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"Freddie, can you talk?": The Ethics of Betrayal in Frederic Raphael's Memoir *Eyes Wide Open* (1999)

Film director Stanley Kubrick died on 7 March 1999. Three days later, the biographer, novelist and Oscar-winning screenwriter, Frederic Raphael, had put together a three-page proposal for a prospective memoir he wished to write about his time collaborating with Kubrick on the screenplay for *Eyes Wide Shut*, Kubrick's posthumous final film. Dated 10 March 1999, the proposal explains how, in the wake of Kubrick's unexpected death, public curiosity in the man was insatiable. Kubrick had been an intensely private individual and this, Raphael commented, "lent intimacy to our conversations; we enjoyed a kind of disembodied closeness".¹ Over the course of their two-year collaboration in the early 1990s, the pair engaged in lengthy conversations, often over the telephone for several hours at a time, as well as several occasions when Raphael visited Kubrick's home at St. Albans. Such an intense relationship was not uncommon between Kubrick and his collaborators. Take the writer Michael Herr who had collaborated with Kubrick; Herr said in the foreword to his own memoir about Kubrick that, "I once described 1980-83 as a single phone call lasting three years, with interruptions".²

Raphael's resultant memoir, *Eyes Wide Open*, revealed the nature of the conversations he had with Kubrick, as well as opening the readers' eyes to the disembodied closeness involved in the working relationship between the two men. The memoir was not merely an intimate account of Raphael's time writing *Eyes Wide Shut*, but a chance to write about and expose the reclusive Kubrick to the wider world. His initial proposal for the memoir explained that he intended not to "reinforce the myth of his [Kubrick's] disagreeable, tyrannical, paranoid character", but rather to "put right some of the things said about K"³ – the more malicious rumours and negative press creations around Kubrick had come to portray him as some modern-day Howard Hughes hermit figure. Whether this was achieved, or whether Raphael instead exploited Kubrick's death to his own advantage, is the focus of this article, which

will explore the ethics of Raphael's 'betrayal' of Kubrick in *Eyes Wide Open*.

The memoir is fraught with ethical dilemmas, particularly in its writing style. Raphael disclosed in his proposal that he intended the book to be cinematic, utilising a combination of five differing writing styles: a non-fiction prose form, a screenplay formatted style, a talking-heads dialogue style, journal entries, and letter extracts. Raphael said he could remember well much of the dialogue exchanges he had shared with Kubrick, but his professed ability to remember his exchanges means he is purporting to be writing an accurate account of not only his own time spent working on *Eyes Wide Shut*, but also of another individual – Stanley Kubrick. Such validation is to lend the memoir an authenticity and authority to which Kubrick had no agency. It is a primary ethical concern of life writing that when a writer claims, as Raphael does, to be accurately retelling events and the narrative includes other people beyond himself, "he takes it upon himself to expose others in ways of his choosing".⁴ The writer's construction of an individual is interpreted by the reader through the choice of writing style and of the anecdotal evidence selected. This is not to suggest that writers like Raphael are not free to write what they wish, but rather such a right must be balanced with the rights of those being exposed particularly when they "have no control over the way that they are portrayed".⁵

Such ethical considerations were at the crux of the reaction of the Kubrick family, in particular Kubrick's widow, Christiane Kubrick, who issued a response to the publication of Raphael's memoir on her website. The public statement denounced *Eyes Wide Open* and Raphael for violating Kubrick's trust and confidence. "Whilst Mr Raphael knew and confirmed in his book that Stanley valued his privacy", wrote Christiane Kubrick, "he showed, by publishing his book, ostensibly in the interests of art, that he in fact has no respect for that privacy".⁶ Conversely, however, Christiane Kubrick heads the statement by claiming that she intended to, "take the opportunity to confirm the truths about Stanley and correct the inaccuracies, at least the gross ones".⁷ She would go on to publish a picture memoir of her late husband's life and career with her aim being to "correct the mistaken view of Stanley as some sort of isolationist misanthrope".⁸

