

**PRAGMATIC REALITY, PURE EXPERIENCE AND THEIR RELATION:**

**AN EXPLORATION OF WILLIAM JAMES' METAPHYSICS**

**Thesis Submitted for The Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy (Arts) of**

**Jadavpur University**

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## INTRODUCTION

In many of his writings William James addresses various theories regarding metaphysical problems that can be found throughout the history of metaphysics. He claims in the book *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* that metaphysics is usually characterised as "a primitive kind of quest." [1] He describes how people became interested in this metaphysical quest. He says individuals often perceive the universe as some sort of puzzle and attempt to unravel them by identifying the basic elements or principles of the universe. Some such thinkers refer to those principles as God, Matter, Reason, the Absolute, and so on. James claims that viewing these notions through a pragmatic lens does not end our search, but rather emphasises the practical cash value of these concepts. In *Some Problems of Philosophy*, James says that metaphysics discusses some abstract and universal questions that science suggests but cannot answer.

James addresses some metaphysical problems in his book *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. He says that the dispute over substance in metaphysics is long-standing. A whole philosophical community has tried to solve the problem of substance in various ways, but none of them has succeeded. For example, nominalism have tried to explain the notion of substance. Nominalists say substance is just a name by which we try to capture different phenomena. But nominalists do not accept phenomenal properties as names. Other metaphysical issues have arisen over the nature of substances, including whether substance is material or spiritual in nature. There are two competing theories: materialism and spiritualism. The fundamental tenet of materialism is that things are made of matter. Matter is the foundation of the external world; hence, matter must be acknowledged in order to explain the external world. In this sense, matter is a metaphysical principle. According to this theory, everything in the world is explained in terms of material conditions. Some philosophers who deny matter as objectively real, such as Berkeley, says that whatever exists must be perceived by the mind and matter does not exist as real independently of the mind. James calls this theory spiritualism. According to spiritualism, the spirit or mind governs and directs everything in the universe. Instead of using mechanical laws to explain the universe, teleological perspectives are used in these theories. So according to spiritualism, the world is guided by higher principles. The question now is whether matter or spirit determines, directs, or affects the world. James claims these two theories cannot provide a solution to the problem regarding the nature of the Reality.

<sup>1</sup> James, William ( 1921), p.52

Moreover, as James points out, there is another kind of controversy in metaphysics concerning free will and determinism. In the theory of free will, the value of human dignity is emphasized: man has the ability to express his will, which is under his control. But on the other hand, those who believe in the theory of determinism do not admit human freedom; they think that every event that takes place is predetermined. However, which of the two theories is more plausible is debatable.

James addresses some other metaphysical problems in his later work, *Some Problems of Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy*. James first looks back at the development of metaphysics. He says that in the history of metaphysics, two distinct types of minds or tendencies have been populated. James refers to them as the empiricist and rationalist types of minds. He draws a distinction between them by stating that rationalists are persons of principles with an emphasis on the universal. They like to move from wholes to parts, whereas empiricists are men of facts who place emphasis on particulars and prefer to move from wholes to parts. According to James, Plato was the rationalist philosopher of the ancient Greeks, while Protagoras and Democritus were empiricists. Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Spinoza were rationalist philosophers who supplemented the experienced world with pure ideal constructions. They accept truth as having eternal characteristics. On the other side, empiricist philosophers like Socrates, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Dewey, Schiller and Bergson are the empiricists who doubt the rationalist philosophers' conclusions by emphasising our actual lives and the facts of the world. James also believes that there have been mixed-type philosophers in the history of metaphysics. Kant, Lotze, and Royce are mixed-minded regarding the facts-principles dichotomy. Despite the fact that James describes himself as "mixed-minded," he is not a Kant or Royce type. He says "The author of this volume is weakly endowed on the rationalist side, and his book will show a strong leaning towards empiricism."<sup>[2]</sup>

Along with the above issues James discusses the specific ontological problems, like the question of how there comes to be anything at all, or how the world comes to be here at all instead of being a non-being. James says that various attempts have been made to solve the ontological problems, but some solutions eliminate the question itself. One such attempt claims that 'being' is eternal like God or material atoms; there is no such thing as 'non-being'. James observes that rationalist philosophers leave the problems alone or reduce the mystery.

<sup>2</sup>James, William (1916) p.37

According to James, some empiricist philosophers such as Herbert Spencer attempts to provide an answer to the problem by assuming that there is always some reality, however faint, weak, or imperceptible, that may come first and gradually be created to its fuller grades until the entire universe is created. James thinks that Spencer's solutions to the ontological problems, too, leave the problems untouched because it is assumed that there is always some faint being there behind non-being. James concludes "If you are a rationalist you beg a kilogram of being at once, we will say; if you are an empiricist you beg a thousand successive grams; but you beg the same amount in each case, and you are the same beggar whatever you may pretend. You leave the logical riddle untouched, of how the coming of whatever is, came it all at once, or came it piecemeal, can be intellectually understood." [3]

James discusses also another problem of metaphysics. He claims that there has been a debate about the reality of "percept" and "concept." According to a rationalist philosopher like Plato, a concept is the highest reality. The features of a concept are that it is discrete, fixed, permanent, and eternal. On the other hand according to empiricism, "percept" is reality. Rationalist philosophers think perception is primordial and concept is secondary, whereas empiricists say concept is primordial and percept is secondary. The rationalist philosopher gave priority to concept over percept. The empiricist philosophers gave priority to percept over concept. Both of these schools think that we can explain the world and reality by accepting either concepts or percepts respectively. According to James the percepts need be admitted to be of the nature of a continuous flow, and without this flow, no concept can be created. James claims that deeper features of reality are found in percepts. James elaborates on why both of concept and percept are needed to explain our understanding of the world and reality. James says "Neither taken alone, knows reality in its completeness. We need them both..."[4] James holds that if we accept concepts as the ultimate reality without accepting percept, then some problems arise regarding activity and causation, knowledge, and personal identity. According to James, the concept is incapable of grasping the total reality presented in perceptual flow. James claims that deeper features of reality can be found in perceptual flux alone. On the other hand, James' opinion percept alone cannot account for the existence of various worlds that are constituted by abstract entities and where even the existence of eternal truths is admitted. Thus, in a word percept too alone is not adequate to grasp the entire reality.

