How do I know that I am the same I today as the person who first conceived of this specific project over two years ago? The problem of the nature of personal identity and its relation to questions of self-understanding, thought, and action have been at the forefront of philosophical debate since the problem of the *cogito* was brought to the fore by Descartes. Hume’s skepticism about the self destroyed the certainty with which the I think was taken for granted, problematizing the unity, identity, and simplicity of the self. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume claimed, famously, that we do not

“have any idea of self…. For from what impression could this idea be derived?…. It must be some one impression that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same throughout the whole course of our lives, since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and variable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions or from any other that the idea of self is derived, and consequently, there is no such idea.”

Hume rightly noted that there is no single idea of the self through which it can be re-identified throughout changes in its representational states. Our passions and ideas are constantly changing, and as we introspect we cannot identify a single one that remains identical throughout the course of our lives. In what sense, then, can we say that it is the same I that undergoes psychological change over time? How can we identify this I if we have available no single representation through which it can be picked out? Moreover, the *I think* is no *mere* representation, since it must ground all of our representations. It is not only “that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference,” but most of us take it to be that *from which* our thoughts and actions spring, providing them with an inner principle of unity such that we can identify them as the thoughts and actions of the same self. If Hume is right, and our identity is merely that of a bundle of ideas—a bundle whose constituents constantly change over time—what are the consequences for our ability to make both practical and
theoretical judgments? Do we at least need an inner principle of unity linking these representations together? Will Hume’s association of ideas do the trick?

These questions were at the forefront of Kant’s critical project. This book will offer a rereading of Kant’s major texts, in particular the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and the *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone* as a response to Hume on the question of personal identity. Kant’s fundamental answer to Hume is that it would be impossible to make judgments, including Hume’s claim that “there is no such idea” of the self, were it impossible to become self-consciously aware of the self who is making such judgments. This self-consciousness must include, first, the capacity to become aware of the identity of the self throughout distinct moments of time. Second, it must include the capacity to understand this identical I as the subject that is making judgments, that is, the I must grasp itself as active in its grasp and use of concepts. However, it is not only our capacity to make theoretical judgments that depends on our ability to become conscious of ourselves. Our capacity to think practically, to make decisions about the course of our lives, even decisions as to how to best satisfy our desires, depends on our ability to become self-consciously aware of ourselves. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, in particular the transcendental deduction, offers an account how it is possible for us to think the identity of ourselves over time if judgment is to be possible. This identity is not, however, the identity of a metaphysical substance. As Kant argued in his paralogisms, we are not justified in concluding that the self is such a substance. Nevertheless, I argue, transcendental self-consciousness is more than the mere logical I. It is, furthermore, different than the empirical self given in inner sense. An important part of the challenge in reading Kant is distinguishing between the different senses of the self as worked out in his system, grasping the relation between them, and understanding the specific role that each notion plays. This is not an easy task.

My analysis of personal identity in Kant has its starting point in Kant’s transcendental deduction. Several prominent interpreters take Kant’s analysis of transcendental self-consciousness to be a failure. I contend they do not succeed in correctly assessing Kant’s argument regarding the nature of the I think and the role it plays in cognition. Paul Guyer (1987), for instance, understands Kant as affirming that we can have apriori certainty that the contents of inner sense really are our own, takes this as the starting point of the deduction, and contends it is a failure. Patricia Kitcher (1990) interprets Kant as a functionalist, with the self arising out of the contents of inner sense; here the self’s representational states stand in a quasi
causal relation to one another, and it is this loosely connected bundle that constitutes the self. On this account the self as the originator of the power of understanding (original apperception) organizing representations according to rules has disappeared; as such, Kitcher’s account of Kant has him subject to the same worries plaguing Hume. Her new book, *Kant’s Thinker* (2011) corrects some of the major shortcomings of her earlier interpretation. Echoing some of the major interpretive moves made by Henrich, she rightly notes that for Kant the “I think” is only possible through the synthesis of representations in which an object is thought. However, her analysis does not clearly distinguish between original apperception, which *generates* the I-think, and *a priori* self-consciousness (the I think that must be able to accompany my representations). Related to this problem is the fact that her analysis does not take into account the upshot of the two steps in the B-edition of the Transcendental Deduction. As such, she does not grasp the significance of the figurative synthesis in generating what I call the *a priori* reflective self-consciousness. This gap in her analysis has important ramifications for her understanding of the relation between the understanding and the figurative synthesis: her account cannot make sense of Kant’s claim at A79/B105 (insightfully analyzed in Longuenesse 1998) that the *same function* unifying representations in a judgment also unifies the synthesis of various representations in an intuition. The latter synthesis presupposes the synthesis of the temporal manifold and this is the focus of the second part of the B-deduction. Importantly, it is through this synthesis that transcendental self-consciousness is possible. Henry Allison’s (1983/2004) account of the transcendental deduction is, on the whole, a better interpretation of the transcendental deduction as a whole; the later 2004 edition in particular takes note of the significance of Longuenesse’s important discoveries, the role played by the figurative synthesis in the B-deduction, and the way that taking account of the figurative synthesis allows us to take into account point of view. However, as Allison’s focus is not on the question of personal identity, the issue of personal identity, point of view, and their relation to objective experience is rarely touched upon at all.