It is not the purpose of this article to assert the validity of Raphael's memoir, but rather to consider the ethics of betrayal in self-life writing

via a case study of *Eyes Wide Open*. Raphael's variety of writing styles challenges the genre and raises questions as to their unethical utilisation. Memoir is a genre that is "by its very nature, a fallible, subjective, and often deliberately artful representation of the past".⁹ A subgenre of autobiography, memoirs burgeoned in the 1990s, James Atlas proclaiming it "the age of the literary memoir".¹⁰ What this flourish of memoirs says about us as avid readers – for their proliferation is on the back of commercial success – is that we are living in a culture where "the very notion of privacy, of a zone beyond the reach of public probing, has become an alien concept".¹¹ The British tradition of the memoir is evident, from the symbiotic development of the fictitious memoir disguised as truth in the eighteenth-century novel by the likes of Daniel Defoe, with his *Robinson Crusoe* and *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, works that were at the time mistakenly read as non-fiction accounts of real-life events. By the twentieth century, the memoir had become a literary staple, though was often confusingly labelled autobiography due to the view of memoir as inferior and salacious. Whereas autobiography covers the entirety of a life of an individual, memoir is about capturing a moment in that life, or recounting a memory of a particular event. To this end, the likes of Winston Churchill (*My Early Life*) and Siegfried Sassoon (*Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*) produced self-life writing that be deemed as memoir. The British memoir developed into a genre that utilised sardonic wit and irreverent black humour, incorporating novelistic techniques and embellished stories;¹² from Clive James's *Unreliable Memoirs*, to Quentin Crisp's numerous memoirs including *The Naked Civil Servant*.

Considering memoir in a post-modern age, it has seen a turn toward an outpouring of personal testament that depends on the author divulging explicit secrets and being honest about one's discretions, a genre described as being one of "crass sensationalism"¹³. Yet, there is a strain of British memoir that has a rhetorical focus and a sarcasm that lends itself to the gentle mocking of its characters by its authors. Raphael's work is part of the British tradition in its use of rhetorical devices and black humour, the author mocking not only himself, but the characters he writes about. But *Eyes Wide Open* is indicative of a turn in British memoir toward post-modern sensationalism, becoming tantalisingly scandalous, gossip mongering and "dwelling on the sordid excesses of oneself".¹⁴

This article will explore the ethical risks inherent in the "sordid excesses"¹⁵ of Raphael's memoir by exploring the disparate writing styles he utilises. I will first examine the contexts of Raphael's employment by Kubrick and the subsequent publication of *Eyes Wide Open* and then move on to analyse Raphael's character portrayal of Kubrick. I will conclude with an exploration of the reaction to the book by the Kubrick Estate. Raphael justified the memoir's publication as humanising Kubrick and offering a more rounded character portrayal that sanctioned biographies of Kubrick did not. The essay will aim to understand the nature of betrayal within self-life writing and the unspoken code of ethics that binds all writers; after all, "when a writer addresses biographical and historical fact, telling the truth is essential".¹⁶ The need for biographical and historical accuracy is even more imperative when the prose is rendered with imaginative interventions, whereby reality is finessed with fictional flourish.¹⁷

A Contractual Vow of Silence

I want to first look at how Raphael came to be employed by Kubrick and the breach of Kubrick's privacy. I will also examine briefly the use of letters and notes sent by Kubrick to Raphael in the book and the ethical implication.

