Missing Links: Exploring Traces of Kubrick's "Unknown" Early Works

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Previously unseen materials donated by the Stanley Kubrick estate to the London University of the Arts Special Collections Archive sheds new light on what has been a relatively 'unknown' period in the auteur's early career, between departing *Look* magazine and forming Harris-Kubrick Pictures (1950-55) [1. Dalya Alberge, "Newly found Stanley Kubrick script ideas focus on marital strife", *The Guardian*, 12 July 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jul/12/newly-found-stanley-kubrick-script-ideas-focus-marital-strife].

The following case studies and analyses draw from this new, as yet uncatalogued material to reveal autobiographical resonances, such as Kubrick's photographic work translating into film, his personality inflecting characterisation and the 'lived' milieu of Greenwich Village and greater New York City. The archival deposit includes numerous script drafts, scenarios and dialogue fragments, revealing Kubrick's abiding concerns – obsessive love, psychosexual drama, jealousy, revenge, ambiguity, ambition and violence – lending it an overriding seediness and pulp aesthetic. It also presents a young man filled with creative energy and ideas, negotiating self-doubt while increasingly honing his skills as a writer and adapter, some of which remains adroit and affecting.

Kubrick's Photographic Imprint

Although increasing attention has been paid to Kubrick's pre-filmmaking period as a *Look* staff photographer, comparatively little attention has been paid to the intermediary, early developmental period of Kubrick as a budding filmmaker in the first half of the 1950s [2. Donald Albrecht and Sean Corcoran, eds. *Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* (New York: Taschen, 2018); Rainer Crone, *Stanley Kubrick: Drama & Shadows* –

Photographs 1945-50 (New York: Phaidon Press, 2005); Philippe Mather, *Stanley Kubrick at Look Magazine: Authorship and Genre in Photojournalism and Film* (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2013); Philippe Mather, “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: The Influence of Look Magazine on Stanley Kubrick’s Career as a Filmmaker," *Stanley Kubrick: New Perspectives*, Peter Krämer and Richard Daniels Tatjana Ljujic, eds. (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2015) pp. 20-47.] As Mather has asserted: “It should no longer be possible to think of Kubrick’s films without acknowledging that their impact owes something to the journalistic codes of realism he acquired at *Look* magazine.”[3. Philippe Mather, “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: The Influence of Look Magazine on Stanley Kubrick’s Career as a Filmmaker," *Stanley Kubrick: New Perspectives*, Peter Krämer and Richard Daniels Tatjana Ljujic, eds. (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2015) p. 46] The recent deposit of material in the Stanley Kubrick Archive affirms Mather’s proposition and provides some fascinating insights into the filmmaker’s neophyte and transitional career. The series of files from 1950-56 (e.g. *The Married Man*, *Jealousy* and *A Perfect Marriage*) showcase the interplay of many of Kubrick’s abiding psychosexual concerns with hints of autobiographical allusion. Indeed, in one creatively “staged” photographic assignment for *Look* in late 1950 (“a quite theatrical mise-en-scene”), titled “Jealousy: a Threat to Marriage”, Kubrick “reveals himself as a conscious manipulator of desired emotional and social effects” [4. Alexandra Von Stosch and Rainer Crone, "Kubrick’s Kaleidoscope: Early Photographs 1945-50," *Stanley Kubrick*, Hans-Peter Reichmann, ed. Kinematograph no. 20 (Frankfurt: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 2004), pp. 22-23].

Kubrick’s principal biographers and their informants note how important and difficult these formative years were for the emerging filmmaker.[5. Vincent LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick: A*

Biography (New York: Donald I. Fine Books, 1997); John Baxter, *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1997); *Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures* (Jan Harlan, 2001)]. Barely out of his teens, and after only four and a half years with *Look,* Kubrick 'retired' from professional still photography to pursue life as an 'independent' filmmaker. However, in these newly deposited files we can glean traces of the photographer's apprenticeship and where his *Look* assignments arguably migrated into movie characterization, scenario, setting and mise-en-scene.

