

Portraits of Philosophers

Hans Maes

Abstract

This paper presents a close analysis of Steve Pyke's famous series of portraits of philosophers. By comparing his photographs to other well-known series of portraits and to other portraits of philosophers we will seek a better understanding of the distinctiveness and fittingness of Pyke's project. With brief nods to Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, G.W.F. Hegel, and Arthur Schopenhauer and an extensive critical investigation of Cynthia Freeland's ideas on portraiture in general and her reading of Steve Pyke's portraits in particular, this paper will also aim to make a contribution to the philosophical debate on portraiture.

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Could a closer look at portraits of philosophers help to shed light on the philosophy of portraits? Conversely, can we turn to the philosophy of portraiture to help illuminate some of the ways in which philosophers have been portrayed? These are the general questions I would like to address in this concluding chapter – a chapter that will mainly focus on the work of one photographer, Steve Pyke, and the series of black-and-white portraits of philosophers that he took over a span of thirty years and collected in two volumes (1993, 2011a).ⁱ

My starting point will be the decidedly mixed review that these photobooks received from prominent philosopher of portraiture, Cynthia Freeland (2011), who considers the series unflattering and unsuitable to its lofty subject. I will take issue with her reading and offer an alternative perspective on Pyke's portraits that will hopefully result a renewed appreciation of their distinctiveness.

To grasp how distinctive Pyke's series of portraits really is, I will compare his work to other series of portraits (section 1 and 2) and other portraits of philosophers (section 3). I will also draw on some insights from the philosophy of portraiture, with brief nods to Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, G.W.F. Hegel, and Arthur Schopenhauer and a more elaborate critical investigation of Cynthia Freeland's ideas on portraiture.

<FIGURE 1 *Arthur Danto* HERE>

Oddity and flattery

It's not hard to see why, generally speaking, many portraits offer flattering images of their sitters. After all, it is the sitters themselves who often commission and promise to pay for the portrait – on the condition, of course, that they are pleased with the end result. Certainly in the pre-modern era, when many artists were entirely dependent on their patrons, portraiture and flattery would frequently go hand-in-hand. This began to change when artists gained more autonomy and gradually obtained the freedom and means to select their own sitters as well the manner in which these sitters would be depicted (Berger 1969). That development culminated, one could argue, in the second half of the 20th century when certain portrait artists seemed to aim for the direct opposite of flattery.

Diane Arbus is a prime example. Arbus famously said about her own practice: 'You see someone on the street and essentially what you notice about them is the flaw. There's a point between what you want people to know about you and what you can't help people knowing about you' (Arbus 1972, pp. 1-2). It was this point that she would seek out as a photographer. One can observe it in some of her best portraits such as *Puertorican Woman with Beauty Mark* (1965) or *Woman with a Veil on Fifth Avenue* (1968).

Her friend and fellow New Yorker, Richard Avedon, adopted a similar strategy in his influential series *In the American West* (1985). Subjects in this series look marginalized and odd and are often deliberately placed off kilter in the frame to suggest social and mental instability. Telling examples are *Bill Curry, Drifter, Interstate 40, Yukon, Oklahoma* (1980) and *Dave Timothy, Nuclear Fallout Victim, Orem, Utah* (1980). These stark black-and-white portraits offer up anything but a flattering image of the American West.

In her review for *The Philosophers Magazine*, Cynthia Freeland seems to place Steve Pyke and his *Philosophers* series squarely within this lineage of photographers: 'The pictures suggest that Pyke ... finds philosophers strange. Here we find philosophers, warts and all: wild eyebrows, unkempt beards, lank hair, lantern jaws, crossed eyes, weak chins, bad teeth, weird noses' (Freeland 2011, p. 52). She notes how Pyke's lens choices and his penchant for the extreme close up 'can distort facial features in unflattering ways' (2011, p. 56) and how there are several instances 'in which the prints show the face of a sitter as bright white against a dark background, making it seem to float above the picture plane ... inducing a kind of alienation effect' (2011, p. 56). His portrait of Mary Mothershill would be a case in point. Freeland concludes: 'What do philosophers actually look like? Rather odd, I'm afraid, or if truth be told, unappetizing - at least if we are to go on this collection of portraits by Steve Pyke' (2011, p. 52).

