

The Development of Functional Psychology of Religion in America, 1900-1925

KIM Jehyun

Department of the History of Science
University of Wisconsin

미국의 기능주의 종교심리학의 발전, 1900-1925

김 제 현

위스칸신대 과학사학과

요 약

종교와 과학간의 미묘한 관계는 시대에 따라 그 양상의 변화를 보여왔다. 19세기에 들어오면서 급속히 발전한 사회과학은 종교를 하나의 과학적 탐구의 대상으로 인식하기 시작하여 인류학, 사회학, 심리학 등의 분야에서 종교에 대한 과학적 설명이 시도되었다. 그 중의 한 분야인 종교심리학은 통상 두 방향으로 발전하였다고 설명된다. 그 하나는 프로이트와 융 등의 영향 하에 발전한 무신론적 경향의 연구였고, 다른 하나는 미국에서 미국 심리학의 태두였던 윌리엄 제임스의 경건하고 다분히 신비주의적인 종교철학에 바탕한 종교현상에 대한 경험적 연구였다. 그러나 이러한 이해는 미국의 종교심리학에 대한 단편적 이해에서 비롯된 것으로 보여진다.

20세기 초 미국 심리학의 주된 조류였던 기능주의는 몇몇 학자들에 의하여 종교심리학 연구에 도입되어 급속히 그 영향력을 확산하여 마침내 미국 종교심리학의 주된 흐름으로 대두하였다. 기능주의가 내포 하였던 진화론적, 자연주의적 사고는 제임스의 종교철학에 바탕한 기존의 종교적 목적을 위한 종교현상의 경험적 연구를 신의 기원 등과 같은 종교의 본질적 문제에 대한 비판적, 자연주의적 연구로 전환시켰다. 이러한 점에서 기능주의 종교심리학에 대한 이해는 미국 종교심리학의 새로운 평가를 가능케 할뿐 아니라, 종교에 대한 과학적 탐구의 역사에 있어서 종교와 다아원주의 간의 상호작용의 새로운 측면을 부각시킨다.

I. Introduction

History of science reveals that science developed within a social and cultural context. Religion, especially Christianity, had a major influence on the development of science within

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Western culture. During the nineteenth century, however, the relationship between science and religion underwent a profound change. With the accumulation of scientific knowledge and the professionalization of science, scientists began to proclaim themselves emancipated from religious authority and biblical interpretation and, more and more, tended to regard religion as an object of scientific investigation.

As the result, the interaction between science and religion developed into a new phase. Earlier impacts of science upon religion, as in the cases of Copernican heliocentrism and Darwin's evolution theory, were created by scientific discoveries incompatible with religious doctrine. However, nineteenth century social scientists began to regard religion as a social and natural phenomenon scientifically explainable, which means the birth of 'science of religion.'

Among the scientific studies of religion, it is generally said that psychology of religion was developed by two great psychologists – William James and Sigmund Freud – almost independently around the turning of the twentieth century. The psychological interest in religion, however, lost its popularity among psychologists and, recently, psychological study of religion occupies only a minor position among the topics of social psychology, and it is only known to public for Freud's atheistic interpretation of religion.¹⁾ Under this circumstance, the psychological interpretation of religion attempted by a number of American psychologists is usually estimated as a marginal development of American psychology which was represented by typically empirical and descriptive studies of religious phenomena initiated and directed by James' influence.²⁾

But my investigation informed me that the conventional observation seem to neglect some significant aspects of the American psychological study of religion. During the 1910s, a number of psychologists resisted the empirical and descriptive study of religion based upon

1. Page, F.H., "The Psychology of Religion after Fifty Years," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 5 (1951); 60–67.

2. There has been few historical researches in the psychology of religion in America except a few review articles. Among them, Schaub, E.L., "The Psychology of Religion in America during the past Quarter-Century," *Journal of Religion*, 4 (1924); 113–134.

_____, "The Present Status of the Psychology of Religion," *Journal of Religion*, 2 (1922); 362–379.

_____, "The psychology of Religion in America," *Symposium*, 1 (1926); 292–314.

Hopkins, P., "A Critical Survey of the Psychology of Religion" *Character and Personality*, 6 (1937); 16–35.

van Teslaar, J.S., "The problems and Present Status of Religious Psychology," *Journal of Religious Psychology*, 7 (1914–15); 214–233.