A folder titled "New York Story - Oct 20 1952" contains a rough version of what later became *Killer's Kiss* (1955), further discussed below. The hero is not a boxer but a photographer, who nevertheless is described assaulting a drunk on the subway who had tried to smash his camera, downing him with a left hook. Expanding on this autobiographical-fantasy sequence are lined pages in a brown wallet titled "Old Story Ideas & Outlines: 1954-56" that evoke a setting almost identical to *Killers Kiss*, with protagonists in opposing New York bedsit apartments, a location reprised in Kubrick's unrealised "Outline for 'The Famished Monkey.'" The prose backstory of the male hero presents a quasi-philosophical and semi-autobiographical passage:

> Close as it is to life, his photography had nevertheless become a very lonely affair; without friends his life became a dreary monotone of silent work. Sometime during this period, perhaps his devotion to his work began to replace his desire for human warmth (which must include friendship and love) and despite the dark and lonely moods he would at times have, his photographs <u>were</u> improving and he imagined himself very close, indeed, to his goal. After a while it had even begun to seem to him that one could become, in a way, insulated, and superior to life by capturing it in a picture; and although this was never a conscious thought on his part, the idea spread through his body like an

> embalming fluid – almost the same effect, but for what was, perhaps, his last ~~remaining interest~~ ideal in the world of flesh and blood. The Girl.

The emphasis on leading a life devoted to photography may correspond with Kubrick immediately after graduating high school and in the lead-up to the period when he married Toba Metz and moved to Greenwich Village.

Additional lined pages from Kubrick's penciled notes foreground the importance of the hero's craft:

> He often thought that the most difficult thing for him to do was to merely [sic] the simple act of pointing his camera at a stranger and carefully focus it and take a picture. It seemed so rude, in a way – and sometimes one could feel so silly. "Hey mister take my picture!" and all at once he would be the center of attraction for a small group of derisive people. And it would take all his good natured self control to enable him to guilty [sic] walk away without panicing [sic]. And despite this – it all seemed worthwhile when he would look at a good print. He often thought it time, that life could only be understood looking backwards and could not reconcile himself to the fact that life had to be lived forwards and stopping life, as in his photography, seemed to him to be a resting place [providing] vantage where one could reflect clearly and a life that was understandable backwards and yet had to be lived forward.

Hence, Kubrick's character outline embraces photography as analogous to ontology, a material and spatio-temporal fixture from which to view and appraise people, locations and events – but only in retrospect.

The conflation of desire, sex and photographic praxis is palpable in several script fragments. Elsewhere the Boy is described: "walking streets taking pictures." He "picks up girl – dumb 5+10 – tells her he wants to photograph; is disgusted with himself afterwards." However, the

Boy later continues to exchange glances with the true object of his desire (the Girl) from their respective apartment windows. Kubrick notes for chronological clarity: "Just before this he has completed an interesting set of pictures on NY after dark – had submitted them to a picture magazine. And has an appointment to see them the following morning at 10 am." The latter reference is summarised in other scenario headings, such as "Magazine Editor + Shopping". Whether or not the Boy is a freelance photographer is unclear, but the observation draws on Kubrick's New York professional experience, evident in a range of *Look* night-time pictorial spreads shot around Manhattan.

Clearly channeling Kubrick's work for *Look*, six pages of numbered scene breakdowns include a "Flashback" to the Boy's past year: "began work on Times Square picture story and subway story. Picks up girl from 5+10 and takes her home. Mild sadism enters scene later on." Kubrick's description elsewhere of the Boy continues these "self-lacerating" themes, while noting he is "an ideal hero":

> artistic self-confidence […] forward sexually – denied himself any true feelings past years devoted to photography – had affairs with cheap shop girl types to prevent anything serious which would detract" from his profession.

Throughout many of these early scenarios Kubrick returns to the theme of sexual conquest and post-coital self-loathing, with sex and love always viewed through the eyes of a photographer:

> Boy – […] naïve – capable of deep feeling – […] romanticizes – […] imaginative enough to create entense [sic] feeling over girl only seen through windows – judged her … as a photographer could. Her paintings, clothes, furniture, face, capable of falling in love with romanticized […] conception of girl. Has fallen in love with the girl!

As noted below in *The Cop Killer* draft, Kubrick's autobiographical propensity is demonstrated in the way his protagonist Slope becomes a photographer for the fictional *Spot* magazine, a clear allusion to *Look*. Kubrick hints at the shadow life of the men who work there: "Another photographer was showing around his latest series of nudes posed in a hotel room which he invariably brought back with him after an out of town assignment."