Frederic Raphael was a noted screenwriter who had won an Academy Award for his screenplay *Darling*, and a nomination for *Two for the Road*. Kubrick's attraction to have Raphael write *Eyes Wide Shut* was obvious given his writing credentials. The film was to be an adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* and Kubrick approached Raphael in the spring of 1994. As with any Kubrick production, the film was shrouded in secrecy and the director wanted to keep it that way by binding his employees to a contract with strict confidentiality clauses. This was to prevent press speculation that might compromise his financial negotiations with Warner Bros. when the time came to put the script into production. Yet, this confidentiality extended to cover the privacy of Stanley Kubrick himself. The initial contract viewed by Raphael included a clause that required him to concede all "decisions concerning who had written any part of the script and who had conceived any of the ideas contained in it".¹⁸ Raphael managed to

eschew such conditions by telling Kubrick he could not work under strict creative bondage. Kubrick relented and had the clause removed.¹⁹ But the clause in question also contained a sub-clause, whereby those employed to work with Kubrick were "bound by a legally composed obligation never to disclose anything about their experiences in his employ".²⁰ Raphael was fully aware that, in asking to be rid of the main clause, it allowed him – by default – to be exempt from the sub-clause. And this awareness meant he was conscious that Kubrick had invested trust in him, welcoming him in to his inner circle in order to collaborate with the confidence that he would not lay bare his private life to anyone else. Though he was now no longer legally bound to maintain confidentiality about Kubrick's private life, there is an argument that Raphael was ethically aware and had to weigh up the moral judgment of whether to expose the details of Kubrick's private life to the wider world – something which Kubrick had avoided throughout his career – or to remain silent. Raphael seemed to delight in the fact that he was not legally bound by Kubrick's confidentiality clauses. In the aftermath of the publication of *Eyes Wide Open*, he commented that there was nothing the Kubrick Estate could do "to stop me from publishing what was at once the truth about working for Stanley and a tribute to his undeniable genius [...] to have indicated that he was not without flaws [...] was deemed tantamount to blasphemy".²¹

Raphael explicitly knew he was betraying Kubrick's confidence with the publication of *Eyes Wide Open*. Here was an author breaking the implicit confidence of another for creative gain, placing that other as a key protagonist of the memoir. But before one places such ethical guilt solely with Raphael, it is necessary to consider the wider set of complicated ethics at work in this case. Raphael had little concern over exposing others in his autobiographical and memoirist works. He even went on to write the fictionalised memoirs of a retired French diplomat in *A Double Life*. Discussing his ethical approach to life writing, Raphael has commented that, "I am as candid as the libel law allows",²² clarifying that his writings are validated by the precise keeping of personal notebooks where he impels himself to "accurate observation, of life and of ideas and their derivatives".²³ Kubrick and his staffers were fully aware of Raphael's background as a memoirist and biographer, with research on the author being conducted prior to his recruitment.²⁴ This is not to suggest that, by being informed of Raphael's tendency for

non-fiction writing, Kubrick was complicit in the ethical betrayal of *Eyes Wide Open*, but it may suggest a naivety. The two men clearly differed in their understanding and concern for privacy. Raphael regularly emphasises his inability to understand Kubrick's almost 'paranoid' desire for privacy, when he himself was more than happy to bare himself to the world through his prose, even in *Eyes Wide Open*, where he lays out his own anxieties and inner thoughts alongside those of Kubrick.

These differing ideologies around privacy are evidenced in the way Raphael includes in the memoir extracts of letters sent to him by Kubrick. These extracts are usually incorporated in the non-fiction prose form and are often snippets of sentences. One anecdote in the book shows how these extracts were utilised to construct a particular image of Kubrick as excessively private. After having worked for a number of months on the first draft of the *Eyes Wide Shut* screenplay, Raphael, wishing to be paid, asked the William Morris agency to make copies of the script to be sent to both Kubrick and to his own agent, Ron Mardigan.²⁵ The agency obliged, wrapping it in a folder headed with the company's logo. This alerted Kubrick to the fact that Raphael had allowed others to see the script. Kubrick responded by sending the script back to Raphael and attaching a letter, which Raphael quotes. Kubrick was too upset at the discovery of the script in the William Morris wrapping to read it, and Raphael quotes him as saying, "I could scarcely believe my eyes",²⁶ and that he could not bring himself to read the script in a "negative frame of mind".²⁷