Beit-Hallahmi, "Psychology of Religion 1880–1930 : The Rise and Fall of a Psychological Movement," *Journal of the History of Behaviour Sciences*, 10 (1974); 80–90 are useful.

On the topic some texts in psychology of religion contain general historical descriptions.

Grensted, L.W., *The Psychology of Religion* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1952)

Byrnes, J.F., *The Psychology of Religion* (New York, 1984)

For the general evaluation of American psychology of religion, refer to Grensted, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–57, Byrnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–14. The article "The Study and Classification of Religion," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., vol. 26 also follow these explanations.

James' pious philosophy of religion, and developed a naturalistic interpretation of religion from the functional point of view. Since then, the functional interpretation of religion remained the main trend of American psychology of religion throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century, the hayday of the psychology of religion in America.

II. William James and the Early Stage of Psychology of Religion

E. S. Schaub pointed out American psychologists were the pioneers and remained the vanguards in the psychology of religion throughout its movement.³⁾ Owing to the contributions of the founders of American psychology—William James and G. Stanley Hall—religion became an important subject of psychology and, from 1904, a journal devoted to the psychology of religion titled *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* was published by Hall.⁴⁾ The earliest psychological study of religion was initiated and dominated by empirical studies of religious phenomena for the practical purpose of religious education. It is generally agreed that G. S. Hall's investigations concerning the various phenomena of adolescence, especially the changes of religious experience and feeling during adolescence, were the pioneer works in this field.⁵⁾ Hall's works were followed by his students at Clark University. E. D. Starbuck undertook Hall's empirical study of adolescence and made statistical study on religious growth and conversion with the method of questionnaire, and it was published in *The Psychology of Religion* (1899).⁶⁾ Outside of Clark University, almost parallel study was going on by George Coe and, in 1900, it was published in *Spiritual Life*.⁷⁾ The principal incentive for those studies came from their interest in the psychology of education, more specifically religious education, and the psychologists claimed the usefulness of the studies for religious purpose.⁸⁾ As the result, by 1925, more than two thirds of theological institutions adopted the psychology of religion into their curriculum.⁹⁾ All in all, the early studies con-

3. Schaub, "The Psychology of Religion...", (1924); 113–144.

4. G. Stanley Hall established the pioneering journal in 1904 under the title *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*. It appeared in only four volumes from May, 1904 until July, 1911; it was then continued as *The Journal of Religious Psychology* from 1912 until the suspension of its publication in 1915.

5. Hall's interest in religious education is explained in, Ross, D. G., *Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972), ch. 4, Hall's work was published in a number of articles and books starting from "The Moral and Religious Training of Children," *Princeton Review*, 10 (1982) and completed in his masterpiece, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its relation to Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, 2 vols (New York, 1904).

6. Starbuck, E. D., "A Study of Conversion," *American Journal of Psychology*, 8 (1888); 168–308
_____, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1937)

7. Coe, G. A., *The Spiritual Life: Studies in the Science of Religion* (New York, 1900) Coe was educated in a theological seminary and later became a religious reformer. For his education and career, see V. Firm, *op. cit.*, ch. II.

8. Schaub, "The Present Status...", (1922); 369–371.

9. According to Schaub, "The Psychology of Religion...", (1926), pp. 114, 36 out of 51 theological institutions gave special attention to the psychology of religion, listing total of 48 courses in the field around 1925.

sisted of statistical analysis of certain religious phenomena, especially mystic revelation and conversion, refraining from scientific interpretation of the essential nature of religion.

It was William James who redefined the nature and the scope of the psychological study of religion attempting to answer deeper philosophical questions covering various religious experiences instead of statistical analysis of specific religious phenomena. In this sense, his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) is evaluated as a milestone of American psychology of religion.¹⁰⁾ In *The Varieties*, originated from 'Gifford lectures on Natural Religion' delivered at Edinburg in 1901–2, his characteristic idea of religion is presented. According to him, religious experience consists of immediate and personal contact with divine reality and this mystic experience is truer and higher than ordinary experience. Mystic experience is acquired through the action of subconsciousness and it is motivated by non-rational and pas-sional instinct superior to reason. Although James himself was the founder of functional psychology, it is interesting to find that he did not attempt any naturalistic interpretaion of 'divine reality' but simply admit the mystic experience of divine reality superior to ordinary experience and reason. While Freud maintained that subconsciousness is the source of the falsified idea of God, James endowed subconsciousness with a quite different role from that of Freud. For James, subconscious was nothing but the mediation faculty between mind and really existing God, in a broader sense, between the realms of science and theology.¹¹⁾

