

1)	<p>The basic principle of Aquinas's Cosmological argument states that everything that exists is a cause exists, everything that exists must be caused by something, there is an uncaused cause which is the prime mover, that prime mover is God. I think that the argument for causation is a just argument and can be proven everything for example throwing something at someone is going to cause annoyance, however, an uncaused cause of any kind whether it is God or not is hard to follow in this argument because it is completely contradictory. In Aquinas's five ways there is this idea of governance, that God is above all men, then follows pilots and kings etc. This worked back in ^{the 13th} century but doesn't work nowadays where such an idea of governance is non-existent.</p> <p>I don't particularly think that the Realist arguments provide proof for a first cause either as it is contradictory, however, in quantum physics it is known that certain particles can form reality, with an infinite amount of time these</p>
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	particle could connect in a way started the big bang or	
	so on, leading to an uncaused cause.	
	Also why would the first cause need to be God,	
	it seems Aquinas couldn't think of a more suitable	
	placement for the first cause so just decided it was God,	
	it could have been anything such as the big bang.	
	There is also the issue of the need of a first cause,	
	the universe could have always existed and	
	been infinite, although there could be arguments put forward	
	about God being the governance of such an infinite universe.	

3)	<p>It has been noted that there are many different ways in which to have a religious experience, although the defining part of a religious experience is that the person experiences some connection to God or the transcendent, possibly further motivating that person to conversion.</p> <p>In the book, "The Varieties of Religious Experience", William James discusses the importance of religious experience and how it proves the existence of God. He talked about how the religious experience is definitely real because the person is so overwhelmed by this experience that it leads them to conversion, and this is a proof of God.</p> <p>I agree with James when he talks about religious experience being real as that person has experienced it and found a connection to religion through that, it doesn't matter if it doesn't affect another person as they might have a totally different experience that leads them to conversion. However, I don't agree with James when he says that religious experience proves the existence of God because there are many explanations about why people have these kinds of religious experiences.</p>
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Religious experiences could well be a coping mechanism for the mind when people are going through a rough time, for example Theresa of Avila was a nun for most of her life and for most of her life she grew quite ill sporadically. She had a religious experience which brought her closer to God and helped her get through her rough time. I think this is a perfect example of evidence in the mind, the way it finds the necessary components to help someone stay alive and survive. Another example of this was Granter Loyola. He was a soldier when one day in battle he had his leg crushed by a cannonball, he survived the battle and was recuperating in hospital for weeks, he also had to go through the pain of having parts of his leg amputated and stretched, all without anaesthetics. He had a religious experience whilst all this was going on, I think, just like Theresa, that his mind allowed him this experience in order to keep him strong throughout the ordeal, to help him survive. He even set up his own group later on called the Society.

I think this provides good evidence that religious experience doesn't prove the existence of God.

In psychology Freud came up with some theories regarding the cause of religious experiences, these theories certainly don't prove the existence of a God. One of these is that religion is a neurosis and the religious experiences are just neurotic behaviour. I don't necessarily think religion is a neurosis but I don't think religion is a component in our psyche is since the dawn of humanity we have come together to worship something, religious experience is a result of this instinctive urge to worship but only gets brought up to kings of sinners e.g. Herod the King.

Another psychologist is Carl Gustav Jung, he came up with some theories on the causes of religious experiences too but unlike Freud he believed religious experience was good for you. Jung believed there were two different kinds of unconscious, personal unconscious, which relates to individual experiences and collective unconscious, which relates to humanity as a whole's experiences.

One of the causes of this idea from the collective unconscious is the idea of primordial images. In his book, "Psychology of Religion," he discusses this. A primordial image is an idea all of humanity share, one such image is the God archetype, everyone of humanity has a basic understanding of religion and God. I think this helps to show that religious experience doesn't prove the existence of a God but is a product of a single psychological trait that all humans share. Jung also thought that the unconscious was the only way to verify both religious experience, through dreams etc. Every evening this is when the mind is most free to do as it pleases and when it could induce a religious experience.

There are also sociological explanations as to why people have religious experiences, which also lead to no proof of God's existence. Emile Durkheim believed religion was core to society and that as a society we are influenced by one another. One idea he brings up is the one of effervescence, this is the idea that during a certain

ritualistic atmosphere the people of a society can be influenced, he states the mass conversion in the Toronto Blessing is an example. I think that it is very true that people can be influenced when surrounded by more people in a ritualistic environment in a society. This in and of itself leads to religious experience on a large scale without bringing God into the equation. Showing that religious experience doesn't provide proof for God's existence.

Bryan Wilson is another sociologist and he believes that religion is a societal salvation, if religion was a pathway for salvation then it would provide a cause for religious experience secondary rather than spiritually. The religious experience would be a necessary component to help reach the salvation.