However, in the percept- concept debate, James mentions that Kant offers a third alternative. James says that Kant does not believe in percept and concept as reality; according to Kant,

<sup>3</sup> James, William (1916) p.45

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.53

reality is a thing in itself and that reality is neither percept nor concept. Kant holds that reality cannot be represented by percept and concept. But James does not accept Kant's view regarding the nature of reality.

Another metaphysical issue referred by James is the debate between metaphysicians regarding forms of reality. Does reality exist distributively or collectively? Pluralism represents the distributive, while monism represents the collective form of being. Monism accepts reality as one. On the basis of this reality, monists can bridge the apparent disconnection between objects. Monist believes that the separation of objects perceived through our senses is not real but mere appearance. On the other hand, a pluralist accepts many things as real, though they may be different in many counts. James describes various types of monism and their advantages and disadvantages, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of pluralism.

James also discusses different types of dualism, such as thought and things, subject and object, physical and mental, and so on. In various ways, philosophers try to overcome the problems arising out of these dualisms, but James holds that those efforts do not really solve the problems of dualism as metaphysical problems but rather leave some controversy with each explanation. James tries to overcome these dualisms like mind - body, subjective-objective, thought-things etc in his philosophy.

James identifies the above issues as the core problems of traditional metaphysics. What James meant by "metaphysics" is now the question that needs to be addressed. Let's first take a look at what is generally understood by "metaphysics" in the traditional sense in the history of metaphysics before we analyse the nature of metaphysics from James's point of view.

Greek philosophy can be referred to as a source to identify the roots and early evolution of metaphysics. Metaphysics has emerged in various forms over time and through various schools. Many philosophical schools have even tried to refute metaphysics. Logical positivists are among those who call metaphysics nonsense. The question is: What is metaphysics? What is the subject area of metaphysical study? For a basic understanding of metaphysics, we have to rely on Greek philosophy. The name "metaphysics" has been in use since the time of Aristotle, although Aristotle himself did not give the name "metaphysics". The etymological meaning of the word "metaphysics" is "after physics." Aristotle wrote some treatises that librarians named "After Physics" to place after physics books when kept in library. This may be the root of the etymological meaning of the term "metaphysics."

However, this explanation of metaphysics does not provide any understanding of what it is. Therefore, if we wish to understand metaphysics, we need to get beyond this etymological meaning.

If we take a closer look, there are a lot of things in this world. Each thing has unique characteristics. It is possible to notice even incompatible characteristics between these items. The main question is how they can all fit into the same world or universe. Therefore, some foundation is needed. It is impossible to understand each object separately. Is there any general nature among them that can be used to comprehend the nature of these objects? Metaphysics deals with that general nature. Metaphysics, according to Aristotle, is the study of being as such. If we comprehend the being, then we can also categorise various things in the world and understand them. The primary task of metaphysics is to identify and comprehend the fundamental categories of being. According to this definition metaphysics deals with the ultimate questions about the nature of reality. Some metaphysicians assume that there is a difference between appearance and reality. Some philosophers, such as Plato, accepts Forms as real and sensible world as copy of that real. This definition of metaphysics is not without fault because other branches of inquiry are also concerned with reality. As a result, it will not be possible to distinguish metaphysics from other investigations or enquiry, such as biology, economics, ethics, and epistemology. For this reason, an attempt is made to give a definition of metaphysics from another perspective.

The shortcomings of the aforementioned definition led to the formulation of a new concept of metaphysics. This definition lists a number of issues and claims that the field of philosophy that addresses these issues is known as "metaphysics." We refer to that list in the discussion of special metaphysics below. Until now, philosophers have tended to adopt this definition more frequently.

Carroll and Markosian mentioned these definitions of metaphysics as three approaches in their book *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Those approaches are the etymological approach, the big-picture approach, and the definition-by-example approach.

According to the 'etymological approach' the metaphysics is the branch of philosophy concerned with Aristotle's collections of particular topics, which were published after the *Physics*.



According to the 'big - picture approach' "metaphysics is the branch of philosophy concerned with fundamental questions about the nature of reality." [5]

There is also the definition-by-example approach, which holds that metaphysics is the area of philosophy that deals with issues like ontology, time, the Mind-Body Problem, problem of freedom and determinism etc.

In the history of metaphysics, we see that metaphysics is classified in different ways, one of them being general metaphysics and special metaphysics. Simply stated, general metaphysics includes ontology and is concerned with issues relating to the nature of reality as a whole, including issues with abstract and concrete existence, the nature of particulars, the contrast between appearance and reality, etc. Special metaphysics, on the other hand, is concerned with specific problems. These special problems are the distinction between the mental and the physical, the possibility of human freedom, the nature of personal identity, the existence of God, etc.

We shall now attempt to see whether James provides a new definition of metaphysics.

James says in *Some Problems of Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy* that "no exact definition of the term "metaphysics" is possible." [6] The way to describe the nature of metaphysics or the meaning of metaphysics in James' opinion is to mention some problems that are accepted to be discussed in the branch of philosophy called metaphysics. James gives a list of some metaphysical problems rather than a definition and says that these problems are discussed in the inquiry, which is called metaphysics. According to James, the issues included in the list are "What are thoughts, and what are things? And how are they connected? What do we mean when we say "truth"? Is there a common stuff out of which all facts are made? Which is the most real kind of reality? What binds all things into one universe? Is unity or diversity more fundamental? Do all things have one origin? or many? How are mind and body related? Do they act on each other?".[7] This is what we referred to as "the definition by example" approach above.