However, there is something not quite right about placing Pyke in this lineage of photographers. Yes, the aesthetic affinity with both Arbus (who also used a Rolleiflex camera and preferred the square format print) and Avedon (the high-contrast black-and-white, the inclusion of the negative's frame) is unmistakable. But Pyke's portraits differ in at least one very important respect. In Avedon's *American West* and also in Arbus's work, oddity and alienation are a constant feature.ⁱⁱ They would consistently select subjects that stood out in some way and then use various photographic techniques to emphasize their strangeness and marginality. Not so with Pyke. Strangeness is not a criterion for inclusion in the *Philosophers* series. The only relevant criterion is the particular philosopher's standing in the profession. Only if they are nominated by at least two or three other prominent philosophers will Pyke contact said philosopher and create their portrait.

Pyke also does not go out of his way to depict philosophers *as* odd and unappetizing. Plenty of portraits are testimony to this. His portraits of Susan James, David Papineau, Jerrold Levinson, Delia Graff Fara, show dignified, well-coiffed, handsome individuals.ⁱⁱⁱ <FIGURE 2 *Jerrold Levinson* HERE> Or take his beautiful portrait of Arthur Danto. Danto had strabismus – a feature you couldn’t help notice when you encountered him. Someone like Arbus would surely have sought out this particular characteristic (the ‘flaw’), but not Pyke. Granted, the portrait series has its share of wild eyebrows, unkempt beards, and weird noses. But that doesn’t yet mean that there’s a deliberate effort on Pyke’s part to show philosophers in an unflattering light. That would be completely contrary to what originally inspired him to make the series. As he explains in an interview: ‘The Philosophy Tribe is made up of thinkers, which is an honorable profession that deserves a wider audience... I’m interested in some way of putting philosophers on more people’s radars’ (Stanley 2011, p. 11).

So, we need a different frame of reference. One photographer that comes to mind is Walker Evans, particularly his series *Many are called* (1938-41; 1966). For this project Walker Evans took candid pictures of subway passengers in New York. He did this by hiding his camera underneath his coat and photographing the random people who sat across from him. In this series, too, one encounters some unkempt bears, odd looks, and weird noses. But, as is the case with Pyke, one cannot say that the photographer is deliberately seeking out such features. It would all depend on who happened to sit in front of his lens on that particular day in the subway. (Cf. the work of DiCorcia, discussed elsewhere in this volume.)

Walker Evans’s aim was a documentary one and he very much valued ‘neutrality’ in pursuing this aim. As he later wrote, it was his idea of what portraiture ought to be: ‘anonymous and documentary and a straightforward picture of mankind’ (Evans 1971). Taking the subjectivity of the photographer out of the equation, in favour of the automatism of photography, was thus partly what the series was about. It is here that we see a notable difference with Pyke. There is no anonymous observation in the *Philosophers* series. All philosophers consented to being photographed and participated in the process. Taking pictures without permission or taking the photographer out of the exchange was never on the cards. Pyke himself puts it very aptly:

‘People talk about taking pictures. It’s a word I never ever use because ‘taken’ is the wrong adjective. If it’s anything, it’s giving. You know, you’re giving pictures. It’s a collaboration, it’s like a conversation ... it’s going backwards and forwards, we’re both learning different things about each other but also about what it is that we do. It’s all about exchange.’ (Pyke 2011b)^{iv}

Because his aim was never to observe anonymously, Pyke was not forced to keep his distance in the way that Walker Evans was. Instead he could come very close to his subjects, creating a sense of intimacy that is noticeably lacking in the subway series.

