[Incomplete draft of book proposal and outline]

Book proposal:  
_Inclination and the Will: a Kantian Conception of Passion and its Role in Action_  
Tamar Schapiro, Stanford University

Aims and significance:

The aim of this book is threefold. On a programmatic level, I want to shed light on a persistent problem that makes it hard for Kantian and non-Kantian theorists of human agency to talk to one another. Philosophers in the Davidsonian tradition and those in the tradition of Kant, Rawls, and Korsgaard all claim to be developing theories of human agency, and all conceive of agency as self-government. Nevertheless, they routinely talk past one another. The source of the problem, as I see it, is a disagreement about how to understand the status and role of the very concept of action, and how to understand the basic aim of a philosophical theory of action. My aim is not to transcend this difference, but rather to help readers understand the foundational commitments that motivate the Kantian approach, and that distinguish it from more prevalent and familiar approaches in the literature. It should be possible to read the argument of the book as a whole as a detailed illustration of the Kantian methodology, applied to a determinate set of questions.

On a more specific but still programmatic level, I want to argue for the philosophical significance of an underexplored concept, that of “inclination.” Any theory of autonomy needs to make reference to some version of this concept. Inclinations are the “feel-like-it” motives that we check and regulate when we govern ourselves. They contrast with the “ought-to” or “have-to” motives, those that issue from our commitments, intentions, resolutions, and decisions. Most theorists of agency tacitly assume that the main focus of philosophical inquiry should be on the latter, the governing motives and their associated norms. The assumption seems to be that we already have a clear enough idea of the nature and role of the motives that are so governed (whether they are called “inclinations” or “desires” in the narrow sense). I argue that this is a serious mistake. My aim is to show, first, that developing a theory of the governed side of our motivational nature is just as much of a challenge as developing a theory of the governing side. There are deep philosophical puzzles specific to the theory of inclination, puzzles with which the ancients were preoccupied, that have been elided in contemporary action theory. Second, I want to show that the resolution of these puzzles has implications for how we conceive of the governing side of our motivational nature. In other words, it is not possible to develop a theory of autonomy in isolation from the theory of inclination. Moreover, if it makes sense to identify autonomy with rationality, this means it is not possible to develop a theory of rationality in isolation from the theory of inclination.

On a substantive level, I will develop and defend a positive conception of inclination, one that avoids the deficiencies of the two most prominent – if underdeveloped – alternative conceptions in the literature. I start by identifying what I take to be the
central puzzle a theory of inclination has to solve. This is to explain what sort of influence could, in principle, “incline without determining the will.” (The sense of “explain” here is relative to the Kantian methodology, and is not the same as that which is presupposed by most causal and functionalist approaches to mind and action.) I argue that neither of the two alternatives, the “brute force view” and the “practical thinking view,” succeeds in resolving the puzzle. The brute force view characterizes the influence of inclination as a brute force. The practical thinking view characterizes the influence of inclination as the force of argument. I maintain that each of these alternatives domesticates our relation to our inclinations by assimilating it to some more familiar relation. (Most of my argumentative efforts are aimed at undermining the nearly universal complacency with the second of these views.) I argue instead that our relation to our inclinations is *sui generis*; it grows out of our distinctive condition as animals who reflect on our own motives. To have an inclination, I claim, is to be drawn out of oneself, as only a reflective animal can be. The force of inclination on the will is precisely the pressure to reintegrate oneself, to unify what I call the reactive and the reflective selves. More ambitiously, I claim that self-government, as such, is a response to this very problem, the problem of being drawn out of ourselves. Hence what counts as governing ourselves well depends on what counts as successful reintegration. Christine Korsgaard has developed a detailed and controversial theory of action as self-constitution. I take my theory of inclination to provide indirect and largely independent support for that theory.

**Audience:**

The book should be of interest to several constituencies: 1) theorists of agency and practical reason in both the Davidsonian and the Kantian traditions, 2) philosophers interested in the emotions and their role in both moral and nonmoral motivation, and 3) moral philosophers specifically interested in Kant’s theory of motivation.

**Chapter outline:**

1. Methodology, basic concepts, and the central puzzle
   1.1 Kant’s conception of freedom: the two standpoint view
      1.1.1 The distinction between the standpoints
      1.1.2 The concept of a practical concept
      1.1.3 Freedom, action, agency as practical concepts
   1.2 The Kantian approach to action theory
      1.2.1 ‘Action’ is a practical concept, not an empirical concept. It refers to a problem we face, not a phenomenon we observe.
      1.2.2 Role of theory: to give an anatomy of the problem, rather than an explanation of a phenomenon
   1.3 The concept of inclination
      1.3.1 ‘Inclination’ refers to a feature of the problem of action as we face it
1.3.2 To be inclined to $\varphi = $ to feel like $\varphi$'ing (contrast: ought to/have to $\varphi$)
1.3.3 The central puzzle: what form of influence can you coherently conceive of yourself being subject to, when you are subject to the influence of inclination? What, in principle, could "incline without determining" your will?

