sense?

But we invoke common sense with no great respect. It is obvious most of the merit of *Wild 90* is in or right next to the obscenity itself. The obscenity

loosened stores of improvisation, gave a beat to the sound, opened the actors to figures of speech—creativity is always next to the verboten—and opens all of us now to the opportunity of puzzling the subject a dangerous step further.

THE PRINCE: Ya know he's the only guy I know, does a push-up, it hurts him in the ass.

TWENTY YEARS: He's got a big ass.

THE PRINCE: I wonder how he got the big ass. How'd you get the big ass?

TWENTY YEARS: Sittin'.

THE PRINCE: No, that ass is too big to get sittin'.

BUZZ CAMEO: That's a nice suit ya got there.

THE PRINCE: Ya know how he got that big ass? He got that big 'cause he has his radar in his ass.

Obscenity is, of course, a picayune topic for those not offended by it, but it does violence to the composure of those who are. It shatters a subtle and enjoyable balance—their sense of good taste. Yet the right to use obscene language in a movie (if there will come a day when the courts so decide it is a right) has at bottom nothing to do with questions of taste. One could show a man and woman naked in the sexual act, and yet done well, the filming could still be said to be in good taste—the film images might slip by as abstractly as the wash of waves against a piling. Yet I do not have the wish to film such a scene, good taste or poor. It is of course a problem no film director can decide in advance, for the twentieth century, our century of technology, the bomb, the concentration camp, the mass media, and the mass drug addiction, may yet be the century where the orgy and the collective replace the family. It is not necessarily a speculation to steep you in joy—in the depths of an orgy with the air full of smog, hard-beat fornications to the sound of air conditioners, nose colds, who indeed would want to film copulation in such a bag? Still, the century rushes toward this kind of investigation. One can easily foresee a movie which will depend for its motivation, nay, for its story itself, on the unveiling of the act. Still I would not wish to be the man who directed such a scene. These days, these years, we prong into

the mystery from every angle, with scalpels, seminars, electronic probes, we cannot bear the thought any of this mystery might escape us; yet the nearer we come on our surreal journey toward the germ of the creation, the further we seem removed from a life which is collectively supportable—repeat: Vietnam, race riots, traffic, frozen food, and smog—all these certified brats of science—they are by-products of the technological race into the center of the mystery. So here there is no great desire to film the sexual act even if the camera work could be superb, the actors delighted in themselves, and taste all secure. You could almost say that the heart of the sexual act might be finally none of technology's business. And work in the world of the film is work in the fluorescent light of technology.

Yet here we have a director who makes a movie with more obscene language than any film ever made. How allay the contradiction?

The director would reply there is no contradiction because obscene language has nothing to do any longer with revelations of the sexual act, it is not even much of a sweetmeat anymore for the prurient, no, obscenity is rather become a style of speech, a code of manners, a transmission belt for humor and violence—it can shatter taste because it speaks of violence, it is probably the most ineradicable measure of the potential violence of social class upon class, for no one swears so much as the men of the proletariat when alone—that has not changed since Marx's time. Today obscene language bears about the same relation to good society that the realistic portraits of the naturalistic novel of Zola's time brought to the hypocrisies and niceties of the social world of France—the naturalistic novel came like high forceps to a difficult birth. Zola was tasteless, Zola outraged, Zola's work was raw as bile, but in its time it was essential, it gave sanity to the society of its time, it gave accuracy and deliverance for it helped to reduce the collective hypocrisy of the epoch, and so served to deliver the Victorian world from the worst of its Victorianism, and thus gave the world over to the twentieth century in slightly improved condition.

Well, one would not claim the shade of Zola's talents or merits for *Wild 90*. It is in the end a most modest pioneer work. It is indeed not even a naturalistic production, not nearly so much as it is one of the first existential movies ever made. Suffice the question in this way: we live in an American society which can remind you of nothing so much as two lobes of a brain, two hemispheres of communication themselves intact but surgically severed from one another. Between the finer nuances of High Camp and the

shooting of firemen in race riots is, however, a nihilistic gulf which may never be negotiated again by living Americans. But this we may swear on: the Establishment will not begin to come its half of the distance through the national gap until its knowledge of the real social life of that other isolated and—what Washington will insist on calling—deprived world is accurate, rather than liberal, condescending, and over-programmatic. Yet for that to happen, every real and subterranean language must first have its hearing, even if taste will be in the process as outraged as a vegetarian forced to watch the flushing of the entrails in the stockyards. You can ask: what point to this? The vegetarian became a vegetarian precisely because he could not bear the slaughter of animals. Yes, your director will say, but let him see how it is really done, let him know it in detail. Then perhaps he will be twice the vegetarian he was before. Or maybe by picking up a gun to defend animals, he will kill humans and end as a cannibal.

Capital, you will say, your strategy for ambushing yourself is superb. You have just done in your argument.

No, rather something may have insisted on taking us further into the argument. The vegetarian, once become a cannibal, knows at least what he has become: if the world is thus turned a shift more barbarous, it is also a click less insane. Each year, civilization gives its delineated promise of being further coterminous with schizophrenia. Good taste, we would submit, may be ultimately the jailer who keeps all good ladies and angels of civilization firmly installed in the innocence of their dungeon, that Stygian incarceration whose walls are adorned with the elegant draperies of the very best and blindest taste. All kneel! Homage to my metaphor! The aim of a robust art still remains: that it be hearty, that it be savage, that it serve to feed audiences with the marrow of its honest presence. In the end, robust art pays cash, because in return for roiling the delicacies of more than one fine and valuable nervous system, it gives in return light and definition and blasts of fresh air to the corners of the world, it is a firm presence in the world, and so helps to protect the world from its dissolution in compromise, lack of focus, and entropy, entropy, that disease of progressive formlessness, that smog, last and most poisonous exhaust of the devil's foul mouth. Yeah, and yes! Obscenity is where God and Devil meet, and so is another of the avatars in which art ferments and man distills.



Norman Mailer directing Camera man Pennebaker on set of *Maidstone*, Long Island, 1968 ©Daniel Kramer.



Norman Mailer directing on *Maidstone* set, Long Island NY 1968, © Daniel Kramer