So in the above discussions, we noted that James expressed his views on various problems of traditional metaphysics and presented how these problems were addressed by various philosophical communities and philosophers. Philosophers identify metaphysical problems, but their theories do not provide satisfactory solutions. But James thinks that if his

<sup>5</sup> Carroll John. W and Markosian Ned (110) p.2

<sup>6</sup> James, William (1916) p.29

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, pp.29-30

pragmatism is accepted, these disputes can be settled, and he tries to show how different views about the same problem can be correct.

We shall explore what James means by pragmatic reality before we go into how pragmatism proposes to settle the aforementioned disputes. James mentions two types of realities in his philosophy, one of which is pragmatic reality. The most controversial issue in James' philosophy is pragmatic reality. According to several academics such as, C.H. Seigfried, John Wild pragmatism has no place in a metaphysical debate. They think that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. They claim that James did not even deal with the metaphysical problem in his discussion of pragmatism. Some of them hold that James deals primarily with epistemology. Moreover, many scholars, such as *Charlene Seigfried*, argue that by using the pragmatic method, James is actually refuting metaphysics rather than discussing it. Some James scholars, such as Rosenthal [8] however, admit that metaphysics is discussed in pragmatism, even in a traditional sense.

Pragmatism is generally taken in a limited sense by those who hold that pragmatism does not contain metaphysics. They claim that pragmatism gives importance and emphasis to concepts like use, practice, need, consequence, the practical world, etc. Furthermore, pragmatism emphasises how truth is established by results rather than examining the essence of truth; as a result, pragmatism's interpretation of truth does not accurately reflect reality. The focus of metaphysical investigation is on beings and principles, whereas pragmatic reality is concerned with everyday objects. Thus, they draw the conclusion that pragmatism is devoid of metaphysics or does not discuss metaphysical issues.

However, if we make an effort to comprehend James' argument thoroughly, we will discover that he applies each of these ideas, like practice, use, and purpose to his philosophy in a technical sense. The term "practice" is used broadly by James. Practice includes engaging in daily activities as well as spiritual, psychological, and intellectual pursuits. James uses the word "consequence" in a broad sense as well. In his language "these may lie either in the way of making us think, or in the way of making us act" [9] Furthermore, when James used the word "need," he did not simply mean an active need. He says "after the emotional and active needs come the intellectual and aesthetics ones." [10] In defining reality, James claims that reality is what truth represents. So based on those concepts, it is claimed that pragmatism engages in discussing metaphysics. Therefore, it can be claimed that the ideas discussed above have metaphysical significance. It is highly

<sup>8</sup> Rosenthal, Sandra B. (1986)

<sup>9</sup> James, William (1916) p. 59

<sup>10</sup> James, William (1890) p.315

doubtful to say that those pragmatism wants to refute metaphysics. James analyses metaphysics in the pragmatic sense, as evidenced by the pragmatic solutions he uses to address classical metaphysical issues.

We will briefly discuss the various types of metaphysical debates and metaphysical theories that, James thinks, can be resolved with the pragmatic method. This discussion too demonstrates that, in a sense, pragmatism includes metaphysics.

The problem of substance is a metaphysical issue that philosophers debate. Empiricists and intellectualists disagree about the nature of substance. Some say that substance is the substratum of qualities, while others say that substance is the aggregate of qualities. Both rationalists and empiricists try to argue in their own way. As a result, controversy over substance can be observed. According to James, substance has a different pragmatic effect when viewed as a substratum of qualities rather than the sum of qualities. These qualities are the cash values of substances, according to James. James tries to show that both theories have some important truth claims, but that does not mean that pragmatism accepts all the claims made in these theories.

Another debate can be seen between materialism and spiritualism. According to materialism, matter is the ultimate reality. Everything in this world is governed by matter. This sensible world is mechanically developed. On the other hand, the ultimate reality according to spiritualism is Spirit or Consciousness. Spirit is the higher principle of the world. On this view, the world has a teleological aspect. All things are driven by the Spirit. As a result, the main claims of these two theories are different. According to James, some claims from both the theories can be correct on pragmatic grounds. If they are judged in a pragmatic sense, then it will be seen that if there is no difference between these two theories in terms of practical effect, then these two theories are actually the same. The pragmatic method is applicable to both theories. If matter or spirit is accepted as real, then what difference will it make in our practical lives? If it can make a difference, then these two will be accepted as real. James says that if one accepts matter, then the moral order is denied because everything is determined by it, and if the moral order is denied, then the hope of human life cannot be accepted. On the other hand, if spirit is accepted, then moral order is also accepted. This is the practical difference that these two theories imply.

Rationalist philosophers accept concepts as real but do not want to call percepts real; on the other hand, empiricist philosophers accept percept as reality and interpret concepts as

secondary. But James explains in his *Pragmatic Rules* that both are needed. Just as reality cannot be fully understood or grasped without a concept, reality cannot be fully understood or grasped without a percept too. As a result, both are accepted as real in pragmatism. In this way, it can be shown that James discusses the problems of traditional metaphysics while dealing with pragmatism, and he also discusses what metaphysics is.

We have discussed James's observations about traditional metaphysics. And in the context of that discussion, we have noted that he observes that there are various debates and even contradictory claims within traditional metaphysics. He thinks that accepting pragmatism can resolve these debates. James tries to show that each apparently contradictory metaphysical theory can, to some extent, be accepted if we adopt a pragmatic perspective. James asserts that every theory has some merit, so no theory can be completely rejected. For this reason, James' pragmatism acts as a mediator between different theories. He claims that pragmatism can play that mediator role. However, though James tries to reconcile these apparently contradictory theories, it does not mean that he is able to keep all the claims of those theories in his theory. In spite of this, if we accept James' pragmatic method, it is possible that metaphysical views that were previously considered incompatible can be shown to have important acceptable aspects.