James' effort to explain various religious phenomena with his philosophical idea of religion influenced the development of psychology of religion significantly; not only his authority motivated psychological study of religion among his disciples and contemporary scholars but also his idea of religion guided the early studies in psychology of religion. Coe, Pratt, Starbuck shared James' emotional interpretation of religion and assumed the action of subconscious as a crucial factor of religious phenomena.¹²⁾ But it was hardly the case in the 1910s. A number of psychologists began to resist to follow James' pious and mystic idea of religion and attempt to explain religion throughly from natural point of view, and the movement eventually replaced the Jamesian psychology of religion by the end of the decade. Ironically, the greatest challenge against James' dominance came from the idea of functionalism of which James himself was the founder.

III. The Development of Functional Psychology of Religion

1. Historical Overview of Functionalism

As early as 1929, E. G. Boring observed that functionalism was the first unique American system of psychology.¹³⁾ Functional psychology is concerned with the unity of consciousness

10. James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1958) This book was originally published in 1902 at London, but in this paper the 1958 reprint is used as text.

11. For detail discussion of Freudian theory of Religion, refer to White, V., *God and the Unconscious* (Chicago, 1953).

12. Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion* (1898), Coe, *Spiritual Life* (1900) and Pratt, J. B., *Psychology of Religious Belief* (New York, 1907) were the major works accomodated James' idea of religion.

13. Boring, E. G., *A History of Experimental Psychology* (New York, 1929), ch. 21.

functioning in organism and it assumes that mind acts for the adaptation of an organism to its environment. The greatest incentive for the rise of functional psychology came from the theory of evolution. Darwinian theory of evolution gave direct impact to the development of certain fields of social and biological sciences; the suggestion of a continuity in mental function between animals and man served as the basic assumption in animal psychology; the importance of variation in the mechanism of evolution gave rise to the study of individual differences represented by F. Galton's study of eugenics. Another important contribution of Darwinism to psychology came from the idea of adaptation. Evolutionary concept of adaptation caused biologists to interpret anatomical structure with functional concept, and functional psychology emerged when psychologists began to consider mental process in an allied manner.¹⁴⁾

It is said that the most influential precursor of American functional psychology was William James. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1878), James considered conscious processes as activities of an organism producing some differences in that organism's life mental processes, then mental process was seen as useful functional activity for a living organism because it enables the organism to maintain and adapt itself to the environment.¹⁵⁾ The formal development of functional psychology had to await the works of John Dewey and James Angell, the founders of the Chicago School of functional psychology. Dewey argued behaviors and consciousness involved in a reflected response cannot be reduced into their elements because they function as an unified guiding force in the struggle for survival. According to Angell, the mental process is not isolated and independent event but a part of the movement of organic evolution, so the job of the functional psychology is to understand the functional role of consciousness in the process of the evolution of an organism.¹⁶⁾ Owing to the contributions of the pioneers, functional psychology became the main trend of American psychology around 1910.

There was a parallel development going on in the psychology of religion, but the leader was James H. Leuba not William James.

2. James H. Leuba : the Pioneer

Leuba was born at Neuchatel in French Switzerland in 1868. After immigration to the United States, Leuba entered in the department of psychology at Clark University and, under the supervision of G. S. Hall, completed his Ph. D thesis 'Studies in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena' in 1895.¹⁷⁾ Since 1904, he edited the annual reviews of psychology of

14. For the Darwinian influence of functional psychology, see Angell, J. R., "The Influence of Darwin on Psychology," *Psychological Review*, 16 (1909); 152-169.

Boring, E. G., "The Influence of Evolutionary Theory upon American Psychological Thought," in S. Persons, ed., *Evolutionary Thought in America* (Yale Univ. Press, 1950), pp. 268-299.

15. Schultz, D., *History of Modern Psychology* (New York, 1975), pp. 128-138.

16. Dewey, J., "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896).

Angell, J. R., "The Province of Functional Psychology," *Psychological Review*, 14 (1907); 61-91.