So perhaps the work of someone like David Bailey or, more recently, Platon offers a better comparison. In *Box of Pin-Ups* (1965) Bailey presents a collection of portraits of celebrities that were at the heart of London's Swinging Sixties: Michael Cain, Rudolf Nurejev, the Beatles, and other fashionable folk are captured in striking high contrast, black and white, square format photographs. Similarly, Platon was able to portray an impressive list of world leaders, including Putin, Erdogan, Berlusconi, and George W. Bush, for a series called *Power* (2011). In contradistinction to Walker Evans, and very much in line with Pyke's practice, both these photographers opt for the extreme close-up and make no effort to hide the I-You relation between photographer and photographed subject. The sitters in these two other series also share a distinctive group-identity (influential politicians, London-based celebrities) as is true for the *Philosophers* series.^v

And, yet, there is also a remarkable difference between Pyke's approach and the portraits in *Power* or *Box of Pin-Ups*. Bailey and Platon clearly glamourize their sitters. Bailey's actors and musicians are invariably depicted as hip and cool. There are no blemishes in their appearance. Platon's politicians always appear powerful and charismatic. Lighting is even arranged so that their heads seem surrounded by a halo. Nothing could be further from the way Pyke photographs his philosophers. There's no halo there, no effort to hide any blemishes. Pyke's revealing close-ups are not at all about glamourizing the sitter.

Still, as we have already established, and as is clear from the pictures, Pyke does not set out to mock, belittle or expose the philosophers. So, what are the portraits about then? Why does he opt for the all-revealing close-up, if demystification is not the aim? We find the answer in a final comparison with yet another photographic series: Pyke's own *Astronauts* (1990s).

Proximity and puzzlement

The series *Astronauts* consists of photographs of the gear that astronauts took with them into space, some of the rocks they brought back from the Moon, and some of the instruments that were crucial in their endeavor. It also includes

close-up portraits of the astronauts themselves: mainly of their faces but in one instance also of the last foot to have walked the surface of the moon.

<FIGURE 3 *Last Foot* HERE>

Like the *Philosophers* series, the project was largely self-funded and the result of a strong personal fascination on the part of the photographer. As he explains in the documentary *Moonbug*, he had always been awestruck by space travel and by missions to the Moon in particular. But becoming an astronaut himself just never was a live option (Pyke quit school when he was seventeen). So, photographing the people who did visit the moon became, as he puts it, 'the next best thing'.

To understand why these close-up photographs would count as the next best thing, it helps to keep C.S. Peirce's distinction between 'icons' and 'indexes' in mind. Roughly speaking, *icons* represent in virtue of *resembling* their referent, whereas *indexes* represent in virtue of a *physical relation* to their referent, e.g. smoke being an index of fire. 'An *Index* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object.'¹, says Peirce (1955, p. 102). Photographs, it has often been pointed out, qualify as both icons and indexes. They will typically resemble their referent in some way, but are also directly affected by the referent, in that light bounces off the object in front of the lens and onto the contact sheet. It's the latter aspect that helps to understand what motivated Pyke to make the *Astronaut* series. By making a photographic imprint of those moon rocks or of the last foot to have left its print on the moon, Pyke seeks to establish a direct line of contact between himself and the Moon. It is this sense of physical proximity that produces the chills that he reports feeling in the presence of these astronauts and their space gear.

My contention is that we need to interpret the *Philosophers* series in much the same way. On the one hand, Pyke's portraits of philosophers are meant to function as "icons". Many people don't know what the most prominent philosophers of our time look like and the photographic series aims to address that. 'They are in essence the world's big thinkers, and yet we don't know who they are. That really interested me; that they were kind of faceless' (Pyke 2015). On the other hand, the photographs are also meant to function as "indexes", whereby a sense of contact is key. In the words of Roland Barthes: 'The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; ... like the delayed rays of a star' (Barthes 1981, pp. 80-81). Thus, the portraits gave Pyke (and are meant to give the viewer) a chance to establish a connection and get up close and personal with these intellectual stars. *Pace* Freeland, I would argue that it is fascination and admiration, rather than demystification, that helps to

explain the all-revealing close-up. (Often, the closer an admirer can get to the object of admiration, the better.^{vi}) This is one reason why I find the series quite fitting: viewers fascinated by philosophy are allowed an intimate encounter with leading thinkers and are given the chance to get close to this particular kind of greatness.