While Pierre Keller’s *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness* (1998) focuses on the problem of how self-consciousness is possible, he understands transcendental self-consciousness as impersonal. As such, he interprets Kant as *not* committed to the claim that I can know that I am the numerically same person through different experiences. He thereby fails to seriously take into account the relation of *original* apperception to transcendental self-consciousness; it is this relation, I contend, that allows me to grasp my transcendental self-consciousness as *my*
own. As such, contra Keller, even though transcendental self-consciousness is criterionless, I can still, nevertheless, ascribe my own I think to myself. Furthermore, transcendental self-consciousness conditions the very possibility of my grasping states of inner sense (empirical consciousness) as my own. My own account, which stresses the importance of the relation of original apperception to the figurative synthesis, both allows for the central role of the imagination in self-consciousness and provides a satisfactory account of how it is that I can grasp the contents of inner sense as mine.

The notion of self-consciousness worked out in the transcendental deduction is difficult enough by itself. While it must be distinguished from the idea of the self as a metaphysical substance, it must also be robust enough to do a great deal of required work in Kant’s practical philosophy. For this self that is capable of becoming conscious of itself must be able to act on principles, and in order to do this it must be able to grasp its past as its own, project itself into the future, and create rules in accordance with which the self will act. It must, in short, understand its point of view as its own. Putting together a narrative of the self’s past and projecting the self into the future requires the imagination. Understanding the lives of others, key to understanding salience in moral judgment, requires imagination as well. One of the main claims in this book is that the role of the imagination is central not only to our capacity for self-consciousness, but for all abilities dependent upon self-consciousness, including our capacity to be moral agents, and that Kant was acutely aware of this fact. As far as I am aware, there is no book relating the issue of personal identity, point of view, and imagination as worked out in the first Critique to issues having to do with moral judgment and our capacity to be moral agents. This book aims to fill this gap.

Significance of Project: My ability to understand my identity over time is key to my capacity to act on principles and make moral judgments. In order to act on principles, I must be able to grasp my past as my own and project myself into the future. I must grasp my point of view as my own, and I must also understand my situation. Only in so grasping my history, my strengths and limitations, and the constellation of events in which I find myself, can I reflect upon the present, my possibilities for action, and how the actions I take now will impinge upon the direction of my life as a whole. Kant’s view of self-consciousness and its role in both theoretical and practical judgment is the best account available grounding an understanding of moral character. His account of character enables us to take into account recent findings of empirical psychology, for instance, those detailed by Lee Ross and Richard Nisbett in The
Person and the Situation; empirical findings show that the situations in which persons find themselves are highly determinative of action in those situations. However, interpretations of these findings as decisively showing that character has little or no influence on action are questionable at best. Kant’s understanding of personal identity has the resources to challenge these interpretations: Kant a) views the self as the locus of enduring commitments that can shape the structure of one’s life as a whole and b) as such the self can reflect on itself and its situation and affect itself in accordance with its long term goals, for instance, by avoiding situations of temptation, or placing itself in communities upholding certain kinds of values. For Kant “character” is not a series of “robust traits” determining action in given situations. It is rather best described as an enduring commitment to the good, one wherein the self also honestly assesses its frailty and finitude (and the frailty of others as well) so as to better situate itself to make moral choices.

Rationale and Completion: While there are many studies of Kant’s work in English, and a few that take up the problem of Kant’s theory of the mind, (most significantly Ameriks 1983, Brooke 1994, Kitcher, 1990, 2011, and Keller 1998), these works either do not recognize, or do not focus on, the relation of what I call original apperception in Kant and its relation to transcendental self-consciousness (what I call the a priori reflected self-consciousness). I argue that for Kant this relation is the most salient one in determining the self’s understanding of its own personal identity and how this identity must function in regard to its moral judgments. Focus on this understanding of the self is key to an adequate grasp of Kant’s overall project. This project is unique in that it focuses on just this issue: this focus also makes it possible for me to compare (in the latter part of the book) Kant’s understanding of the self’s personal identity with some contemporary models.

