

# Defining the self

Philosophy



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Defining the Self Immanuel Kant's opinion of the self is one that I agree with wholly. Kant was very logical in his opinion and only backed philosophical statements that had bearing. Kant stated that the mind has multiple functions and abilities that make it a complexity (Caruth, 112). This, I have come to acknowledge well within my own life. In the ancient world, men and women had their roles cut out for them. Men were viewed as the creative beings while women were viewed as the domestic beings. Outside of this, there was a perception that none could fulfill the responsibilities of the other. Modernity has, however proved that the human mind is capable of so much more. While I am a full time student, I have managed to take up two jobs as well. While in today's world that is not a wonder, in the 17th and 18th century, it was unfathomable that one could take up two or more mentally and physically engaging tasks at once. This illustrates that the mind has so many capabilities; most of which humanity is not even aware of at this time. The abilities and endeavors that human beings will pursue in the distant future have not been comprehended in the current time.

Kant is also in support of Hume's assertion that they are not "unshakeable truths." The beliefs that human beings live by in actuality do not have an explanation. Once someone asked me why I believe that stealing is wrong. I found myself fumbling with the answer. In actual sense, I have acknowledged that the only reasons I believe this is because firstly, my religion states it and secondly, those before me instilled it in me. However, none of the reasons laid out above are logically strong or supported. Therefore, Kant was right in stating that there is no evidence of the existence of "certain truths"; we have created them within our minds.

John Locke shared Kant's line of thought (the latter) but modified it. His focus

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was not more on the lack of existence of unshakeable truths, but rather on lack in existence of innate facts (Caruth, 31). The existence of God is one that has caused controversy in the literary world. If there were such a thing as innate facts, the existence of a supreme being ought to be one of them. This is because it is a belief that a larger majority of the world shares. If indeed there is a supreme being, it ought to be an innate (inborn) fact, as he is the creator of everything, including human beings. However, as a child, I had to attend Bible studies and learning sessions to completely understand the concept of God as well as what differentiates right from wrong. The argument here is not on the existence of God, but rather that his existence is not innate knowledge. If the fact in question were innate, even children would be well aware of it from birth. It is common knowledge that children know nothing; everything they learn, they are taught or observe. Therefore, the existence of innate knowledge or facts is mythical.

My general opinion of the self therefore, is that though the human mind is capable of so many functions, it does not have any knowledge of its own. The self merely adapts to the environments we are in, it does not generate any knowledge of its own. Each human being develops their own truths and beliefs; they may be similar, but not in all cases.

#### Work Cited

Caruth, C. Empirical truths and critical fictions : Locke, Wordsworth, Kant, Freud. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009.