A couple of things are worth noting in this context. First, Pyke does not always opt for the close-up and keeps a fair amount of distance when the sitter is someone he does not admire – as was pointedly the case for his famous portrait of Augusto Pinochet for *The New Yorker* (1998). Secondly, in claiming that Pyke's portraits of philosophers are setting the viewer up for an intimate meeting, I do not mean to imply that viewers will become familiar with intimate details of the philosopher's personal lives or with their innermost secrets. Rather, intimacy here refers to the experience of physical proximity, of seeing the philosophers from so close a distance as is ordinarily reserved for those who are actually on an intimate basis with them.^{vii} Thirdly, likeness and recognisability can be somewhat compromised due to the unusual proximity of the lens to the face in making these photographs. Pyke is aware of this and comments on the fact that sitters often don't immediately recognize themselves: 'On a most fundamental level one may question a likeness "How is that me? ... it doesn't look like me ... but it is there in front of me ... it is a photograph of me."' But he adds, creating 'that moment of puzzlement is at the very least a beautiful byproduct of photography' (Stanley 2011, 11). This may be another reason to consider Pyke's approach quite fitting. After all, puzzlement is also at the very least a beautiful byproduct of philosophy.

Pyke very much welcomes the puzzlement that his portraits tend to induce. In so doing, he articulates and demonstrates an important insight regarding portraiture in general, namely the idea that puzzlement and perplexity ("*Is this really X?*") are not necessarily bad-making features for a portrait. On the contrary, it's what makes some portraits particularly compelling. A case in point, besides Pyke's own work, would be Lucian Freud's head-and-shoulder portraits (which exhibit a framing and topography of the skin that is similar to Pyke's) or many of John Deakin's portraits (their combination of blurriness and dark shadows shows affinities with some of Pyke's more 'puzzling' photographs, such as the ones he did of Rae Langton and Peter Ludlow).

This basic insight poses a direct challenge to a widely held but ultimately too narrow belief, namely that all great portraits offer clarity by capturing or distilling the essence of a person ("*This really is X!*"). That belief, which I have elsewhere labelled the 'standard view' of greatness in portraiture, is given philosophical credence by Freeland in her monograph *Portraits & Persons* where she notes how 'the greatest portraits ... reveal someone's essential nature or

their character in a deep sense' and that 'the best portraits manifest a person's "air", their unique essence or inner character' (2010, p. 44).^{viii} Given this firm normative stance on portraiture, it should not come as surprise that Freeland is less than enthusiastic about Pyke's work.

But whereas Freeland is somewhat disappointed, G.W.F. Hegel would have been downright *horrified* to witness such depictions of philosophers. In his *Lectures on Fine Art* he devised some instructions for the portrait artist: 'the portrait-painter ... *must flatter*, in the sense that ... the purely natural side of imperfect existence, little hairs, pores, little scars, warts, all these he must let go, and grasp and reproduce the subject in his universal character and enduring personality' (Hegel 1975, p. 155). Or, as he also puts it, 'the portrait painter will omit folds of skin and, still more, freckles, pimples, pock-marks, warts, etc... For in all this there is little or nothing of the spirit, and the expression of the spiritual is the essential thing in the human form' (1975, p. 165). In order for the artist to capture the sitter's universal character, 'he must have seen him in several situations and actions, in short been well acquainted with him' (1975, p. 165).