In *The Principles of Psychology*, James clearly engages in metaphysical discussion. He states in the preface to the first volume of his book that many of the chapters in this book are metaphysical. And we notice that he gives many definitions of reality in this and many subsequent works of his. Some of those definitions are often interpreted as definitions of pragmatic reality, while others are interpreted as definitions of metaphysical reality. Accordingly we can see that he discusses two types of reality. Since pragmatic reality is much debated among James scholars, many do not want to call it metaphysical, so in the first Chapter of this thesis we will discuss whether James makes any metaphysical discussion when discussing pragmatic reality. However, here we may mention about another doctrine of James, which he calls doctrine of "pure experience," which he discussed in his later book entitled *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. While there is disagreement among James scholars about pragmatic reality, there is little debate about the metaphysical status of pure experience. James addresses pure experience in his later writings, which most of the scholars interpret to denote metaphysical reality. So it cannot be said that there is no discussion of metaphysics in James's philosophy. Explaining the nature of pure experience, James says that pure

experience is the primal stuff from which all things are created. Now the question arises: Is there is any relation between these two realities? If yes what is it? James himself does not make clear what the relation between them is, but we do get hints of apparent contradiction in his writings about this matter. As a result, there is a debate among James' scholars about what the relation between them is. The question arises as to whether there is any relationship between two realities at all, and if so, what kind of relationship. In my research, I have attempted to demonstrate how these two realities would relate.

The relation of pure experience to pragmatic reality depends on the relation between radical empiricism and pragmatism. It is accepted that pure experience is a part of radical empiricism, whereas pragmatic reality is a part of pragmatism. Now, if the connection between pragmatism and radical empiricism cannot be established, then it is difficult to establish the connection between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality. Since James himself did not give a clear answer about the relationship between these two, the question arises as to whether there is any relationship between them at all, and if so, what kind of relationship is it?

There is disagreement among James researchers regarding the connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism. Two kinds of seemingly incompatible claims in James's two works are the main source of controversy among scholars.

James says early in his philosophical career that "there is no logical connexion between pragmatism, as I understand it, 'and a doctrine which I have recently set forth as 'radical empiricism.' The latter stands on its own feet. One may entirely reject it and still be a pragmatist." [11] James' remark is used by a group of academics to support their claim that these two realities have no connection to one another.

But in a latter book, James says, "it seems to me that the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail." [12] James' remark is used by another group of scholars to support their claim that these two realities are related.

In order to make our debate more convenient, we will now try to see what arguments the researchers have provided in the interpretation of the aforementioned phrase. If we categorise the interpretations of different interpreters, we can see that these interpreters can be divided into three groups in a broad sense. In the first group, I will put those commentators who think

<sup>11</sup> James, William (1921) p. ix

<sup>12</sup> James, William (1909) p. xii

that there is no relation between these two theories. In the second group, I will put those researchers who think that the relationship between these two theories can be shown. They, however, refute one of James' remarks. The final group will be of those James scholars, who believe that both of James' comments are correct, but that the relationship depends on how we interpret them.

Elizabeth Flower, Andrew J. Reck argues that there is no relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism. He was part of the first group.

John R. Shook, Ruth Anna Putnam [13], Richard Stevens [14], Richard P. Mullin [15], David C. Lamberth, etc. are among those who belong to this second group.

Ralph Barton Perry, Richard Gale. Wesley Cooper, Graham Bird [16], belong to the third group.

Since I have given their arguments in detail in the conclusion, I will mention only the gist here. Elizabeth Flower [17] interprets James's comment as saying that the two are distinct because radical empiricism is a theory about the nature and content of experience, whereas pragmatism is a theory about the meaning and belief of experience. These are the two distinct aspects of James's philosophy. According to Reck [18] these two theories are considered similar in their methods, but even if they are not logically related. David C. Lamberth [19] interprets James's comments as one that claims that two theories are not related in the sense that one helps to prove the other. Lamberth states that radical empiricism includes the pragmatic theory of truth, which is one of the components of radical empiricism. John R. Shook [20] discussed how radical empiricism and pragmatism are related to one another. Shook says that when James says that the truth of radical empiricism does not depend on the theory of pragmatism, James basically refers to the kind of pragmatism that other philosophers like Peirce, Dewey and Schiller were developing as theories of pragmatism in James's time. And ,on their view, James himself did not refer to his own version of pragmatism here. So when James says that radical empiricism does not depend on the truth of the pragmatism, he is not talking about his own theory. Here, James basically means another version of pragmatism. However, radical empiricism and what James himself refers to as the pragmatic theory of truth are interconnected, and even pragmatism is dependent on radical empiricism.

<sup>13</sup> Putnam, Ruth Anna (1997), <sup>14</sup> Stevens, Richard (1974 )

<sup>15</sup> Mullin, Richard P (2007 ) , <sup>16</sup> Bird, Graham (1986)

<sup>17</sup> Flower, Elizabeth and Murphey, Murray G. (1977 ) , <sup>18</sup> Reck, Andrew J. (1967 )

<sup>19</sup> Lamberth, David C. (1999 ) , <sup>20</sup> Shook, John R (2011)

Perry says that pragmatism and radical empiricism do not differ as methods, they are closely related. But if pragmatism and radical empiricism are seen as doctrines, then they cannot be said to be related, because then they can be independent. This way, numerous interpreters have indicated their claims regarding how these two theories relate to one another. We will try to see which of these different views is consistent with James' other views also James' other views also.