Despite Kubrick's repeated insistence that Raphael concede to his desire for privacy, it was not being acknowledged; in fact, Raphael goes on to expose Kubrick's protestations by publishing extracts from Kubrick's letter and his own letter in reply, and over the course of the next five pages publishes brief extracts from the heated correspondence that ensues. Kubrick is angered by Raphael referring to his need for confidentiality and privacy as being a foible, "even if you don't understand why this is so", he thought that his credentials *as a producer* entitled him to more than having his concerns being off-handedly dismissed as one of his 'foibles'.²⁸ Raphael's blatant disregard of Kubrick's wish for privacy raises the issue of the need to even publish *Eyes Wide Open* and intimate details of Kubrick's life; Raphael's insights throughout serve to (purposely) bring Kubrick down to the level

of a mere mortal being, of flesh-and-blood, when telling us at one point that "Kubrick went to pee".²⁹ Such detail serves no advantage to being placed in to the public domain and one must ask,

... on what grounds is it possible to argue that readers can be served, not soiled, by the expansion of the domain subjected to the glare of publicity? What is important for a given community, at a given historical moment, to know?³⁰

If Raphael's intentions were to reveal Kubrick as a human being, to deconstruct the myth of the cult-auteur, then it is to the numerous writing styles that he uses that we must turn to understand such a construction.

The Ethics of Prose Style

The unique selling point of Raphael's memoir was his ability to, "catch Kubrick's voice as no one else could".³¹ Very little was known publicly about Kubrick, with actual imagery and footage of the director being rare. Thus, Raphael's claim to recreate Kubrick's voice in *Eyes Wide Open* is predicated on the very notion of exposing his privacy.³² The lack of information about Kubrick led to speculation in the press, which Kubrick did little to control, and what resulted was an image of a recluse. Raphael, in part, justified his memoir in terms of an attempt to correct this public image of Kubrick, providing readers with, "a chance to 'hear' the thinking attitudes and methods of a great director".³³ Raphael contended that biographical works to date had pieced together an ugly profile of Kubrick³⁴ and that his memoir would counter this through an accurate construction of the director.

Raphael's claim to be able to catch Kubrick's voice is demonstrated through the use of several differing styles of writing: a screenplay format, a talking-heads style, the inclusion of journal and letter extracts, and a first-person non-fiction prose form. Taken together, these styles present a significant character portrayal of Kubrick, but it often verges on the caricature and brings into question Raphael's claim to be presenting a more accurate picture of Kubrick. I want to focus on Raphael's use of the screenplay format, the talking-heads format, and the ethical dilemma of his use of journal extracts and letters.

The screenplay format aims to cinematise the infrequent face-to-face encounters Raphael had with Kubrick. During their two-year collaboration, he met Kubrick face-to-face on just four occasions at his stately home. These face-to-face encounters with Kubrick are recalled through the use of a studio-formatted screenplay in which there are scene titles with the location and time of the action, the prose (action) is manifestation-orientated describing what is visible and audible and is authoritative in nature, and the dialogue is centred on the page, with the characters' names capitalised. The use of this style plays up the absurdity Raphael felt about the situation, travelling to meet this legendary figure at his mansion. But the novelty of this writing style in the memoir is outweighed by the form's fictitious origins. The screenplay is associated with the invention of fiction and leaves the reader questioning whether the action taking place in these segments is in itself fictitious. Raphael turns the life of Kubrick – or at least the few moments he was exposed to – into a biographical film. Biographical films dramatise the life of historically grounded figures, but in a generalised, even romanticised manner.³⁵ One is not expected to take away the explicit truth of an individual when viewing a biographical film, but rather an interpretation of the figure. These screenplay moments ground us in a time and place and urge us to cinematically visualise the characters of Raphael and Kubrick. One such cinematic retelling is when Raphael goes to meet Kubrick to discuss the first forty pages of the screenplay he had written. The scene is headed INT.KUBRICK RESIDENCE – DAY and Kubrick asks Raphael if he would like something to eat because he does not want him to have a migraine. In the action, Raphael writes how Kubrick offers a slight smile of ironic affection and how he, F.R., "smiles too; he feels a certain affection for the man who had once intimidated him".³⁶

