

Jason Timothy Potter

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Education:

- B.A. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1977; Major: Distributed Philosophy Major w/
Psychology and Religious Studies
- M.A. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1994
- PhD University of Colorado at Boulder, August, 2000

Dissertation: Kant's Refutation of Idealism (see abstract attached)

Committee: George Bealer (interim chair), Christopher Braider, John Fisher, Robert Hanna (co-chair),
Christopher Shields, Wayne Waxman (co-chair)

Areas of Specialization

- Kant (the entire critical project, but with a focus on metaphysics and theory of mind)
- History of Modern Philosophy (Descartes-Locke-Leibniz-Hume-Berkeley-Kant)
- Aesthetics (theory of aesthetic judgment, appreciation, and the metaphysics of artworks)

Areas of Competence

- History of Ancient Philosophy (pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle)
- Early Analytic Philosophy (Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Moore)
- Philosophy of Religion/Comparative Philosophy (with an emphasis on Asian traditions)
- American Pragmatism (William James and John Dewey)

Teaching Experience

- Teaching Assistant, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 1994–1995
 - Phil 3010—History of Modern Philosophy Fall 1994
 - Phil 3010—History of Modern Philosophy Spring 1995
- Part Time Graduate Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 1995–1997
 - Phil 1010—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Ancient Fall 1995
 - Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Ancient (x2) Spring 1996
 - Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Modern Summer 1996
 - Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Modern Fall 1996
 - Phil 1000—Introduction to Philosophy (x2) Spring 1997
- Replacement Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 1998
 - Phil 4010—Single Philosopher: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason Spring 1998
- Honorarium Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 2000-2002
 - Phil 1200—Philosophy and Society Fall 2000
 - Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Modern (x2) Spring 2001
 - Phil 3010—History of Philosophy: Modern Summer 2001
 - Phil 3010—History of Philosophy: Modern Fall '01, Spring '02
- Honorarium Instructor, Continuing Education, CU Boulder: 2000
 - Phil 1010—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Ancient Fall 2000
 - Phil 1200—Philosophy and Society Fall 2000
- Honorarium Instructor, Baker ERAP Program, CU Boulder: 2001
 - Phil 1200—Philosophy and Society Spring 2001

Lecturer, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 2002-2005	
Phil 3000-020—History of Philosophy: Ancient	Fall '02
Phil 3010-010—History of Philosophy: Modern	Fall '02, Spr '03, Fall '03
Phil 4010-010—Single Philosopher: Kant (Critique of Pure Reason)	Spr '03
Phil 4010-010—Single Philosopher: Hume (Treatise & Enquiry)	Fall '03
Phil 3000-010—History of Philosophy: Ancient	Spr '04
Phil 3000-020—History of Philosophy: Ancient	Spr '04
Phil 3010-010/020—History of Philosophy: Modern	Fall '04
Phil 3010-010/020—History of Philosophy: Modern	Spr '05

Publications

(1997). "Technology, Appreciation and the Historical View of Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55(2), 169-185 (John Andrew Fisher, co-author).

Abstract: In this paper, Fisher and I note that appreciative practices pose a difficult problem for historical-contextualist (HC) theorists of art (Danto, Levinson, Davies, etc.). Their theories suggest that historical artworks cannot be appropriately appreciated in contexts divorced from information about the artwork's context of creation, yet modern, technological appreciative practices presuppose the opposite. Either HC theories are wrong, or they must reject the idea that artworks are socially constructed in part by how we appreciate them. We rebut both disjuncts of this dilemma. We defend the role of appreciative practices in determining our common conception of the artwork. We defend HC theories by showing that this common conception contains the historical art object as a regulative idea, even in highly abstracted contexts of appreciation.

Conferences

Invited respondent to: John Bengson, University of Boston, "Perspectives on Moral Phenomenology," *Rocky Mountain Student Philosophy Conference*, February 23, 2002.

Invited respondent to: Bryan Hall, University of Colorado at Boulder, "The Threefold Synthesis in the A Deduction," *Rocky Mountain Student Philosophy Conference*, April 15, 2000.

Invited respondent to: James Harald, University of Minnesota-Minneapolis, "Two Kinds of Aesthetic Reasons," *Rocky Mountain Student Philosophy Conference*, March 6, 1999.

Invited chair, APA Convention Pacific Division Meetings, March 26-30, 2003, San Francisco, CA. Session X-F. Speaker: Barbara Montero, "What does the conservation of energy have to do with physicalism?"; Respondent: Robert Pasnau.

Presentations

"The Ethics of Genetic Engineering," January 6 & 7, 2000, a series of six 90-minute classroom presentations to science classes at Montrose High School, Montrose, Colorado under the auspices of the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado* (a grant-based outreach program organized through the University of Colorado at Boulder Philosophy Department). (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

"Popperian Falsificationism," January 7, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Montrose, CO through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

"Ethical Relativism," May 12, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Buena Vista, CO, through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

"Cultural and Moral Relativism," September 15, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Montrose, CO, through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

"So Moral Relativism Doesn't Work. What Does? A Debate Between Kant and Mill," October 20, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Montrose, CO, through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Ed Hafer, co-presenter)

"The Origins of Rational Explanation: Thales and the First Philosophers," October 23, 2000, a 1-hour classroom presentation to an accelerated math/science 7th and 8th grade class at Centennial

Middle School, Montrose, Colorado through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*.
(Ed Hafer, co-presenter)

"Philosophy, Myth and the Ancient Western World," December 16, 2002, two classroom presentations to honors junior and senior Honors English classes at Manitou Springs, CO, High School through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*.