Pyke, of course, does none of these things. He does not seek to become well acquainted with his sitters (a photo-session will typically take less than an hour). Furthermore, he emphatically does not omit folds of skin, pimples, pock-marks, warts, in favour of an attempt to capture a sitter's spiritual personality. From Hegel's perspective this is particularly horrifying because Pyke's sitters are *philosophers* and it is precisely in philosophy, according to Hegel, that spirit achieves its ultimate, absolute understanding of itself.

Philosophers and pharmacists

There is one more reason why Freeland considers the series a failure that bears mentioning: 'The problem is that there is not really anything to be seen about philosophers *per se*' (2011, p. 54). Pyke's book is entitled *Philosophers* but one might as well guess that his sitters are pharmacists or magicians. So, according to Freeland, his approach does not appear particularly suitable or attuned to its subject.

This is, of course, partly due to how the series is set up: 'the philosophers seen here are mostly heads (remember those aliens from Star Trek). Rarely do they have bodies. Nor do they employ any tools of their trade.' (2011, p. 54). Pyke's headshots carry no information about the characteristic attire, accessories, and activities of philosophers. In that respect they appear rather mute. We can contrast this with other well-known portraits of philosophers. Think of Hans Holbein's portrait of

Erasmus (1523), Peter Paul Rubens' *Four Philosophers* (1611-12), or Louis-Michel van Loo's portrait of Diderot (1767). Here the clothing, setting, tools of the trade, and depicted activity are clues that enable an artist to portray someone *as a philosopher*. Pyke's portraits, on the other hand, offer the viewer no clues in terms of clothes, setting, or accessories.

That said, his approach does have one big advantage. By removing those clues from the final image, Pyke effectively removes anything that could distract from the individual's face. There are no silly hats, unusual chairs, or attention-grabbing trousers in his pictures. When you see the early eighteenth-century portraits of members of the Kit-Cat club (of which the philosopher John Locke was also a member) the first thing that strikes you is the huge wig they all wear. As Gombrich (1972) points out, these wigs create a so-called "masking effect" whereby a strong impression impedes the perception of lower thresholds. That prominent and, from our perspective, peculiar feature makes it extremely difficult to see how the faces of these Club members differ. As a result, they all look the same. With Pyke there is no chance of a similar distraction. Because the focus is entirely on the face it is not at all hard to see the sitters as individuals and to see how their faces differ. Once more, that makes his approach very appropriate, given that his explicit aim is to give these influential but "faceless" thinkers a face.^{ix}

However that may be, Freeland is dismayed that there is not really anything to be seen about philosophers *per se* in the series. This is partly due to Pyke's decision to leave out any sartorial or environmental detail and opt for close-up headshots. But there is more to it than that. Freeland is also disappointed with the *manner* in which these close-ups are made. To find out why that is, it is helpful to compare portraits of philosophers with portraits of people in other professions. Take pharmacists. Like philosophers, pharmacists can be depicted in their professional role. But to portray a pharmacist *as a pharmacist* one will need to include some clues as to their occupation, e.g. a lab coat, some medicine bottles, or a pharmacy cabinet. Without any such details it seems impossible to portray a pharmacist *as a pharmacist*.

This is different with philosophers. It does seem possible to portray someone *as a philosopher* without including any details in terms of clothing, setting, and tools of the trade. Just consider Alfred Eisenstaedt's portrait of Bertrand Russell (1951), Albrecht Dürer's portrait of Philip Melancton (1526), or the famous clair-obscur portrait of Immanuel Kant made by an anonymous painter in the 18th c. In each of these cases, the artist has succeeded in portraying the philosopher as a philosopher, not by adding any extraneous detail, but simply by giving him a particularly thoughtful expression or an 'air' of intelligence. But Pyke refuses to adopt a similar strategy in his series. And this is a source of

disappointment for Freeland: 'Arthur Danto ... says that all the people shown here look "fiercely smart". I beg to differ. A few (you will understand my not naming names) look a bit vacant. Judith Thomson looks mischievous, Peter Singer tired, Timothy Williamson meek... Some of them (Ernie LePore, Harry Frankfurt) just look like nice guys to have a beer with at the local pub' (2011, pp. 53-54). She adds, 'it also means, unfortunately, that if we seek the mystique of the philosopher as sage here, we will not find it' (2011, p. 59).