We shall now discuss about the views regarding the connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. We can observe that, in a broad sense, the interpretations of the many interpreters can be categorised into three groups. One group denies the connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. Another group asserts that there is a connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. The third group holds that while the relationship can be acknowledged in one sense, it can be denied in the other. That is, the relationship depends on how we interpret them.

Charlene Haddock Siegfried initially admits that there is a relationship between pure experience and pragmatic reality, but in her later phases, she denies that there is any metaphysics in the traditional sense in both pragmatism and radical empiricism. Some James scholars explain the relation between these two realities by referring to their basicness. Some scholars, such as Ellen Suckiel, argues that pragmatic reality is fundamental and that pure experience is dependent on it. On the contrary some scholar such as Sami Pihlström argues that pure experience is fundamental and that pragmatic reality is dependent on it. There is pure experience and pragmatic reality, and even though they are not related in one sense, they are related in another sense for Cooper and Perry.

The title of my research is Pragmatic Reality, Pure Experience, and Their Relationship: An Exploration of William James' Metaphysics. The aim of this thesis is to try to see whether both pure experience and pragmatic reality can be considered to be *equally* real and whether a relation of interdependence can be shown between these two notions of real in James' metaphysics. For doing this we shall critically evaluate the various claims made by James scholars regarding the relation between this two notions of real, and shall try to see whether we can get any important insight from their accounts that can help us to reach our goal. To proceed with these objectives we will apply the qualitative method of critico-conceptual analysis. My thesis is mostly divided into four segments. Let me briefly mention the chapter divisions and summarise what I have discussed in the chapters.

In Chapter 1, I shall elaborate on William James' conception of pragmatic reality

We find discussions of pragmatic reality in various works of James, such as *Principles of Psychology*, *Pragmatism a New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, *The Meaning of Truth*, and *Some Problems of Philosophy*. James gives some definitions of reality in his discussion of pragmatic reality. He says that anything that can affect my interest is real to me. Pragmatic reality is what I take to be real. Pragmatic reality is the one that fulfils our various needs. One may object to James' notion of practical or pragmatic reality as "...whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real." [21] The objection may be that many times objects of illusion also excite and stimulate our interest and in that case will James consider matters of illusion as real? The answer to this question is found in James' later work entitled *Pragmatism - a new name for some old ways of thinking*. Here James mentions another characterization of reality. James holds – "Reality is in general what truths have to take account of". [22] The answer to the above objection can be provided from this characterization. If anything even after exciting or stimulating our interest turns out to be false then it cannot be real in James' view. To be real it has to be an object of truth. James also talks about various constituents of reality in the discussion of pragmatic reality.

In Chapter 2 I shall present William James' view of pure experience

In the book *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James discusses the nature of pure experience. That is not to say that pragmatism or other texts do not discuss pure experience. James also discusses pure experience in other books, but we get the details in his later book. Explaining pure experience, James says that pure experience is the continuous stream that is the material from which all things are created. But that itself is not created by anything else. The stuff that we can interpret in different ways is neutral experience. We can read it in different ways. One can define this stuff as subject or object because, within it, these distinctions exist as possibilities. It is determined by the context or to whether something is subjective or objective, etc. Relations and functions create this context. For practical purposes, we use concepts to separate these. Primal matter does not mean matter in Aristotle's sense. It is not completely undifferentiated. James explains that in some cases, this pure experience is experienced. Subject, object, knower, and known—these are actually functions of pure experience.

<sup>21</sup> James, William (1890) p.295

<sup>22</sup> James, William ( 1921) p.244



James says “ the instant field of the present is at all times what I call the pure experience. It is only virtually or potentially either object or subject as yet.” [23]

Chapter 3 is entitled ‘Two types of reality and their relation: various interpretations’.

In this chapter, I have discussed the interpretations of James scholars on James’ view regarding reality and the relation between pragmatic reality and pure experience. Scholars I have discussed include Charlene Haddock Seigfried, Sami Pihlström, Richard Gale, Ellen Kappy Suckiel, John Wild, and Wesley Cooper.

Seigfried claims that pure experience is a metaphysical reality. Pragmatism is actually an epistemological doctrine with no metaphysical component. The gist of Siegfried's argument is that since traditional metaphysics is denied and refuted in pragmatism, it can be said that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. It is basically a theory of knowledge. In her earlier period, Seigfried accepted that there is a relationship between pragmatic reality and pure experience. But in the latter phase, Seigfried changes her mind. She says pure experience is also not a metaphysical reality. So these two cannot be called realities, and hence there is no relationship between them as reality.

Suckiel claims that James uses the concept of reality in two broad senses, namely metaphysical and pragmatic reality. Pure experience is metaphysical reality. Metaphysical reality is basic; pragmatic reality is secondary and depends on metaphysical reality. In this sense these two realities are related.

Interpreting the philosophy of William James, John Wild claims that radical empiricism or pure experience is the main metaphysical theory on which the pragmatic theory of truth is based. Pragmatism is a partially epistemological theory with no metaphysical element in the ultimate sense. Wild contends that the only way to demonstrate a consistent relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism is through an existential phenomenological approach. Wild claims that these two theories may be independent, but the relationship between them is only possible in this way. If we read James's theories with this existential-phenomenological approach, we can understand that for James, the main reality is pure experience.

Sami Pihlström has expressed a completely different view from other scholars regarding the relationship between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality. He claims that pragmatic

<sup>23</sup> James, William (1912) p.23

reality is the basis on which other metaphysics depend, but the pragmatic reality does not depend on any other fundamental metaphysical theory.

Gale, like Pihlström, recognises the connection between these two realities, but for different reasons. Richard Gale says pragmatic reality is the fundamental metaphysical reality, but pure experience cannot be called the fundamental metaphysical reality as it has certain limitations. Gale asserts that if pure experience is called a basic metaphysical reality, then many things cannot be accepted as reality in James's metaphysics.