17. For Leuba's education and career, see his autobiography "The Making of a Psychologist of Religion," in V. Ferm, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-200.

religion section in *Psychological Bulletin*, and coedited the *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* with Hall. His activity certainly makes him deserve the evaluation that “he was in the leadership position in the movement as long as it existed.”¹⁸⁾ But, curiously enough, the evaluations on his scholastic achievements are usually negative. He has been portrayed as a singular and eccentric figure in the psychology of religion owing to his radically humanistic interpretations of religion dissenting from the main tendency.¹⁹⁾ The existing evaluations, however, seem to be improper when the development of functional psychology of religion is properly understood, which presents him as a pioneer of a new movement not a mere singular dissenter.

What distinguished Leuba from other psychologists of religion was the motivation of his study. His reading in scientific works, especially those of Darwin and Huxley, in his teens made him scientifically inspired and determine to ‘clear up’ the wonders of religion scientifically.²⁰⁾ The following remark contrasts his ambition against the motivation of other psychologists searching for useful empirical knowledge serving to religious education and proselyting.

Thus the conflict between religion and science which broke out first in the field of cosmology, then of biology and the historical sciences, is now carried into the field of psychology.²¹⁾

Leuba’s Ph. D. thesis was completed under the supervision of Hall with Starbuck’s ‘A study of Conversion’ almost simultaneously. But Leuba’s work differed from Starbuck’s statistical analysis of conversion in the respect of its functional interpretation of the process of conversion. Defining the essence of religion as a striving toward ‘being’ not toward ‘knowing’, he tried to show that the process of conversion could be explained as a striving toward ‘being’ though ordinary mental process, what he called ‘inner adaptation.’ The main source of religious dogma and authority is nothing but its usefulness to the satisfaction of human desire, in other words, inner adaptation.²²⁾

In a number of articles published from 1900, his idea became articulated. Leuba defined religion as a mode of human action to satisfy religious impulses and motives through religious means or channels such as the idea of God. Religion is the action of human consciousness to fulfil its desires in the ‘struggle for life’, and religious consciousness adopt God as ‘working hypothesis’ which becomes true when it proves Himself useful for the satisfaction of man’s desire. There is no emotions, feelings and desires specific only to religion and, what distinguishes them from others is the difference in the means (Idea of God) applied for the satisfaction of human needs and desire.²³⁾

18. Beit–Hallahmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 85.

19. Teslaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 226.

Grensted, *op. cit.*, pp. 226.

Schaub, *op. cit.*, pp. 375.

20. Leuba, not 17, pp. 181.

21. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion* (New York, 1912), pp. 221.

22. Leuba, “Studies in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena,” *American Journal of Psychology*, 7 (1986), pp. 311–312, 346–349.

Leuba's idea was incorporated in *A Psychological Study of Religion* (1912). Agreeing with Dewey's volitional interpretation of consciousness, Leuba defined religion as following.

Religion is that part of human experience in which man feels himself in relation with power of psychic nature, usually personal power, and makes use of them. In its active forms, it is a mode of behaviour, aiming, in common with all human activities, at the gratification of needs, desire, and yearning. It is, therefore, a part of 'the struggle for life.'²⁴⁾

The idea of God is essentially the invention of human desire and needs and it has evolved with the change of human needs. Accordingly, Leuba asserted, all theological problems are referable to psychological phenomena, and theology would become a branch of psychology, what meant the final stage of the development of science to him.²⁵⁾

From the functional point of view, religion was no more a non-rational instinct to believe transcendental reality, but a conscious mode of behaviour for the adaptation to environment by means of the idea of God invented by human mind. Upon these assumptions, psychology of religion was able to shift its aim from pious service to theology to scientific interpretation of God and religion which would replace the metaphysical arguments of theology. Pivoting upon the belief in functionalism and naturalism advocated by Leuba, the main stream of psychology of religion was turning into a new direction in the 1910s.

3. The Establishment of Functional Psychology of Religion

E. King and E. Ames were the major psychologists who shared the functional idea of religion introduced by Leuba, and developed a strong trend of social interpretation of religion under the banner of functional psychology. In 1910, two influential works attempting social interpretation of religion from the functional point of view were published by them, those were Ames' *The Psychology of Religious Experience* and King's *The Development of Religion*.