Target Market: The book is aimed primarily at scholars and graduate students working on both Kant’s First Critique and his moral theory and understanding of agency. Hence it would appeal to readers of works by authors such as Henry Allison, Beatrice Longueness, and Patricia Kitcher. It is also aimed, however, at those concerned with the question of personal identity more broadly, and how personal identity is conceived affects our understanding of moral judgment. As such it would be of interest to those concerned with questions on personal identity and morality as explored by Derek Parfit.
The work I undertake in this book is closely related to my work on personal identity in my book *Transformation of the Self* (Oxford University Press, 2008), as well as work already completed in several articles. *Transformation of the Self* has been extensively reviewed and recently received a full page review in the philosophy section of the *Times Literary Supplement*. I already have already completed two chapters of the book I propose here, and have two others in draft form. I expect to have a completed manuscript by the end of next year. I am providing two sample chapters along with this proposal, as well as a short bibliography containing the complete information on some of the books I have mentioned. Below are *chapter descriptions and plan of work*:

1. “Personal Identity in Historical Context.” This chapter provides a brief introductory discussion of the problem of personal identity as set out by Locke, Leibniz, and Hume. In particular, I focus on how these figures understood the problem of providing *criteria* for personal identity. This chapter is intended not only to put the significance of Kant’s project in context, but to also lay out, in broad outlines, the implications for ethical theory of the views of Kant’s competitors on personal identity. As such, the first chapter will help establish key connections between the metaphysics of personal identity practical philosophy. (This latter focus makes it significantly different from the first chapter in Kitcher’s 2011 book). Summer 2013.

2. “Transcendental Arguments for Identity in the Transcendental Deduction.” **Completed.** In this chapter I argue that one of the principle aims of the B version of Kant’s transcendental deduction is to show how it is possible that the same I think can accompany all of my representations, which is a transcendental condition of the possibility of judgment. Contra interpreters such as A. Brook, I show that this ‘I think’ is an *a priori* (reflected) self-consciousness; contra P. Keller, I show that this *a priori* self-consciousness is first and foremost a consciousness of one’s personal identity from a first person point of view. (16,199 words). A version of this chapter is the lead article in *Philo*, Fall 2012 issue.

3. Inner Sense, Self-consciousness, and Embodiment: Personal Identity and the Refutation of Idealism. **Completed.** The chapter provides a careful account of inner and outer sense and the roles they play in Kant’s account of self-consciousness. I show that key to Kant’s refutation of idealism is the claim that our awareness of inner alterations presupposes awareness of ourselves as spatial and as thereby orientable in space. Inner experience presupposes a necessary synthesis of the two forms of intuition, space and time, and therefore
of inner and outer sense. Contra commentators such as Guyer, Chignell, and Vogel, I argue that Kant’s refutation of idealism, when correctly understood, is successful. The Refutation clarifies the role of Kant’s a priori reflected self as a precondition for both empirical self-consciousness and experience of the world. (16,329 words).

4. “Imagination and Objectivity: Personal Identity and the Analogies of Experience.” This chapter examines the role of the Schematism in the first Critique, its relation to the Analogies of Experience, and the relation between personal identity, point of view and objective experience. This discussion will include, although will not be limited to, an analysis of Kant’s account of how to distinguish between the subjective and the objective temporal order. I also tie the results of this investigation of subjectivity (and the role that the imagination plays in the grasp our subjective point of view) with the individual’s understanding of his or her finite standpoint in the world. Currently working on.

5. “Personal Identity and the Problem of the Paralogisms.” Kant’s arguments as to why we are not justified in positing the self as a noumenal substance from a theoretical perspective are developed. I provide an analysis of the difference between the first person point of view and the third person point of view in Kant’s views on self-identity and their significance. Elements of the analysis I intend to provide can be found in my discussion of Schleiermacher on Kant’s paralogisms in my book Transformation of the Self. November-December 2013.

6. “Personal Identity and Practical Reasoning.” I discuss the characteristics of self-consciousness necessary for practical reasoning to take place. How does Kant’s understanding of self-consciousness allow us to conceive of character? Character, for Kant, is not a set of robust character traits; at bottom, it is a fundamental commitment. The nature of self-consciousness is such that the individual can reflect upon herself and her empirically given situation in order to change the course of what Frankfurt calls her first order desires. Here I also I show that the role of the imagination in providing us with a first person narrative is key to our ability to construct policies and act in accordance with rules. September-November 2013.

7. “Personal Identity and Transformation of the Self.” I discuss the role of the disposition in Kant, and the possibilities for the transformation of the self. Looking at both Kant’s Religion and Anthropology, I discuss Kant’s understanding of personal identity in the context of a revolution in a person’s fundamental disposition, in particular, the relation of the relation of the transcendental I to the empirical self in the context of the revolution of the will. A
version of this chapter has appeared in *Faith and Philosophy*. It will be significantly revised.

February-March 2014.

Finalize all drafts: April-August 2014.

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