

Hume of mankind.  
hume explains this  
point brilliantly



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Hume on Miracles  
In explaining Humes critique of the belief in miracles, we must first understand the definition of a miracle. The Webster Dictionary defines a miracle as: a supernatural event regarded as to define action, one of the acts worked by Christ which revealed his divinity an extremely remarkable achievement or event, an unexpected piece of luck.

Therefore, a miracle is based on ones perception of past experiences, what everyone sees. It is based on an individuals own reality, and the faith in which he/she believes in, it is based on interior events such as what we are taught, and exterior events, such as what we hear or see first hand. When studying Humes view of a miracle, he interprets or defines a miracle as such; a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, an event which is not normal to most of mankind. Hume explains this point brilliantly when he states, Nothing is esteemed a miracle, if it has ever happened in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man seemingly in good health should die on a sudden. (Hume p. 888) Hume states that this death is quite unusual, however it seemed to happen naturally.

He could only define it as a true miracle if this dead man were to come back to life. This would be a miraculous event because such an experience has not yet been commonly observed. In which case, his philosophical view of a miracle would be true. Hume critiques and discredits the belief in a miracle merely because it goes against the laws of nature. Hume defines the laws of nature to be what has been uniformly observed by mankind, such as the laws of identity and gravity. He views society as being far to liberal in what they consider to be a miracle.

He gives the reader four ideas to support his philosophy in defining a true miracle, or the belief in a miracle. These points leads us to believe that there has never been a miraculous event established. Humes first reason in contradicting a miracle is, in all of history there has not been a miraculous event with a sufficient number of witnesses.

He questions the integrity of the men and the reputation in which they hold in society. If their reputation holds great integrity, then and only then can we have full assurance in the testimony of men. Hume is constantly asking throughout the passage questions to support proof for a miracle. He asks questions such as this; Who is qualified? Who has the authority to say who qualifies? As he asks these questions we can see there are no real answers, in which case, it tends to break the validity of the witnesses to the miracle. Humes second reason in contradicting the validity of a miracle is that he views all of our beliefs, or what we choose to accept, or not accept through past experience and what history dictates to us. Furthermore, he tends to discredit an individual by playing on a human beings consciousness or sense of reality.

An example is; using words such as, the individuals need for excitement and wonder arising from miracles. Even the individual who can not enjoy the pleasure immediately will still believe in a miracle, regardless of the possible validity of the miracle. With this, it leads the individual to feel a sense of belonging and a sense of pride. These individuals tend to be the followers within society.

These individuals will tend to believe faster than the leaders in the society. With no regard to the miracles validity, whether it is true or false, or second hand information. Miracles lead to such strong temptations, that we as individuals tend to lose sense of our own belief of fantasy and reality. As individuals we tend to believe to find attention, and to gossip of the unknown. Through emotions and behavior Hume tends to believe there has been many forged miracles, regardless if the information is somewhat valid or not.

His third reason in discrediting the belief in a miracle is testimony versus reality. Hume states, It forms a strong presumption against all supernatural and miraculous