According to Cooper, James's approach has two levels: one that is metaphysical and another that is empirical. According to him, these two levels are unique and separate from one another. He places pragmatism on the empirical level and pure experience on the metaphysical level. According to Cooper, discussing pragmatic reality does not require addressing metaphysical realities. Moreover Cooper asserts that it is possible to address metaphysical realities without also considering pragmatic reality at the empirical level. There is no connection between these two realities on an empirical level. A radical empiricist is not always a pragmatist. Cooper seeks to demonstrate that, if the metaphysical level is accepted, it can explain pragmatic reality. Cooper discusses the connection between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality at the metaphysical level.

In Chapter 4, I shall be concerned with critical evaluation of the interpretations of Jamesian view of the real

In this chapter, I have tried to evaluate the interpretations of various scholars discussed in the last chapter. We would examine the claims and arguments put forward by these philosophers. While dealing with Siegfried's interpretation we would thus ask: What is the meaning of Siegfried's claim that pragmatism denies metaphysics? Do the pragmatists say that traditional metaphysics is impossible, or do they say that traditional metaphysics is not adequate? James, we would argue, does not say that traditional metaphysics is not possible. James only claims that traditional metaphysics is not adequate because taking it in this sense would leave many things out of metaphysics that also have metaphysical value. Thus, it can be said that pragmatism does not make traditional metaphysics impossible but rather show that limited and inadequate. We have made an effort to present a number of arguments to refute Siegfried's claims.

Suckiel's reading, Wild's reading, and Pihlström's reading of James suggest that James will be prepared to accept the reduction of pragmatic reality to pure experience or the reduction of pure experience to pragmatic reality. These scholars either call pure experience basic or pragmatic reality basic. If these two realities are understood from the perspective of basicness, then the objection of reductionism arises. But throughout his philosophy, James has opposed both dualism and reductionism.

Cooper's central thesis is that reality differs as levels differ. There will be issues with how these two levels relate to one another if they are considered independent. Here the problem of dualism arises. But if we examine James' philosophy, we can find that he opposed dualism from the very beginning. As a result, James's claims will be inconsistent if we adopt Cooper's perspective. Therefore, it cannot be argued that the two levels are distinct.

Gale asserts that if pure experience is called a basic metaphysical reality, then many things cannot be accepted in James's theory of reality. Gale argues in support of his view that James admits in his ontology the existence of many things that are non-phenomenal, that do not appear in space and time, that do not have spatial or temporal properties. For example - contents of the abstract world are numbers and properties, contents of the super natural world are purely spiritual individual etc. However, if we call pure experience the basic reality, we cannot describe all the objects of these non-phenomenal worlds on the basis of pure experience, because as Gale claims, pure experience can be stuff of sensible world objects with spatial and temporal locations. Pure experience can be significant for intra-world unification but not for inter world unification. Here, inter world unification means the relationship between the seven worlds that James recognized. Gale holds that the relationship between the sensible world and the other six worlds cannot be unified by the theory of pure experience. If we read James's writings, especially *Pragmatism* and *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, we see that this interpretation is not acceptable. When James acknowledges the existence of pure experience, he says that the flow of experience can create a variety of objects with the help of "relation."

As I have discussed the doctrines and arguments of the above scholars in detail in the 3rd and the 4th chapters, only a few of their claims have been mentioned above here very briefly.

I have divided the conclusion into three parts. I discussed the relations between pragmatism and radical empiricism in the first part. In the second part, I have summarised the main arguments and refutations of various James scholars. We have discussed here whether we can

accept any of these scholars' arguments. In the third section, I went over to see how pure experience and pragmatic reality relate to the idea of process. I would like to argue here that James' philosophy can be explain better by considering his notion of reality as a process.

In Western metaphysics, mainly intellectualist philosophers defined reality as a fixed, permanent substance and explained "change" or "becoming" as appearance, although there were hints of process metaphysics, this metaphysics did not develop until much later. Process theory is mainly presented as a theory opposed to substantive metaphysics. The main focus of process theory is to explain reality through the concepts of change, motion, action, and continuity. In this process theory, priority is given to processes over substances or things, which are here described as subordinate. That does not mean that substance or thoughts are denied here. Rather the concept of substance, things, or properties are attempted to be explained or understood in terms of processes.

James' theories of pragmatism and pure experience incorporate concepts of process as well.

In the book *The Meaning of Truth*, James defines "experience" as a process that provides us with material to digest. When a subject creates pragmatic reality by selecting from the flow of experience according to one's needs, one cannot do so randomly. That, too, is a process. If we try to understand where the concept of process is involved in pragmatism, then the "reflex arc" theory can be cited as an instance. James discusses this "reflex arc" theory in his book, *Will to Believe*. This reflex arc is a triadic process that is physiologically based. There are three steps in this process, which cannot operate independently. According to this process, the sensory impressions we receive through our senses—we receive sense data by attending to something while ignoring the rest because of our interest—are then classified as conceptions. On the basis of this conception, we act. Through this act, an individual fulfils his needs. The purpose of the reflex arc is achieved by satisfying these needs. And through this triadic process pragmatic reality is created. Processes have an important contribution to make in the discussion of pragmatic reality. Thus, we see that process plays an important role in James's pragmatic reality.

In our conclusion we have also discussed how his theory of pure experience might be seen as a "process".

James explains pure experience as the continuous stream that is the primordial material from which all things are generated. However, that does not originate from anything else.

According to James, pure experience is initially chaotic but gradually divides into inner and outer states through acts and relations. This explanation of pure experience demonstrates that it can be viewed as a process. According to James, when the intellectual life of man is created from unanalyzed pure experience by using concepts, these concepts are nothing but secondary processes. We can easily explain how different objects and functions are generated by acts and relations in the flow of experience by referring to the process. For instance, knowing is how one aspect of experience relates to another. One portion of experience is called "knower," and another portion is explained as "known." This 'knowing function' is created within pure experience as a process. So, we can incorporate James' two views of reality into the process theory.