Raphael refers to himself in the third person, as he does in the talking-heads style, indicated by the use of his initialised proper name. Raphael's intention is not clear, though the use of the third person in autobiographical genres may be a "serious (or humorous) use of biographical presentation, imitation of the psychological novel, indication of the formation of a double".³⁷ What the use of the third person does allow is for internal distancing,³⁸ that leads to a "disparity of past and present".³⁹ The resort to the third person at the same time shows the subject (Raphael) to be admittedly fragmented and undermines

traditional notions of the autobiographical self, indication of a "post-modernist defiance of boundaries".⁴⁰

If we are to take these screenplay moments as fictitious representations, with Kubrick and Raphael rendered as characters in a film screenplay, does this momentarily extricate them from the ethical boundaries of the autobiographical prose forms of the rest of the book? If non-fiction has a set of ethical considerations that do not apply to fiction,⁴¹ we can surely alleviate these segments from the same ethical considerations one would apply to the first-person non-fiction prose form. But it is Raphael's recourse to be recreating an accurate picture of Kubrick wherein the ethical dilemmas are present. The writing styles used by Raphael are in the realms of imaginative intervention and these still hold "an obligation to truth".⁴² A writer may be inclined to take a leap of imagination and recreate moments that are impossible to verify;⁴³ the scenes with Kubrick often involved only the two men and no one else, and with the passing of Kubrick, there is only the word of Raphael as to their verifiability. Therefore, what has been written can never wholly be said to be what actually happened, but rather what Raphael remembered and then crafted into a narrative. As Miller has said of such imaginative interventions, "one *might* be truth; the other, a good story".⁴⁴

I want to turn to Raphael's 'talking-heads' writing style, used to reconstruct the telephone calls he had with Kubrick. These segments usually commenced with a variation of Kubrick's asking Raphael, "Freddie, can you talk?", presumably in an attempt to capture Kubrick's 'voice.' This writing style is the most realistic, achieving a level of disembodied-ness that Raphael has said best described his relationship with Kubrick. Removed of metaphorical flourishes, these dialogue exchanges can be read at a more objective level; interactions with others take place through the use of speech and so the recording of exactly what an individual said is to capture the moment more precisely, but only if we can be sure it *is* what someone said and is not a fictional recreation. The first appearance of this style comes when Kubrick phones Raphael to ask him if he would like to work on his new project:

F.R.: Hello.

S.K.: Is this Freddie? This is Stanley. How are you?

F.R.: Pretty good.

S.K.: Is this a good time?

F.R.: Absolutely.

S.K.: Good. So listen, are you free to work on something with me?

The telephone conversation continues with Kubrick asking Raphael if he would consider reading the book he wishes to adapt:

S.K.: Will you read something if I send it?

F.R.: Of course. What is it? A book?

S.K.: It's a piece of material. How do I get it to you?

F.R.: Is it, ah, science fiction?

S.K.: Who told you that?

F.R.: (Covers mouthpiece, to SYLVIA) *Christ!* It's science fiction.

S.K.: (Overlapping) Because no, it's not. It's something else.

The use of the parenthesis breaks the disembodied-ness of the style by introducing a visual element. It in effect places us in the position of Raphael's space, listening to the talking head of Kubrick. Distance is placed between the reader and Kubrick, but an intimacy is achieved between the reader and Raphael. The talking-heads conversations build a mystique around Kubrick, a voice with no matching visual cues, in contrast to the visual cues Raphael provides for his own character.