Kubrick's work for *Look* frequently had him in the studied presence of women.[6. Bernd Kiefer, "Chess Games in the Boxing Ring: Stanley Kubrick's Early Works," *Stanley Kubrick*, Hans-Peter Reichmann, ed. Kinomatograph no. 20 (Frankfurt: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 2004)]. These included numerous assignments during 1946-50 that feature nude life models, semi-naked showgirls, fashion models, cheerleaders, acrobats, dancers, debutantes, actresses, and a spread on shoppers at a New York 5+10 (i.e. nickel and dime) variety store.[7. Donald Albrecht and Sean Corcoran, eds. *Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* (New York: Taschen, 2018)] In one resonant passage the Boy is described forcing humour into relationships with shop-girls to avoid complications: "The only way to keep things bareable is never to give them a serious answer! […] "I'm looking for a girl I can love. These gwich [i.e. Greenwich Village] 'things' become a bore after a while!" As Bernd Kiefer has observed, "As a photographer Kubrick visually anticipated almost everything that was to make up his cinematic oeuvre [including] the performance of erotic visual stimuli in photographs of show girls on stage, i.e. a kind of voyeurism that in a perverse way structures all his films by making the viewer realize that this is where the downfall begins" [8. Bernd Kiefer, "Chess Games in the Boxing Ring: Stanley Kubrick's Early Works," *Stanley Kubrick*, Hans-Peter Reichmann, ed. Kinomatograph no. 20 (Frankfurt: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 2004) p. 31).

The Cop Killer and *The Duke*: Kubrick in the City

Kubrick's early creative writing reveals an interest with the urban environment, looking at ways of setting his stories in locations across New York City, specifically Greenwich Village. The streets in which he lived served as a means of inspiration, with Kubrick placing his stories in the surrounding cafes, bars, parks and apartments. At the same time, he appears to be using the local environment to explore his own identity and his relationship with urban space, even reflecting on his quotidian practices within the city. His notebooks from the early 1950s show an iterative process of locating his stories in New York and a fascination with the interplay between urban space and the crime / thriller genre. We know that Kubrick, whilst still working as a photographer for *Look* magazine, had visited the production of Jules Dassin's *The Naked City* (1948), a noir thriller that utilised the brutality of the New York environment for its backdrop [9. Philippe Mather, *Stanley Kubrick at Look Magazine: Authorship and Genre in Photojournalism and Film* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), p. 106]. Kubrick's colleague and contemporary at *Look*, Arthur "Weegee" Felig, had worked as a visual consultant on the film, which itself had been a loose adaptation of his own collection of photographs, *Naked City* (1945) [10. Philippe Mather, *Stanley Kubrick at Look Magazine: Authorship and Genre in Photojournalism and Film* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), p. 183]. Weegee had captured unflinching portraits of urban life, photographing crime scenes and the corpses of murdered gangsters in the Lower East Side.

Both Weegee and Dassin may well have been formative influences on Kubrick's approach to exploring the urban environment. Or it may have been that Kubrick viewed the crime thriller as a suitable mode of low-budget production, allowing him to write and film his stories on the very streets he lived at a time when he had no access to Hollywood studio budgets. And

the reflections in his notebooks from this period emphasise the belief in “visual” cinema, writing that “people like action – this means visual.” Such an approach becomes clear in one of his earliest efforts at constructing a crime thriller set in New York. Tentatively titled *The Duke*, it is an early iteration of a heist film from September 1954, perhaps indicating Kubrick’s inclination towards subject matter that would later translate into *The Killing* (1956). What remains of *The Duke* is a plot outline and a series of character biographies. The Duke – originally called The Colonel – is the head of a crime gang that is planning a bank robbery. Kubrick constructed a gang of seemingly stock pulp thriller characters: Honest John, Don Juan, and Hypochondriac Muscleman.

But it is Kubrick’s use of the urban environment that is of interest. The outline is largely composed of a lengthy opening sequence, which runs to six pages and is highly visual in nature, with little to no dialogue. Instead, the focus is on the streets of New York. We follow The Duke as he window shops, taking in fine suits. As Kubrick describes him, “Everything about his manner suggests a man with costly tastes who lacks the money to gratify them.” But the appearance of a Department of Corrections truck (the subject of Kubrick’s 1949 *Look* spread “Paddy Wagon”) alters The Duke’s demeanour, “and his eyes follow it with a strange fascination. He drags a little more on his cigarette and stares reminiscently at the fading prison truck.” The sequence continues following The Duke around the streets of New York, where he encounters “a hip-swinging, overdressed girl” and later visits a local diner. Kubrick uses The Duke’s behaviour and interactions within the urban space to communicate his character, right down to a group of NYPD officers, who knowingly observe The Duke walking the streets: “They exchange a glance which clearly spells out ‘what’s the duke up to

this time?"' This is a character that is a known quantity within this environment and is clearly more comfortable wandering the streets than he is staying at home.