Service

Web, email, and computer consultant/troubleshooter to the University of Colorado at Boulder Philosophy Department, 1993-ongoing. Created original departmental web page and helped various faculty and graduate students to make classroom use of web- and email-based resources, and to fix various hard- and software-related computer problems.

Graduate student member, Faculty Search Committee, 1995-96, University of Colorado at Boulder Philosophy Department.

References

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Professor John Fisher
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3003 Valmont Rd #76
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Professor Wesley Morrison
Department of Philosophy
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Professor Forrest Williams (ret.)
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Philosophical Education

Graduate Courses

Single Philosopher: John Dewey
Single Philosopher: Plato
Analytic Philosophy: Theory of Truth
Seminar: Thomas Aquinas
Philosophy of Mind
Philosophy of Science
Seminar in Metaphysics
Seminar in Phenomenology
Comparative Philosophy
Symbolic Logic
Ethics
Ethics (Aristotle and Kant)
Philosophy of Science
Symbolic Logic
Epistemology
Philosophy of Hegel
Philosophy of Language
Philosophy of Kant
Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy of Aristotle
Philosophy and Social Policy (Coercion)
Seminar in Phenomenology
Seminar in Ethics (Metaethical Theory)
Seminar in Metaphysics
Aesthetics
Seminar in Epistemology

Audited Graduate Courses:

Philosophy of Kant
Philosophy of Wittgenstein
Seminar in Metaphysics
Philosophy of Kant
Theory of Causation
Philosophy of Language
Philosophy of Descartes

Instructor

Bertram Morris
William Sacksteder
Robert Rogers
Paul Miller
John Visvader
David Hawkins
James Kimble
Wes Morrision
Edward Machle
Steve Leeds
James Kimble
Gary Stahl
George Bealer
George Bealer
George Bealer
Forrest Williams
Robert Hanna
Robert Hanna
Wes Morrision
Naomi Reshotko
Claudia Mills
Wes Morrision
N. Ann Davis
George Bealer
John Fisher
George Bealer

Wayne Waxman
Wayne Waxman
George Bealer
Robert Hanna
Carol Cleland
George Bealer
Robert Pasnau

Kant's Refutation of Idealism: A New Interpretation

Jason Timothy Potter

In his Refutation of Idealism, Kant attempts to show that what Cartesian idealism takes to be most certain (inner perceptions, appearances before the mind) is only possible on the condition of that which Cartesian idealism takes to be least certain (the existence of matter in space causally responsible for the content of sense perception). Despite widespread interest in this argument, most 20th century Anglophone commentators think it unsound. I provide textual and philosophical evidence that these criticisms depend chiefly on either of two common interpretive errors in determining the reference of the pivotal expression "something permanent in perception" employed in the second premise of this argument. Different groups of commentators coalesce around each error:

Group I includes those who think the permanent in perception (PIP) is a perceptual continuant, either permanent (E. Skorpen) or relatively permanent (J. Vogel, Q. Cassam, H. Alison, H.A. Prichard, R. Meerbote), to which the mind has unmediated access through its faculty of sensibility whenever it is aware of its own empirical existence in time. I argue that for Kant, in fact, the mind's access to the PIP is indirect, mediated by outer appearances which are themselves immediate but transitory representations with a necessary, nonimmediate relation to that which is permanent in outer sense.

Group II includes those who think the PIP is either "an enduring framework of space" (P.F. Strawson, P. Guyer), or a pure formal intuition of space (R. Hanna). These interpretations are incompatible with Kant's oft-repeated claim that space is a product of the mind's faculty of sensibility, is no less ideal than time, and cannot be an actual representation (i.e., a given appearance in sensibility). The PIP is needed to provide what the form of inner sense (time) cannot, i.e., an objective representation of time in the field of appearances. But neither a pure formal intuition of space nor an enduring framework of space can do this job because, according to the Transcendental Aesthetic, space is strictly subjective.

These criticisms are byproducts of a new interpretation of the Refutation, the elaboration and defense of which is the central theme of my work. On this new interpretation, Kant's "something permanent in perception" is not any particular empirical object, nor a noumenal object, nor even a pure object of intuition, but rather what Kant means by 'Nature': a qualitative unity of dynamically interrelated material substances which, taken together, yield a real individual which can only be cognized indirectly. In contrast to other interpreters, I claim the PIP is a set of unified, necessary relationships among material substances inferred from sensations which together constitute objective time (and objective space) through acts of mind without which cognition and experience (for a being like that under consideration in the Critique of Pure Reason) would be impossible.

Whether the resulting Refutation of Idealism is sound is not settled in this work. In the last chapter I attempt to consider reasonable challenges and replies, and hope that in any case I have helped to clarify the setting within which this well-known argument is evaluated.