Kubrick's 'voice' also appears within the memoir as snippets of letter extracts or recalled spoken word in Raphael's journal extracts. Raphael goes further in his exposing of the private conversations he had with Kubrick by his inclusion of these journal extracts. The journal entries reflect on the conversations he had with Kubrick and evidence his thoughts on his personality, which he found complex and curious. One such entry, from late May 1995, reveals a disturbing remark. Days after the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday, Kubrick apparently told Raphael that he thought Hitler had been "right about almost everything".⁴⁵ Raphael contends that the remark was said to purposely shock, rather than an expression of a genuine belief, but its inclusion, with no context surrounding how it had been raised in conversation, does little to address Raphael's assertion that the memoir would allow the reader to hear the thoughts and attitudes of a great director. If Kubrick uttered the remark about Hitler with the aim to shock and outrage, surely its inclusion in the memoir by Raphael attempts exactly

the same. Presented is an image not of a convivial family man, but of an individual that always looked to challenge the boundaries of extremity and deplorability, both in his working collaborations and in his films. It is as if Raphael is saying that he has discovered where the depravity and darkness of human behaviour in Kubrick's films stems from. It is a portrait disputed by the Kubrick family, who talked of Kubrick's "domestic virtues",⁴⁶ something that Raphael did not recognise. His memoir is not of Kubrick the family man, but of Kubrick the filmmaker and collaborator and of his "professional conduct".⁴⁷ Raphael has since said, in defence of his portrayal of Kubrick, "what did they know of my working relationship [...] I never heard him say a single word about his beloved wife and children".⁴⁸

Raphael does attempt a justification of the inclusion of his own journal entries from the time as being an attempt not to "reveal my real feelings about Stanley", but to evidence how "exasperating" Kubrick was at times.⁴⁹ It is also a way of allowing him to describe the writing process and the stress and anxieties a writer goes through, particularly when the collaboration is as intense as it was with Kubrick. Each time Raphael submitted a draft of *Eyes Wide Shut* to Kubrick, there would be days, if not weeks of waiting for a response. The anticipation and desire to meet Kubrick's expectations routinely disturbed Raphael's vacations with his wife or holiday periods spent with family, such as one Christmas. The suspense led Raphael to question the worth of Kubrick, to become angry due to the power he held over him: "Who was Kubrick anyway? He had directed some movies [...] Big deal".⁵⁰

What needs to be understood about *Eyes Wide Open* is that it is a memoir of an extraordinary episode in Raphael's life and he makes remarks throughout the work to this end. He is in awe of the talent of Kubrick and of his work and insists that he would not have worked under such conditions and for such length of time if it had been anyone else. Kubrick's mystique lends almost an air of absurdity to Raphael's account, as he approaches the house of a man who has no equal in the film industry, only to discover that he is not some ethereal, omniscient genius, but a man with "foibles" just like himself. Raphael has stood firm with his ethics and right to include Kubrick in his memoir in the face of objection by the Kubrick Estate; what he is including in the memoir is an authentic character portrayal – as he saw it – disguised in fictional prose. But the recourse of four disparate writing styles

complicates how the character of Kubrick is being transmitted to the reader; his use of third person and his cinematizing of various scenes place distance between Raphael and the events. He prevents the reader from getting closer to Kubrick, instead – intentional or not – revealing the distance that existed in his own relationship with the director. The writing styles that deviate in to fictional flourishes are juxtaposed with the 'conventional' non-fiction prose, itself prone to fictional intervention, and in doing so creating a post-modern ironic effect for the reader. The disparate writing styles ask the reader to question if the memoir should even be read as such, or rather be seen in the vein of black humour that pervaded much of Kubrick's own work. The playfulness of the writing styles treats this extraordinary episode in Raphael's life with a lack of earnestness. The awkward mixture of writing styles mocks the genre of memoir in an acknowledgement of the form's distinctly British tradition. It is not meant to be serious, as in the American memoir, but rather to be read humorously, ironically and satirically.