When Kubrick introduces the living space of The Duke – an apartment that is described as "minimal" – it reflects his experience of the often-squalid living conditions of Lower Manhattan, an autobiographical resonance of his own personal circumstances. The Duke is described as taking "four measured steps which seasoned movie-goers will recognize as the length of countless trip [sic] to-and-fro on the floor of a conventional prison cell." This sense of being trapped inside explains The Duke's preference for being out on the streets, in the open. It might also reflect the way Kubrick himself felt trapped by the confines of his own cramped living spaces. Time and again, throughout much of Kubrick's early creative writing, he revisits the apartment as a site of misery and restrictive ambition. The streets of New York, in contrast, offer a space of escape and potential fortune. A contemplation of Kubrick's own state of mind and frustrated aspirations perhaps?

Kubrick expands the visual ideas of *The Duke* in the much more detailed and thematically complex *The Cop Killer*, a treatment of over thirty pages dated April 1955. It is another attempt at a crime thriller, incorporating elements of the heist plot from *The Duke* and melding it with Kubrick's abiding interests. The story commences in Lovelace, a ghost town in Texas with a name that connotes "loveless". Earl Slope, the protagonist, is involved in an affair with the wife of Preston Howard. On hearing that Howard has discovered his philandering and wants revenge, Slope escapes Lovelace for New York and sets up a new life for himself. *The Cop Killer* then digresses into what becomes one of the most overtly autobiographical stories of Kubrick's career as he outlines the trajectory of Slope's life in New York:

> One day he discovered Greenwich Village and liked it at once. He made a couple of friends at the San Remo bar, and they took him to a party on MacDougal Street where he met some very unusual girls. This, he decided, was the place to live.

The Cop Killer presents an almost phenomenological account of Kubrick's experiences in the Village, of the sights and sounds he encountered, and of how it made him feel. It captures a slice of life of the beatnik café culture and of the bohemian attitudes of residents of the Village, serving as an historical record of the social and cultural mores of the era. Earl Slope seems to act as Kubrick's alter-ego, perhaps capturing elements of who he was and, more important, who he *wanted* to be:

> In the evenings he apportioned his time between the coffee shops where admittedly the girls might have been a little weird in dress or in their approach to life, but these qualities only seemed to enhance Earl's pleasures. You might say his evenings had become a sort of ritual. Supper at the griddle shop on 8th Street. Then on to the Rienzi Café on MacDougal Street for coffee and a little music which lately he had begun to enjoy. Afterwards down to the San Remo. […] Earl had quickly become a well-known figure around the Village and was regarded as "the real thing" by the Village characters.

Kubrick takes the visual action and the urban exploration that he experimented with in *The Duke* to the extreme in *The Cop Killer*. Dialogue is minimal and the story takes a backseat to what amounts to the psycho-geographical wanderings of Slope. On learning of the death of his father, Slope turns to a life of crime in order to raise the funds to pay for his funeral. Slope wanders the streets of The Bowery, a skid row geographical space between Greenwich Village and the Lower East Side, the latter being the principal site of Weegee's

own troubled urban exploration of New York. It represents the underbelly of society into which Slope has slipped, and perhaps into which Kubrick also fears he could fall.

Following a violent bank robbery, in which he shoots dead several police officers, Slope flees New York and returns to Lovelace. But as he kneels at his father's graveside, Preston Howard returns, "vengeance personified", and shoots Slope. As he lies dying, Slope smiles up at Preston, "Not just a grin or a friendly smile – but a triumphant smile, a scornful smile, a smile that seemed to contain the deepest insult one-man can communicate to another." A sheriff arrives at the scene and asks Preston why he has killed Slope: "I don't know…it was that smile, I guess."