We will discuss in the conclusion what the advantages are and what problems can be avoided if in James' theory these two realities and their relation is interpreted in terms of process.

## INTRODUCTION

In many of his writings William James addresses various theories regarding metaphysical problems that can be found throughout the history of metaphysics. He claims in the book *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* that metaphysics is usually characterised as "a primitive kind of quest." [1] He describes how people became interested in this metaphysical quest. He says individuals often perceive the universe as some sort of puzzle and attempt to unravel them by identifying the basic elements or principles of the universe. Some such thinkers refer to those principles as God, Matter, Reason, the Absolute, and so on. James claims that viewing these notions through a pragmatic lens does not end our search, but rather emphasises the practical cash value of these concepts. In *Some Problems of Philosophy*, James says that metaphysics discusses some abstract and universal questions that science suggests but cannot answer.

James addresses some metaphysical problems in his book *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. He says that the dispute over substance in metaphysics is long-standing. A whole philosophical community has tried to solve the problem of substance in various ways, but none of them has succeeded. For example, nominalism have tried to explain the notion of substance. Nominalists say substance is just a name by which we try to capture different phenomena. But nominalists do not accept phenomenal properties as names. Other metaphysical issues have arisen over the nature of substances, including whether substance is material or spiritual in nature. There are two competing theories: materialism and spiritualism. The fundamental tenet of materialism is that things are made of matter. Matter is the foundation of the external world; hence, matter must be acknowledged in order to explain the external world. In this sense, matter is a metaphysical principle. According to this theory, everything in the world is explained in terms of material conditions. Some philosophers who deny matter as objectively real, such as Berkeley, says that whatever exists must be perceived by the mind and matter does not exist as real independently of the mind. James calls this theory spiritualism. According to spiritualism, the spirit or mind governs and directs everything in the universe. Instead of using mechanical laws to explain the universe, teleological perspectives are used in these theories. So according to spiritualism, the world is guided by higher principles. The question now is whether matter or spirit determines, directs, or affects the world. James claims these two theories cannot provide a solution to the problem regarding the nature of the Reality.

<sup>1</sup> James, William ( 1921), p.52

Moreover, as James points out, there is another kind of controversy in metaphysics concerning free will and determinism. In the theory of free will, the value of human dignity is emphasized: man has the ability to express his will, which is under his control. But on the other hand, those who believe in the theory of determinism do not admit human freedom; they think that every event that takes place is predetermined. However, which of the two theories is more plausible is debatable.

James addresses some other metaphysical problems in his later work, *Some Problems of Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy*. James first looks back at the development of metaphysics. He says that in the history of metaphysics, two distinct types of minds or tendencies have been populated. James refers to them as the empiricist and rationalist types of minds. He draws a distinction between them by stating that rationalists are persons of principles with an emphasis on the universal. They like to move from wholes to parts, whereas empiricists are men of facts who place emphasis on particulars and prefer to move from wholes to parts. According to James, Plato was the rationalist philosopher of the ancient Greeks, while Protagoras and Democritus were empiricists. Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Spinoza were rationalist philosophers who supplemented the experienced world with pure ideal constructions. They accept truth as having eternal characteristics. On the other side, empiricist philosophers like Socrates, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Dewey, Schiller and Bergson are the empiricists who doubt the rationalist philosophers' conclusions by emphasising our actual lives and the facts of the world. James also believes that there have been mixed-type philosophers in the history of metaphysics. Kant, Lotze, and Royce are mixed-minded regarding the facts-principles dichotomy. Despite the fact that James describes himself as "mixed-minded," he is not a Kant or Royce type. He says "The author of this volume is weakly endowed on the rationalist side, and his book will show a strong leaning towards empiricism."<sup>[2]</sup>

Along with the above issues James discusses the specific ontological problems, like the question of how there comes to be anything at all, or how the world comes to be here at all instead of being a non-being. James says that various attempts have been made to solve the ontological problems, but some solutions eliminate the question itself. One such attempt claims that 'being' is eternal like God or material atoms; there is no such thing as 'non-being'. James observes that rationalist philosophers leave the problems alone or reduce the mystery.

<sup>2</sup>James, William (1916) p.37

According to James, some empiricist philosophers such as Herbert Spencer attempts to provide an answer to the problem by assuming that there is always some reality, however faint, weak, or imperceptible, that may come first and gradually be created to its fuller grades until the entire universe is created. James thinks that Spencer's solutions to the ontological problems, too, leave the problems untouched because it is assumed that there is always some faint being there behind non-being. James concludes "If you are a rationalist you beg a kilogram of being at once, we will say; if you are an empiricist you beg a thousand successive grams; but you beg the same amount in each case, and you are the same beggar whatever you may pretend. You leave the logical riddle untouched, of how the coming of whatever is, came it all at once, or came it piecemeal, can be intellectually understood." [3]

James discusses also another problem of metaphysics. He claims that there has been a debate about the reality of "percept" and "concept." According to a rationalist philosopher like Plato, a concept is the highest reality. The features of a concept are that it is discrete, fixed, permanent, and eternal. On the other hand according to empiricism, "percept" is reality. Rationalist philosophers think perception is primordial and concept is secondary, whereas empiricists say concept is primordial and percept is secondary. The rationalist philosopher gave priority to concept over percept. The empiricist philosophers gave priority to percept over concept. Both of these schools think that we can explain the world and reality by accepting either concepts or percepts respectively. According to James the percepts need be admitted to be of the nature of a continuous flow, and without this flow, no concept can be created. James claims that deeper features of reality are found in percepts. James elaborates on why both of concept and percept are needed to explain our understanding of the world and reality. James says "Neither taken alone, knows reality in its completeness. We need them both..."[4] James holds that if we accept concepts as the ultimate reality without accepting percept, then some problems arise regarding activity and causation, knowledge, and personal identity. According to James, the concept is incapable of grasping the total reality presented in perceptual flow. James claims that deeper features of reality can be found in perceptual flux alone. On the other hand, James' opinion percept alone cannot account for the existence of various worlds that are constituted by abstract entities and where even the existence of eternal truths is admitted. Thus, in a word percept too alone is not adequate to grasp the entire reality.