1.4 Related concept: will power
1.4.1 Role of will power is to counter the influence of inclination
1.4.2 The puzzle about will power: what mode of influence does it exert, and what counts as exerting this influence well? What form of power is will power, and what is it for?

1.5 Overview of the argument of the book
1.5.1 The main candidate conceptions of inclination's influence:
   1.5.1.1 The brute force view: inclinations influence the will through brute force
   1.5.1.2 The practical thinking view: inclinations influence the will through the force of argument.
1.5.2 Assessment of the brute force view
1.5.3 Assessment of the practical thinking view
1.5.4 My alternative:
   The self-constitution view: the influence of inclination is neither brute force, nor the force of argument. It is the pressure to reintegrate the reactive self.
1.5.5 Implications for will power: will power is the effort to get and keep hold of ourselves, so that we can engage with our inclinations on the basis of the force of the arguments they embody.
1.5.6 Implications

2. Assessment of the brute force view: inclinations influence the will through brute force
   2.1 Philosophical motivation for the brute force view
   2.2 Weakness: does not capture idea that inclinations exert influence on the will. Assimilates inclinations to features of the circumstances we face, rather than to directives that presuppose a prior account of the circumstances
   2.3 Related problem: does not capture the idea that will power is the influence of the will. Assimilates will power to muscle power.

3. Assessment of the practical thinking view: inclinations influence the will through the force of argument
   3.1 Philosophical motivation for the practical thinking view
   3.2 Weakness: does not capture the idea that inclinations, as such, put a distinctive, asymmetric pressure on the will, so as to incline it, independent of the strength of the argument, albeit without determining it to act. Relies on perceptual analogy, but does not go farther to identify the mode of influence that perception and inclination share.
3.3 Related problem: does not capture the idea that the role of will power is to counter the distinctive, asymmetric pressure that is proper to inclination as such. Assimilates the force of will power to the force of counterargument, regardless of whether it is embodied in a feel-like-it or an ought-to motive.

4. A Kantian variation on the practical thinking view: the constitution model
4.1 Philosophical motivation for the constitution model
4.2 Weakness: same as weakness of the practical thinking view generally, although with greater appreciation of the need for a broader theory of the unity of the agent.
4.3 Strength of the practical thinking view generally: articulates an ideal we should strive for: relate to your inclinations as proposals, on the basis of nothing other than the strength of the arguments they embody.
4.4 Limitation of the practical thinking view: We still need to know why realizing this ideal requires striving, why it involves the special effort we call “will power.”

5. My alternative: The self-constitution view: the influence of inclination on the will is neither brute force, nor the force of argument. It is the pressure to reintegrate the reactive self.
5.1 Against intellectualism about feeling
5.2 The concept of reaction: emotional and behavioral
5.3 Reaction as distinct from action: attributable to instinctive agential source. Reaction is essentially, not just incidentally, unreflective.
5.4 Instinctive agency as a constituent of reflective agency: our reactive selves.
5.5 Having an inclination: being drawn out of yourself. Inclination as the self-determination of the reactive self. Generates self-division, unsettles the whole self.
5.5.1 How this conception remedies defect of practical thinking view:
explains the sense in which inclinations exert distinctive pressure on the will
5.5.1.1 Explains experience of “passion”: exhilarating and unsettling
5.5.1.2 Explains why role of will power is to get a hold of ourselves
5.5.1.3 Explains why having an inclination pressures us into practical thinking, in a way that making a decision does not.

6. Reflection as reintegration: the will at a crossroads.
6.1 Once pressured into practical thinking, that thinking can take the form of reasoning or rationalization. Rationalization is the defective version of reasoning.
6.2 The defective version of reasoning, rationalization, is reasoning attributable to one who has yet to get and keep hold of herself.
6.3 Getting and keeping hold of yourself is not a precondition of reasoning that is conceptually independent of reasoning itself; it is a constitutive feature of reasoning. Reasoning constitutively involves achieving and maintaining a certain relation to one's inclinations.
6.2 Why is it easier to rationalize than to reason? Why does giving in feel good? Because it offers the opportunity to reintegrate without making the effort of reflection. The reactive self is already someone to be. The reflective self has to construct its identity. That takes effort.

6.3 What is the alternative to giving in? --- reintegrating on the basis of the constitutive principles of reflection [ref. to Korsgaard’s theory…]

7. Implications for active feelings: respect, conscience, moral feeling.
   Active feelings are those generated by the effort to get and keep hold of ourselves. They do not “incline without determining” the will; they are expressions of will.

8. Objection that none of this has direct implications for practical reasoning, since reasoning is orthonomy, not autonomy (Pettit and Smith, 1990 and later)
   Reflections on the relation between autonomy and orthonomy.

Bibliography