The Cop Killer is a fatalistic and existential work, one that draws on coincidence to advance plot, but which constructs a story world more concerned with the urban environment and its impact on the main character. At one point, Kubrick even muses on the role of fate in a conversation between Slope and a writer, saying that, "psychoanalysis was ruining the morality of the world. She said it took the burden of moral responsibility off the individual and let him justify all his wicked deeds by allowing that he was a victim of forces beyond his control or understanding." But certainly, Slope is not a character that is in control. He is persistently transformed by each new space he inhabits, from the bohemian beatnik that he becomes in Greenwich Village to the desperate bank robber of the Bowery. Kubrick uses the urban environment to explore his own identity and to construct alternative personalities for himself, of an imagined life that might have been. During the early 1950s, Kubrick's personal circumstances were never secure, and he reflects his, at times, own desperate situation in his stories, with the urban space symbolising the fragility of society. Slope slips between the cracks, falling from the civilization of Greenwich Village and its café culture, into the chaos

and brutality of the Lower East Side and its legions of losers and forgotten people. Kubrick constructs New York as a site of high culture, but also of depraved depths.

Kubrick as adapter-auteur

Killer's Kiss is interesting to study in the light of this new archival material because the film pre-dates the 1960s period in which Thomas Leitch says Kubrick transformed himself from a "metteur en scene" to an auteur.[8. Thomas Leitch, *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to the Passion of the Christ*. Kindle edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), Kindle Locations 3413-3417.] Kubrick iteratively shaped and reshaped his materials through early fragments and the screenplays *Along Came a Spider* and *The Nymph and the Maniac.* Comparing them reveals traces that echo throughout Kubrick's entire oeuvre, particularly his approaches to sexual morality and to his writer/collaborators, in this case Howard O. Sackler. This relationship presages Kubrick's later activities as an auteur adapter.

Analysing these materials through the framework of adaptation studies addresses two gaps in the scholarly literature. Firstly, the screenplay has historically been neglected in adaptation studies.[9. Jack Boozer, *Authorship in Film Adaptation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 1] Secondly, *Killer's Kiss* has not been considered extensively in terms of adaptation. Greg Jenkins does not identify it as an adaptation at all, probably because Kubrick was working from his own screenplay.[10. Greg Jenkins, *Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1997), p. 2] However, I. Q. Hunter considers it under the auspices of adaptation because the scripts were at least co-authored with another: Howard O. Sackler.[11. I.Q. Hunter, "Introduction:

Kubrick and Adaptation." *Adaptation* 8, no. 3 (2015): p. 278.] That said, Hunter does not give it sustained attention.

Among the archival papers is a fragment that limns the basic situation that will be elaborated through *Along Came a Spider, The Nymph and the Maniac,* and *Killer's Kiss.* It begins to develop the Oedipal themes evident in the final film, with a sexually charged emotional blackmail scenario involving a niece and an uncle in a situation that resembles the Gloria/Rapallo dynamic. While these early prose treatments display a surprising level of maturity and acumen, the documents also paradoxically reveal Kubrick's callowness and occasional puerile humour through his doodles and sketches: "sexesex" and "Pervert". On the reverse of one of the draft pages is a drawing of a faux movie advertisement featuring a man and woman's and face, accompanied with bold text:

A STORY OF SIN, SEX, AND SPORTS

THE NYMPH AND THE MANIAC

STARRING: STAN.DUP, BEND.OVER, MARY McGOON.

And of course, there is a love triangle. The Boy is in love with "The Girl," but she has to marry the uncle. While the Boy is said to be domineering in relationships, it cannot be said that Davey, in any of the iterations of the *Killer's Kiss* story, is similarly inclined. Rather, it is Gloria in charge. About whom is Kubrick writing here? Possibly himself because Kubrick seems to have been domineering in his decidedly undemocratic collaborations with writers. While some of Kubrick's relationships with writers appear to have been happy, as with Diane Johnson on *The Shining* (1980) , some were famously unhappy, as with Stephen King on the same adaptation or Frederic Raphael on *Eyes Wide Shut.* [12. Diane Johnson, "Diane Johnson, Screenwriter," by Michel Ciment, *Kubrick: The Definitive Edition*. (New York: Faber

and Faber, 1999) p. 295.; Frederic Raphael, *Eyes Wide Open: A Memoir of Stanley Kubrick* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999); Jack Boozer, "From *Traumnovelle (*1927) to Script to Screen—*Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)," *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, Jack Boozer, ed. (University of Texas Press, 2008.)] As Leitch observes, Kubrick tended to take on the writers of his adapted texts "the old fashioned way…in open warfare." [13. Thomas Leitch, *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to the Passion of the Christ*. Kindle edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), Kindle Locations 3412-3413].