Sanctioned Truth

Raphael has confronted the ethical controversies surrounding *Eyes Wide Open* and its denunciation by the Kubrick Estate in subsequent essays. These polemical defences argued that the Kubrick Estate were constructing a sanctioned biography, whereby a divine image of Kubrick was being presented, of a man without flaws and of a transcendent genius. Raphael highlighted the case of the touring Kubrick Exhibition, in which an accompanying catalogue contained a wholly different perspective of Kubrick to the one Raphael said he knew: "The Gospel according to Harlan and his acolytes depicts a Kubrick without humour and without faults".⁵¹ Raphael saw the exhibition catalogue as an advertisement for the Kubrick 'brand' as opposed to insightful biographical assessment.⁵² Rather than a portrait of a human, a construction of Kubrick was instead offered in which his humanity had been 'amputated'.⁵³ Raphael asserts that his ethical motivations for writing the memoir were to rescue Kubrick's life and personality from such worship. His aim was to position him as a human being first, genius second. His memoir was an attempt at a warts-and-all portrayal, not to disparage Kubrick, but to understand him as something other than a

mechanical hermit as seen in press accounts. Raphael viewed his betrayal as not of Stanley Kubrick, but of the sanctioned biography desired by the Kubrick Estate.

Raphael defended his right "to tell a story from his perspective",⁵⁴ regardless of whether this met with the desired perception of those being written about. But these rights must be weighed against the lack of agency of those being written about.⁵⁵ By its very title – *Eyes Wide Open* – the memoir is setting us up to have our eyes opened to the private world of a very private man. Therefore, Kubrick's family took it upon themselves to defend and protect Kubrick's reputation. Christiane Kubrick viewed Raphael's exposé as a disregard of a "normal professional duty of confidence".⁵⁶ This breach of professional duty occurred on several accounts. Firstly, it would seem that the Kubrick Estate took particular issue with how they believed Raphael had given a false impression to his literary agent that the memoir was "both authorised and welcomed by Stanley's family and friends".⁵⁷ The memoir was not sanctioned. Secondly, by exposing Kubrick, writing about him from his own perspective and not receiving the permission to do so from his family, Raphael is said to have caused pain to the family and to have denigrated Kubrick.⁵⁸ As a result of these breaches of confidence, Raphael became a pariah during the release of *Eyes Wide Shut*, with Warner Bros. not inviting him to the premiere of the film. Speaking shortly afterwards in an interview, Raphael said of his treatment by the Kubrick Estate and Warner Bros.: "They didn't say I could say what I've said [...] here in the U.K. they have the freedom of speech, so I think with any luck I shall get away with it".⁵⁹

This in part acknowledges that *Eyes Wide Open* is a memoir that purposely exposes Kubrick, regardless of whether the portrait is genial or otherwise. But the extent to which Raphael had access in order to expose Kubrick's private life was limited. Raphael gives Kubrick the nickname Bluebeard, a name taken from the fairy tale character epitomised in Charles Perrault's seventeenth-century version of the story. Bluebeard was a monster of a man with many secrets contained within a room in his house that he prohibited his wife from entering. Entry to the room led to the discovery of bloodied corpses of women to whom he had previously been married.⁶⁰ Raphael humorously claims that such a room must have existed in Kubrick's 'castle', where writers before him had died and been "buried in its recesses".⁶¹ Whilst Raphael's

comparison is meant in gallows-humour, the insinuation is similar to that of Emma Tennant's memoir of poet Ted Hughes, *Burnt Diaries*. As Middlebrook has argued, "for Tennant, Hughes resembles Bluebeard in being a man who possesses a secret that can ignite [...] overwhelming curiosity".⁶² Raphael's decision to refer to Kubrick as Bluebeard reveals just how little he is able to reveal for how little he knows. Kubrick keeps Raphael locked out of his secret room – his private, personal world – and as a result, all Raphael has to go on in understanding the director is speculation and supposition. Raphael is not alone in making leaps of judgment about character based on scant fact and only snippets of understanding. The media, given no access to the 'real' Kubrick, instead created a character of hermetic, paranoid, and obsessive qualities.