King's functional idea of religion had been formulated early in his Ph. D. thesis "The Differentiation of the Religious Consciousness" completed in 1904 at University of Chicago. In the dissertation, King maintained that religious consciousness is always a reaction of the organism as a whole toward the stimuli from its environment, so the distinction between religious and other consciousness is purely functional one not referable to ontological differences.²⁶⁾ In "The Pragmatic Interpretation of the Christian Dogmas," King argued that our concept of reality including that of God and Holy Spirit does not refer to ontological reality but

23. Leuba, "Introduction to a Psychological Study of Religion," *Monist*, 11 (1901); 195-225.

_____, "The Contents of Religious Consciousness," *Monist*, 11 (1901); 563-73.

_____, "The Field and Problems of Psychology of Religion," *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, 1 (1904-1905); 155-167.

_____, "On the Three Types of Behaviour," *American Journal of Psychology*, 20 (1909); 107-119.

24. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion: Its Origin, Function, and Future* (New York, 1912), pp. 52.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-210, 231-233.

26. King, Irving, "The differentiation of the Religious Consciousness," *Monograph Supplement of the Psychological Review*, 6 (1904); 1-72.

only to functional one which acquire reality only when they are useful for the fulfilment of organism's needs.²⁷⁾

Later on, King developed his idea in social context. In 'The Evolution of Religion'(1909), religious consciousness was defined as a valuational attitude gradually evolved by means of social heredity. So the origin and evolution of religion becomes a definite branch of social psychology.²⁸⁾ The idea formed the central point of *The Development of Religion* that a deity is nothing but a symbolified and personified social values, and religion is a product of psycho-physiological organism's social reaction to the condition of existence.²⁹⁾

Ames showed a parallel development of the pragmatic and evolutionary idea of religion. Ames, applying Leuba's expression, argued that the idea of God is 'working hypothesis' serving to practical demand for self-preservation against social and material conditions. When the hypothesis proves itself useful, it becomes true existence because of its functional value.³⁰⁾ The conclusion of *The Psychology of Religious Experience* is that religion is the consciousness of social values that is the demand for self-preservation by means of voluntary adaptation to physical and social environment. The idea of God has to be understood in its relation to the social and historical conditions in which alone it has meaning.³¹⁾

The major scholars of functional psychology of religion explicitly shared functional understanding of religion claiming that religion is a product of human consciousness in the course of the struggle for existence through its adaptation to inner or social environment, of which the former Leuba emphasized and the later Ames and King did. The functional idea of religion thus formulated rapidly became popular during the 1910s to a degree that even the followers of James accomodate it. This fact supports my claim that functional idea of religion became the main philosophical orientation of psychology of religion replacing James' philosophy of religion during the period. The conventional opinion, representing Leuba, Ames and King only as eccentric scholars owing to their humanistic, naturalistic attitude and their idea of religion as social value, is neglecting the significant transition in American psychology of religion.³²⁾

In contrast to the phenomenal and descriptive study of conversion in *Spiritual Life*, Coe attempted functional interpretation of religious phenomena including the origin of religion and God in *The Psychology of Religion* (1916). Praising Leuba's idea opened a new horizon of functional psychology, Coe reiterates the functional explanations on the genesis of God and the origin of religion presented by Leuba, King and Ames.³³⁾ The main theme of the volume was that mental function is in the process of evolution through the adaptation to natu

27. King, "The Pragmatic Interpretation of Christian Dogmas," *Monist*, 15 (1905); 248–261.

28. King, "The Evolution of Religion from the Psychological Point of View," *American Journal of Sociology*, 14 (1909); 433–450.

29. King, *The Development of Religion: A Study in Anthropological and Social Psychology* (New York, 1916), ch 8, 9.

30. Ames, E. S., "Theology from the Standpoint of Functional Psychology," *American Journal of Theology*, 10 (1906); 219–232.

31. Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience* (Boston, 1910), pp. 280–297.

32. See the articles in note 19.

33. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1916), pp. 63–65.

ral and social environment, and what is useful to this process of adaptation is valuable and real. Religion and the idea of God acquire their reality and social value owing to their service to the process of evolution, and evolve according to the change of social values.

In *The Religious Consciousness* (1920), James Pratt, a student and loyal disciple of W. James, admits Leuba's pragmatic idea of religion defining religion 'the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies.'