This contestatory attitude manifests in the relationship between the first draft screenplay *Along Came a Spider* and the second draft *The Nymph and the Maniac.* The authors of *Along Came a Spider* are listed in this order: Howard O. Sackler and Stanley Kubrick. In the later draft, *The Nymph and the Maniac*, the names are reversed: Kubrick comes first; Sackler second. This "gazumping" manoeuvre was to become typical of Kubrick's work with writers later in his career. Particularly famous examples include his volunteering to substitute his name for that of Dalton Trumbo on *Spartacus,* and his labelling his Anthony Burgess adaptation "Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange."* [14. Nathan Abrams, "Becoming a Macho Mensch: Stanley Kubrick, *Spartacus* and 1950s Jewish Masculinity," *Adaptation* 8, no. 3 (2015): 285] This displacement of Sackler is an early instance of Kubrick's later career-long quest for total creative control. [15. Peter Krämer, "'Complete Total Final Annihilating Artistic Control': Stanley Kubrick and Post-War Hollywood," *Stanley Kubrick: New Perspectives*, Peter Krämer and Richard Daniels Tatjana Ljujic, eds. (London: Black Dog, 2015), pp. 48-61)]

So what are the changes that are detectable between the first draft, with Sackler nominated as the principal author, and the second, with Kubrick nominated as the principal author?

And how do these screenplays differ from the finished film? The first thing to note is the relative moral conventionalism of *Along Came a Spider*, in which characters and their motivations are arguably simpler, and the morality more conventional, than in later iterations. Kubrick's development of moral complexity – particularly with regard to sexual mores – contradicts Jenkins' assertion that "*Kubrick imbues his films with a morality that is more conventional than [his sources].*" [16. Greg Jenkins, *Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1997), p. 158. Emphasis in original]

Gloria, in particular, evolves from a good girl unwillingly targeted by a sexual predator in *Along Came a Spider,* to the titular "nymph" of *The Nymph and the Maniac.* This interest in female sexuality emerges early in Kubrick's fragment, in which the Girl is said to be a "sexually open – intellectual type – a bit on the obscure? Side – poetic in her approach to life. Gentle yet very resilient in a womanly way. Accepts boys […] warmly. Immediate physical response." This sexuality is relatively wholesome. As the iterations that culminate in *Killer's Kiss* develop, Gloria's sexuality becomes complicated relative to this early picture.

While the early fragment features an Oedipal story, this disappears in Sackler-Kubrick's *Along Came a Spider,* and only reappears in Kubrick-Sackler's *The Nymph and the Maniac,* where what will become Iris' Story in *Killer's Kiss* emerges as "Gloria's story". As Hunter observes, Kubrick films characteristically concerned with "the intertwining of sexuality and violence, and the unconscious." [17. I.Q. Hunter, "Introduction: Kubrick and Adaptation." *Adaptation* 8, no. 3 (2015): p. 277] The late re-emergence of this idea, and its incorporation into the finished film as a surrealistic flashback featuring a ballet performance by Ruth Sobotka, Kubrick's second wife, and subject of his earlier 1946 photo shoot, presages

several aspects of Kubrick's later practices, including his improvising on set, and his opportunistic deployment of *all* available resources and personnel, including family. But what matters most about Iris' story is that it reveals is that what Kubrick adapts are "unseen obsessions".[18. Greg Jenkins, *Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1997), p. 24.] Despite having a literally visible inner life, the Gloria of Kubrick's finished film remains like his Lolita, "inscrutable and unknowable". [19. Rebecca Bell-Metereau, "The Three Faces of *Lolita,* or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Adaptation" in *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, Jack Boozer, ed. (University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 224.]

Gloria's interactions with Rapallo are radically recharacterized through iterations of the story. This emerges in the handling of the scene in which Gloria and Rapallo grapple sexually in the light of the televised broadcast of Davey's boxing match. In *Along Came a Spider,* Gloria is sexually predated. She finds Rapallo's attentions repulsive. *The Nymph and the Maniac* is closer to the finished film, suggesting Gloria's salacious enjoyment.