Conclusion

In many respects, there were two Kubricks; Kubrick the family man and Kubrick the filmmaker, and both personas remained enigmatic and deeply private. Raphael has attempted to justify the ethical righteousness of his work – revealing the humanity he believes sanctioned biographies have robbed Kubrick of – and his freedom to write about whom he chooses, but he knew of Kubrick's desire for privacy and there is no question that it was betrayed. But his ethical reasoning is lost in a work that mixes fiction and non-fiction writing styles so as to leave the reader unsure of whether what is being presented is merely a caricature of a man that even Raphael did not truly know. The mixing of writing styles by Raphael is in line with the tradition of the British memoir and its post-modern irony and satire, but at the same time, the ethical implications, particularly surrounding a figure as private as Kubrick, cannot be ignored. The ultimate effect of these styles is to create distance; distance between the reader and the character of Kubrick, but also revealing a distance that existed between Raphael and Kubrick.

Raphael concludes the memoir by emphasising its post-modern irony, but also the issue of distance. Their 'friendship' – if that is what it can be called – remained amicable, with infrequent contact during the shooting of *Eyes Wide Shut* and with Kubrick extending invitations for Raphael to visit the set.⁶³ Raphael's final correspondence with Kubrick occurred at Christmas 1998: "Dear Freddie, Looking forward to seeing

you. Best Wishes, Stanley".⁶⁴ But he never did see Raphael again, since he passed away several months later. The memoir ends with this moment, with Raphael utilising post-modern black humour to suggest that he felt no emotion, instead conflating the news with his hearing that Newcastle United had beaten Everton in the English FA Cup. This news in fact takes priority over Kubrick's death, he notes, with Newcastle's football victory printed above an insert of Kubrick's death on the following day's newspaper.⁶⁵ Kubrick has immediately become a printed story in the writer's mind, their relationship at Kubrick's death perhaps as distant as it was when he was alive.

Notes

¹ Raphael, Frederic (1999a). Letter to Deborah. Stanley Kubrick Archives (SKA). SK/17/5/13. 10 March 1999, 1.

² Herr, Michael (2000). *Kubrick*. London: Picador, 11.

³ Raphael (1999a), 1.

⁴ Gooblar, David (2008). "The Truth Hurts: The Ethics of Philip Roth's 'Autobiographical' Books." *Journal of Modern Literature* 32.1, 36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁶ Kubrick, Christiane. Home page. Web. 1999.

<<http://eyeswideshut.warnerbros.com/ck/ckenglish.htm>>.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Kubrick, Christiane (2002). *Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures*. London: Little, Brown, 1.

⁹ Couser, Thomas G (2012). *Memoir: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 85.

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- ²⁰ Raphael (2013), 56.
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- ²² Boyd, William (2012). "In Conversation with Frederic Raphael." *PN Review* 38.5, 27.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ McDowell, Frederick (n.d.) "Frederic Raphael - Contemporary Novelists." SKA, SK/1/2/3/6/19.
- ²⁵ Raphael (1999b), 121.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.
- ³⁰ Miller, Nancy K. (2004). "The Ethics of Betrayal: Diary of a Memoirist." *The Ethics of Life Writing*. Ed. Paul John Eakin. London: Cornell University Press, 151.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Such a low profile meant that a conman, Alan Conway, was able to impersonate the director at celebrity parties throughout the 1990s. See the film *Colour Me Kubrick*. Dir. Brian W. Cook. 2005 for a fictional retelling of Conway's exploits.
- ³³ Raphael (1999a), 1.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ For a detailed history of the biopic genre see Custen, George F (1992). *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed Public History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Custen's work traces the evolution of the biopic within the Hollywood studio system and its representation of historical figures.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 86
- ³⁷ Lejeune, Philippe (1977). "Autobiography in the Third Person." *New Literary History*, 9.1, 34.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ³⁹ Kosta, Barbara (1994). *Recasting Autobiography: Women's Counterfictions in Contemporary German Literature and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 69.

- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.
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- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
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