Professor Leuba seems to be right in the main when he says that God is used rather than understood; the religious consciousness cares little who God is, but wants to make use of him for various ends.³⁴⁾

Not only the functional interpretation of religion formed the main current of the religion but it severely criticized the main tenets of James' idea with mystic implications and, eventually, replaced them.

4. Functionalism vs. Jamesian Theory of Religion

The main points of James' idea of religion—instinctive origin of religion, superiority of mystical experience and the significance of subconscious in the religious experience—were basically reflected his mystical and supernatural attitude toward religion. This attitude caused strong anxiety among the functional psychologists who sought after natural and scientific understanding.

First of all, James, who himself was the advocator of pragmatism, did not integrated it with evolutionary idea, and explained that religion is a direct outcome of the 'deep-rooted religious instinct'.³⁵⁾ Certainly, functional psychologists admitted that instinctive impulses and needs are the principal factors which motivate and govern human behaviour and consciousness. But the concept of religious instinct independent from other primary and biological instinct was seen to be unscientific and mystic to them.

Leuba argued that religious instinct is superficial phenomenon created by human action to gratify more primary instinctive needs and impulses, therefore the notion of independent religious instinct is redundant and meaningless.³⁶⁾ King criticized the term innate religious instinct as a scientific disguise of a entirely unscientific notion maintaining that instinct is not original, elemental endowment but a mode of overt action produced in the process of organic development and evolution.³⁷⁾ Under the severe attack, Pratt and Coe abandon the notion of religious instinct maintaining that there is no evidence that religious intuition and instinct ever occur, and, if the notion of instinct is used so loose as to admit religious instinct, it will be hard to find any human action not instinctive.³⁸⁾

34. Pratt, J., *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1920), pp. 207.

35. James, *op. cit.*, "conclusion".

36. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

37. King, "The Evolution of Religion..." (1909), pp. 435–436.

38. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*(1920), pp. 26–28, 292–294 Coe, *The Psychology of Religion* (1916), ch. 19.

Above all, the most crucial factor of the conflict between James and the functional psychologists lay in the incompatibility between James' mystical disposition and the naturalistic attitude of functional psychologists. For functional psychologists, religion was understood within the context of organism's adaptation to its environment, and there was no room for mystic intervention of supernatural being.

Again, the first and foremost critic of mysticism was Leuba. Employing various results of physiological psychology and abnormal psychology, Leuba maintained that mystical religious experience could be understood as illusion caused by the reduction of mental association activities which happens during sleep and hypnotism.³⁹⁾ There is, according to him, no more reason for positing superhuman interposition in religious phenomena than in the most ordinary change of our affective life.

Mystical experience reveals not the Christian God, but the lawful workings of our Psycho-physiological organisms. In that respect the Mystical experience is not of a nature other than the rest of conscious Experience.⁴⁰⁾

Coe, through physiological investigations on the conditions of mystical revelation, maintained mystical revelation and conviction are acquired precisely in the same way as non-mystical ones are; through tradition and instruction, and the reflective analysis of them. He claimed that the superior certainty and authority of mystical experience are illusory, and the illusion arises through auto-suggestion which gives reality to illusory ideas or ideals.⁴¹⁾ Ames also emphasized the similarity between mystic experience and ordinary one in their functional aspect. The vital and immediate relation with absolute reality which mystics crave for is the product of tradition hypostatized by means of auto-suggestion and hypnosis.⁴²⁾

James and Freud were two significant figures who explained religion with the notion of subconscious or unconsciousness. But they employed it in quite opposite manners; Freud rejected religion as illusion what was the projection of the unconscious conflict, meanwhile, James regarded subconscious as the conceptual medium to fill the gap between religious supernaturalism and scientific naturalism. James thought the subconscious, the subliminal religion of mind first indicated by Myer, is the source of mystical experience and bring direct perception of supernatural God to mind. The process of sudden conversion is the outburst of the energy incubated in the subconscious, and the truth revealed through subconscious is purer and higher than that of ordinary experiences.⁴³⁾

But, James' notion of subconscious was the last thing to be reconciled with the tenet of functional psychology which emphasized the natural process of human mind and the unity of consciousness. Leuba criticized James as spiritual psychologist of mysticism 'who could not

39. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (London, 1925).

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 316.