Freeland is right. But the one word I take issue with is 'unfortunately'. The philosophers in Pyke's work are not consistently depicted as a kind of sage, but I think that's rather fortunate and fitting. Consider the alternative: a book where philosophers would all don looks of deep cogitation. A book of that kind would create the impression that philosophers have intellectual powers that cannot but manifest themselves in their appearance. Such a book would fit nicely with Schopenhauer's thesis, as laid down in his essay 'On Physiognomy', that a person's intellectual capacities will inevitably shine through in their face and demeanor: 'Stupid people move like lay figures, while every joint of intellectual people speaks for itself. Intellectual qualities are much better discerned, however, in the face than in gestures and movements, in the shape and size of the forehead, in the contraction and movement of the features, and especially in the eye' (Schopenhauer 2010, p. 280).^x

But this view is now horribly outdated and the pseudo-science of physiognomy has been widely debunked. The idea that, say, mischief and vice are written on the face of criminals is no longer taken seriously. Accordingly, a portrait series of criminals where they are all depicted *as* criminals (with faces expressive of murderous thoughts and desires) would nowadays be received as quite dubious. Well, equally dubious, I suggest, would be a portrait series of philosophers where they are all depicted *as* philosophers (with faces expressive of wisdom and deep thoughts). And that is precisely what Pyke manages to avoid. As such, Pyke has got the better of Schopenhauer. In one of his interviews he explicitly states: 'I have no more reason to believe that we can understand philosophy by looking at the faces of its practitioners as I have that we could understand the complexities of a family by studying its family albums (or the minds of murderers by studying their police portraits)' (Stanley 2011, p. 10).

Whereas Schopenhauer thinks that blemishes must point to intellectual and other shortcomings, Pyke's portraits serve as a powerful rebuttal. In that regard, incidentally, Pyke also seems one step ahead of many other contemporary photographers. As Jean Baudrillard points out, 'In the name of realism and testimony, contemporary photography ... condemns itself (and not just in reportage) to photograph victims as such, the dead as such, the poverty stricken as such, left entirely to their poverty' (Baudrillard 1999). He adds: 'this self-

proclaimed realist photography in no sense captures what is. ... It is a moralizing photography (though perfectly immoral in the aesthetic use it makes of its images)' (Baudrillard 1999). Sebastiao Salgado's lush portrayals of migrants and refugees come to mind here. But one could also think of Platon's photographs of politicians, always depicting the powerful *as* powerful. (Hence also the title of the series: *Power*.)

Part of what makes Pyke's work distinctive is that it does not seek out a distinctively philosophical look or expression. (Note that the title of his series is not 'Wisdom' or 'Intellect'.) It is not a moralizing photography and all the better for it. So, what he's doing for individual philosophers, he also seems to be doing for philosophers as a group, that is, creating a moment of puzzlement: Is *that* what philosophers look like? And, again, given that puzzlement is at the very least a beautiful byproduct of philosophy, I think that makes the whole project very fitting, indeed.^{xi}

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ⁱ His most recent portraits of philosophers, including portraits of Jenefer Robinson, Gregory Currie, Kendall Walton, and (!) Cynthia Freeland, are to be found in Maes 2017.

ⁱⁱ Contemporary portrait artist Thomas Ruff is highly critical of their work for that very reason: 'Avedon and Diane Arbus are to my mind arch perpetuators of [the] sentimental tradition. Theirs is a glib, New York version of sentimentality, one that thrills itself with the hysterical belief in antagonism and grit as truth, but that's sentimentality all the same. Provocative as their pictures may seem to be at first, people love them—perhaps counterintuitively—for that titillating myopia, because they corroborate, rather than challenge, our baser preconceived notions.' (Blank and Ruff, 2004: 52)

ⁱⁱⁱ To be fair, there are more such portraits in the second volume (2011). This may be partly due to the fact that the philosophers in this volume are, on average, younger than the subjects of the first volume. Another reason why they may appear less ‘foreign’ has to do with Pyke’s own maturation as artist: ‘Prior to having myself traveled a long course of disciplined creation, there was a certain reverence. ... As one’s understanding of mankind matures, one’s sense of the foreignness of other paths erodes.’ And this, he suggests, ‘has ultimately changed the portraits and made my subjects perhaps seem more humane’ (Stanley 2011, 10).