She is iteratively developed in other ways, as well. In *Along Came a Spider* Gloria and Davey fight shoulder to shoulder against Rapallo's thugs so that Gloria becomes Davey's equal. In fact, she actually saves Davey, shooting Rapallo in the penultimate scene. This contrasts her more languid role in the finished film, in which she is arguably more objectified. This goes along with her increasing hypersexualisation through instantiations of the story from *The Nymph and the Maniac* onwards, and her increasingly opaque representation as the enigmatic woman.

These two developments – the complication of conventional sexual morality and Gloria's increasingly enigmatic representation – appear most strikingly at closure. In the epilogue to

the fragment, Kubrick's notes say "Two kids. Home in the suburbs […] and bourgeois. Dreary but not heavy handed. End with irony – and they lived happily ever after." This foreshadows his later ambivalent representations of marriage. By optimistic contrast, *Along Came a Spider* finishes with a coda in which Gloria visits Davey in hospital, and the two blissfully plan a honeymoon. In retrospect, this is interesting to compare with two later hospital bed scenes in Kubrick's oeuvre. The first is Alex's very satisfactory dinner with the minister in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), in which he declares himself "cured alright", with all the mayhem that implies. Kubrick's cutting the hospital bed coda from the final version of *Killer's Kiss* also anticipates his deletion of a similar scene from *The Shining,* in which Ullman visits Wendy and Danny, simultaneously reassuring Wendy about the normalcy of the Overlook, and handing Danny the famously uncanny ball, concrete proof of the haunting. Overall, it appears that Kubrick preferred his hospitals to be ambivalent rather than straightforwardly comforting places. *Killer's Kiss* also ends happily, with the lovers meeting at the station, but there is great uncertainty about Gloria appearing at all until the absolute last minute, and the marital future is only implied, not realized. And there is residual distrust of Gloria's motivations: she has betrayed Davey to Rapallo at least once. Gloria is more ambivalent in finished film than in screenplays and less conventional morally, and narrative closure is also tidier in the earlier drafts. This is in keeping Kubrick's life-long habit of creating unresolvable ambiguity, which make his films so endlessly fascinating to discuss.

Through the iterations of the *Killer's Kiss* material, Gloria develops as a full-blown *film noir* femme fatale, but Kubrick's approach to *noir* was characteristically idiosyncratic. As Hunter says: "his films inhabit and deconstruct genres rather than exemplify them."[20. I.Q. Hunter, "Introduction: Kubrick and Adaptation." *Adaptation* 8, no. 3 (2015): p. 277] One thing that is

clear: in working and reworking this material Kubrick began the practice Hunter describes as characterizing his career as an adapter: he “wrested merely literary texts away from their authors and relocated them in a […] spectacle of unusual intensity and duration, which worked on the unconscious.”[21. I.Q. Hunter, "Introduction: Kubrick and Adaptation." *Adaptation* 8, no. 3 (2015): p. 281] Or to put it as Kubrick himself did, adapting allowed him to transliterate the raw materials of a story from “paper and ink and words” to “flesh and feeling.”[22. Kubrick quoted in Greg Jenkins, *Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1997), p. 24] Examining the materials that have newly been made available through the Kubrick Archive reveals characteristics that will later position Kubrick as the auteur adapter we have come to revere.

Conclusion

This article is but a brief exploration of the wealth of new information now available in the Stanley Kubrick Archive, but it demonstrates how it can begin to shed light on the early years of Kubrick’s life and career. What we can see through the fragments of scripts, stories, and notebooks is Kubrick’s developing interest, at times morbid fascination with sex, death, jealousy, and revenge. And these themes are perhaps no surprise; Kubrick, in his early-to-mid-twenties, was exploring both himself and the world around him, inhabiting a thriving cultural hub in Greenwich Village, and encountering people and experiences that stimulated his creativity and peaked his intellectual curiosity. And he used his personal encounters with the people and places of New York as inspiration for a range of crime thrillers and psychosexual dramas. This was Kubrick at his most self-reflexive and autobiographical, finding his authorial voice in collaborative and sometimes contestatory relationships with

others, and using writing as a means of expressing himself and his understanding of the world. Beyond photography, a professional career that he had abandoned by 1950, he had very little other affordable means of telling stories – film was a costly medium for Kubrick at that time and he was still a relative 'unknown'. Instead, Kubrick turned to writing as a means of investigating his filmmaking identity. And it is in his writing that we can find some of the most honest and insightful perspectives about him that we have ever come across.