


Traits of Religious Experiences			Types of Religious Experience			Key Vocabulary	
1	William James	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Passive: something acts upon the agent and the agent surrenders to thisIneffable – hard to describeNoetic – new informationTransient – passes with time Further information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Changes are permanentThe change makes a person better, calmer and kinder	1	Conversion experience	James: the divided/conflicted mind becomes focused on a new, religious goal. Conversion can be gradual or sudden. Example: St Paul (Acts 22:6-10)	Conversion experience	Produces a radical change in someone’s belief system
2	Rudolph Otto	Numinous experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Mysterium: tremendum et fascinans.</i>Mysterious, terrifying and fascinating	2	Mystical experience	Absolute unity between the agent and divine. Ineffable, paradoxical and perennial (cross-cultural and underpinning all creation) Example: Teresa of Avila	Corporate experience	A group of people have a religious experience
			3	Corporate experience	A group have the same religious experience. E.g. speaking in tongues or having a vision. Example: Toronto Blessing	Credulity	We usually believe what we experience
			Criticisms of Religious Experience			Divine Ground	Divinity underlies the physical world
3	Friedrich Schleiermacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The essence of religiositySelf-authenticatingFeeling of absolute dependence	1	Hume	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is more probable that the agent is wrong than a law of nature broken and falsified	Illusion	Misinterpretation of sensory experience
Richard Swinburne			2	Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Freud: religion is wish fulfilment and experiences are delusions.Feuerbach: God is the imagination of humanity	Mystical experience	Extraordinary experience of the divine
1	Principle of Credulity	We generally trust our experience, and this applies to religious ones	3	Physiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dawkins: religious ideas have helped survival through evolutionHallucinatory drugs and conditions like epilepsy cause similar symptoms	Numinous	Feelings of awe, worship and fascination from experiencing God
2	Principle of Testimony	We generally trust people’s accounts of events and this applies to religious ones.	4	Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marx: Religion is the opium of the massesMob mentality: people conform to the group and lose individuality	Physiological	Study of the physical body and mental faculties
3	Conditions	We may doubt someone if they have a reputation for lying, is a child or cannot interpret their experience properly				Pragmatism	Philosophical movement that a theory must be true if it works in practice



This Philosophy unit pairs with the Problem of Evil unit, exploring the nature and challenges to the existence of God. It also links to DCT units, including Knowledge of God’s existence, Life after death and pluralism units.

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