^{iv} It’s worth noting in this respect that Pyke also asked all philosophers to contribute 50 words capturing their particular philosophy.

^v There’s an obvious link here with one of the most famous and influential photographic series, as Pyke himself acknowledges: ‘I realized that philosophers form a community, not unlike the communities represented in August Sander’s *People of the 20th C*’ (Stanley 2011: 11). But Pyke is not simply following in Sander’s footsteps. His project is quite distinctive. Whereas Sander is mainly, or perhaps even exclusively, interested in people as representatives of a particular community or class, Pyke is much more interested in people as individuals. Sander’s pictures bear generic titles (e.g. “Police constable, 1925”, “Grammar-school girl, 1928”, “The painter”, 1924), but Pyke’s philosophers are all individualized. Pyke’s focus is also on the individual face, whereas Sander’s portraits are often full-figure, deliberately depicting the posture, clothes, tools, and surroundings thought to be indicative of the group or profession to which the subject belongs.

^{vi} That is why, at live concerts, the greatest fans will often want to be as near to the stage as possible, or why many people reportedly wish to touch, hug, or just shake hands with (whoever happens to be) their idol. Carolyn Korsmeyer thematizes this in her work on the aesthetics of the genuine (2012).

^{vii} Not all sitters will have been equally comfortable with this kind of intimacy. Some, I know from personal testimony, would have preferred to have kept the photographer and the viewer at more of a distance. (It is perhaps not a surprise that David Velleman, who places such emphasis on self-presentation, as is explained in Costello’s contribution to this volume, refused to be portrayed by Steve Pyke.)

^{viii} Freeland is drawing on Barthes here: ‘All the photographs of my mother which I was looking through were a little like so many masks; at the last, suddenly the mask vanished: there remained a soul, ageless but not timeless, since this air was the person I used to see, consubstantial with her face, each day of her long life.’ (Barthes 109)

^{ix} There are other reasons why Pyke’s portrait series might be considered appropriate for its subject. For instance, his photographs are quite ‘truthful’ in that he uses no Photoshop, no artificial light, no theatrical poses. Moreover, the high-contrast black and white fits well with the popular image of philosophers seeking light in the darkness. There is also his focus on the head as the seat of thought. And, finally, his portraits aptly convey that all abstract philosophical systems ultimately originate in people of flesh and blood, who are often more vulnerable and frail than the neatly construed and robust theories they gave birth to. (I am grateful to Eileen John for this last suggestion.)

^x As he also states at the outset of the essay: ‘that the outside reflects the inner man, and that the face expresses his whole character, is an obvious supposition and accordingly a safe one, demonstrated as it is in the desire people have *to see* on all occasions a man who has distinguished himself’ (Schopenhauer 2010: 271)

^{xi} A distant cousin of this paper was presented at the London Aesthetics Forum, the White Rose Aesthetics Forum, the Scottish Aesthetics Forum, the ASA Eastern Meeting, the Dubrovnik Philosophy of Art Conference, and the universities of Murcia, Warsaw, Warwick, and Antwerp. I want to thank the various audiences (and in particular Maria José Alcaez León, Adam Andrzejewski, Diarmuid Costello, Victor Durà-Vilà, Steven Houlgate, and Andrew Huddleston) for their valuable comments on my proposed ideas. I also wish to thank the students on my module *The Art of Portraiture: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives* whose enthusiastic questions and suggestions have helped to make this a better paper.