41. Coe, "The Sources of the Mystical Revelation," *Hibbert Journal*, 6 (1908), pp. 359–372.

42. Ames, "Mystic Knowledge," *American Journal of Theology*, 19 (1915); 250–267.

43. For the explanation of the Myer and James' notion of subconscious, see Pratt, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–49.

interpret mystic experience as illusion forced with scientific understanding of mysticism called his assistance to the concept of subconscious.⁴⁴⁾ Coe, who had accepted the role of subconscious in sudden conversion, abandoned his idea in a later work, *The Psychology of Religion*, (1916) suggesting that religious conversion is, all in all, a particular instance of differentiation of the individual or social consciousness, which reveals his own conversion toward functionalism.⁴⁵⁾ King also asserted that the action of subconscious is at most a reorganization of meanings and values present in consciousness sublimated from previous experience, therefore, the employment of mystic notion of subconscious is a characteristic of 'pseudo—psychology.'⁴⁶⁾

From the discussion above, it becomes clear that functional psychologists criticized, with a remarkable unanimity, the major tenets of James' idea replacing them with naturalistic interpretations of religion, which indicates the establishment of functional psychology as a new paradigm of the psychology of religion in America.

IV. Historical Meaning of the Functional Psychology of Religion

Although functional psychologists came up with a new interpretation of religion, it has been pointed out that they failed to develop an empirical and experimental research tradition. Teslaar disregarded Leuba's work as vague and commonplace generalization, and criticized Ames and King for the reason that they naively equated religion with social value without any clear criterion.⁴⁷⁾ Schaub insists that religion is not a mere psycho—physical instrument or function of mind, but a more complex and autonomous phenomena, therefore, it cannot be adequately explained by biological and utilitarian bias that religious experience is subservient to the demands of life.⁴⁸⁾ As a matter of fact, functional psychologists became more and more intrested in the naturalistic interpretation of philosophical problems of religion rather than theoretical and experimental research of religious pyenomena. In this respect, Beit—Hallahmi's estimation seems proper that the theoretical and ideological basis of the psychology of religion was basically a residue of the philosophical tradition in psychology, and it limited the impact of the movement on general psychology and seperated the psychology of religion from the main stream of academic research.⁴⁹⁾

Although functional psychologists failed to develop a trend of theoretical academic research, the introduction of functional idea of religion significantly affected the nature of psychological study of religion as a whole. Functional psychologists shifted their point of concern from the descriptive study of specific religious phenomena to the critical study on the essential problems of religion like the origin of God. When religion is a product of organ

44. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion*, pp. 223, 321.

45. Coe maintained that sudden conversion always involve the action of subconscious in *Spiritual Life*, ch. 3, but he changed his opinion in *The Psychology of Religion* (1916), ch. 12.

46. King, "The Real and Pseudo Psychology of Religion," *Jouranal of Philosophy*, 2 (1902), pp. 622—626.

47. Teslaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 226—227.

48. Schaub, "The Present Status...", pp. 274—275.

49. Beit—Hallahmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 88.

ism's functional effort for adaptation, they thought, the origin of God and the cults of religion become legitimate subjects of science. Proclaiming a new role of psychology, Leuba asserted that psychology of religion should be the critical and scientific guide of metaphysical theology rather than a handmaid of theology serving for religious purpose.⁵⁰⁾ Upon the changed role proclaimed, functional psychologists cultivated new fields of research which had been neglected by the followers of James so far. For example, they attempted to answer the questions about individual and social origin of religion and the generation of mystic experiences, which had been simply attributed to religious instinct and Divine revelation, from natural point of view employing new discoveries in the fields of social psychology and abnormal psychology.

Although the psychology of religion failed to escape its philosophical disposition throughout its movement, as Beit–Hallahmi pointed out, the establishment of functional idea of religion demarcated a significant transition of the movement. Even though functional psychology of religion did not develop itself as an established academic fields of research, it certainly formed a strong trend of American psychology of religion by 1910 and characterized the later development of the movement. In this respect, the conventional understanding that psychology of religion in America was a descriptive study of religious phenomena foreshadowed and dominated by James is oversimplifying the nature of the movement.

The development of functional psychology of religion also give a clue for the explanation of the decline of the psychology of religion after 1925. It is usually said that psychology of religion declined with its accomodation to religious institutions as pastoral psychology. The accomodation caused psychology of religion fail to separate itself from theology and the general dogmatic and evangelical tasks of religious institutions, and promoted its separation from the academic trend of psychology.⁵¹⁾ But this explanation seems to neglect the fact that the main stream of the psychology of religion at the time of its decline was the critical study of religion inspired by naturalism and anti–dogmatism. As a matter of fact, the appearance of pastoral psychology, according to Stark,⁵²⁾ was the result of the effort to neutralize the threat of the movement of psychology by taking it under the wings of religious institutions. As the result, only pious and descriptive study was accomodated and the functional study of religion lost institutional support from religion which gave the crucial incentive to the movement in its early stage. When functional psychologists abandoned religious support insisting naturalistic and anti–dogmatic attitude, and failed to establish a academic field of psychology, the decline of the movement was inevitable.⁵³⁾

50. Leuba, note 44, pp. 207–211.

51. Homans, P., *Theology after Freud: An Interpretive Inquiry* (Indianapolis, 1970), pp. 99.

Strunk, O., "The Present Status of the Psychology of Religion," *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, 25 (1957); 287–292.

52. Stark, R., "On the Incompatibility of Religion and Science," *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, 3 (1963); 3–21.

53. Surveys on the courses in psychology of religion exhibit the decline of academic interest in the psychology of religion. According to Schabu's "Psychology of Religion..." (1926) 57 out of 111 academic institutions offered courses in psychology of religion in 1924, but in 1938 only 24 out of 154 colleges surveyed offered the courses according to E. R. Henry, "A Survey of Courses in Psychology offered by undergraduate college of liberal arts," *Psychological Bulletin*, 35 (1938); 430–435.

Functional psychology of religion also provides an unique example of scientific explanation of religion in the history of science. American functional psychologists shared the idea of evolution with British evolutionary anthropologists represented by E. B. Tylor and J. C. Frazer.⁵⁴⁾ But they employed the idea of evolution in a quite different manner from that of British anthropologists in the explanation of religion. While the anthropologists viewed religion as the remnant of primitive mind which would disappear with the evolution of human mind and society, American psychologists thought of religion as a mode of human activity for the adaptation to the natural and social environment. So religion would not perish but only evolve with the evolution of human mind and society, and remain real and valuable as far as it is useful for human evolution.

Their view also differed from Emile Durkheim's sociological theory of religion according to which religion is the symbolized and personified social order and relation.⁵⁵⁾ Functional psychologists, especially Ames and King also emphasized the significance of social value in religion, however, they did not equate the symbolization of social value with religion. The real essence of religion was organism's functional need and desire for the adaptation to social environment which was symbolized as social value. In other words, social value is dependent on more fundamental functional needs and desire.

It is interesting to find that American psychologists developed a unique naturalistic interpretation of religion with the idea of evolution out of pious descriptive study for religious purpose. This Darwinian interpretation of religion deserves a recognition among a number of scientific explanations of religion attempted from the nineteenth century, and it also reveals a neglected aspects of Darwinian impact upon religion in American culture.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to illuminate and reevaluate the movement of functional psychology of religion as a neglected aspect of the psychology of religion in America. The movement was pioneered by Leuba and established by Ames and King. In contrast to the popular observations, it does not remain a mere unsuccessful dissenting branch of the psychology of religion but develop a new trend in the field which affected the nature of the study significantly to the end of its movement.

Although, as reviewers point out, it failed to establish a theoretical and academic field of research, the introduction of functional idea of religion shifted the focus of study from the descriptive analysis of religious phenomena to the critical and naturalistic explanation of the essential problems of religion including the origin of god and the reality of mystic experience. As a matter of fact, the advent of functionalism caused the redefinition of the scope and role of psychological study of religion and it demarcated the two phases of the movement in America. In this respect, the conventional understanding that American psychology

54. The classics in the evolutionary anthropology are Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1877).

55. For Durkheim's sociological theory of religion, see

Durkheim, Emil, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (English tr., 1912).

of religion was typically descriptive study of religion foreshadowed and headed by Wiliam James needs to be modified.

American psychologists produced a specific interpretation of religion inspired by scientic naturalism out of pious empirical study for religious purpose, and this reveals a neglected aspect of Darwinian impact on religion in American culture, which deserves recognition in the history of scientific explanation of religion.