However, in the percept- concept debate, James mentions that Kant offers a third alternative. James says that Kant does not believe in percept and concept as reality; according to Kant,

<sup>3</sup> James, William (1916) p.45

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.53



reality is a thing in itself and that reality is neither percept nor concept. Kant holds that reality cannot be represented by percept and concept. But James does not accept Kant's view regarding the nature of reality.

Another metaphysical issue referred by James is the debate between metaphysicians regarding forms of reality. Does reality exist distributively or collectively? Pluralism represents the distributive, while monism represents the collective form of being. Monism accepts reality as one. On the basis of this reality, monists can bridge the apparent disconnection between objects. Monist believes that the separation of objects perceived through our senses is not real but mere appearance. On the other hand, a pluralist accepts many things as real, though they may be different in many counts. James describes various types of monism and their advantages and disadvantages, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of pluralism.

James also discusses different types of dualism, such as thought and things, subject and object, physical and mental, and so on. In various ways, philosophers try to overcome the problems arising out of these dualisms, but James holds that those efforts do not really solve the problems of dualism as metaphysical problems but rather leave some controversy with each explanation. James tries to overcome these dualisms like mind - body, subjective-objective, thought-things etc in his philosophy.

James identifies the above issues as the core problems of traditional metaphysics. What James meant by "metaphysics" is now the question that needs to be addressed. Let's first take a look at what is generally understood by "metaphysics" in the traditional sense in the history of metaphysics before we analyse the nature of metaphysics from James's point of view.

Greek philosophy can be referred to as a source to identify the roots and early evolution of metaphysics. Metaphysics has emerged in various forms over time and through various schools. Many philosophical schools have even tried to refute metaphysics. Logical positivists are among those who call metaphysics nonsense. The question is: What is metaphysics? What is the subject area of metaphysical study? For a basic understanding of metaphysics, we have to rely on Greek philosophy. The name "metaphysics" has been in use since the time of Aristotle, although Aristotle himself did not give the name "metaphysics". The etymological meaning of the word "metaphysics" is "after physics." Aristotle wrote some treatises that librarians named "After Physics" to place after physics books when kept in library. This may be the root of the etymological meaning of the term "metaphysics."

However, this explanation of metaphysics does not provide any understanding of what it is. Therefore, if we wish to understand metaphysics, we need to get beyond this etymological meaning.

If we take a closer look, there are a lot of things in this world. Each thing has unique characteristics. It is possible to notice even incompatible characteristics between these items. The main question is how they can all fit into the same world or universe. Therefore, some foundation is needed. It is impossible to understand each object separately. Is there any general nature among them that can be used to comprehend the nature of these objects? Metaphysics deals with that general nature. Metaphysics, according to Aristotle, is the study of being as such. If we comprehend the being, then we can also categorise various things in the world and understand them. The primary task of metaphysics is to identify and comprehend the fundamental categories of being. According to this definition metaphysics deals with the ultimate questions about the nature of reality. Some metaphysicians assume that there is a difference between appearance and reality. Some philosophers, such as Plato, accepts Forms as real and sensible world as copy of that real. This definition of metaphysics is not without fault because other branches of inquiry are also concerned with reality. As a result, it will not be possible to distinguish metaphysics from other investigations or enquiry, such as biology, economics, ethics, and epistemology. For this reason, an attempt is made to give a definition of metaphysics from another perspective.

The shortcomings of the aforementioned definition led to the formulation of a new concept of metaphysics. This definition lists a number of issues and claims that the field of philosophy that addresses these issues is known as "metaphysics." We refer to that list in the discussion of special metaphysics below. Until now, philosophers have tended to adopt this definition more frequently.

Carroll and Markosian mentioned these definitions of metaphysics as three approaches in their book *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Those approaches are the etymological approach, the big-picture approach, and the definition-by-example approach.

According to the 'etymological approach' the metaphysics is the branch of philosophy concerned with Aristotle's collections of particular topics, which were published after the *Physics*.

According to the 'big - picture approach' "metaphysics is the branch of philosophy concerned with fundamental questions about the nature of reality." [5]

There is also the definition-by-example approach, which holds that metaphysics is the area of philosophy that deals with issues like ontology, time, the Mind-Body Problem, problem of freedom and determinism etc.

In the history of metaphysics, we see that metaphysics is classified in different ways, one of them being general metaphysics and special metaphysics. Simply stated, general metaphysics includes ontology and is concerned with issues relating to the nature of reality as a whole, including issues with abstract and concrete existence, the nature of particulars, the contrast between appearance and reality, etc. Special metaphysics, on the other hand, is concerned with specific problems. These special problems are the distinction between the mental and the physical, the possibility of human freedom, the nature of personal identity, the existence of God, etc.

We shall now attempt to see whether James provides a new definition of metaphysics.

James says in *Some Problems of Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy* that "no exact definition of the term "metaphysics" is possible." [6] The way to describe the nature of metaphysics or the meaning of metaphysics in James' opinion is to mention some problems that are accepted to be discussed in the branch of philosophy called metaphysics. James gives a list of some metaphysical problems rather than a definition and says that these problems are discussed in the inquiry, which is called metaphysics. According to James, the issues included in the list are "What are thoughts, and what are things? And how are they connected? What do we mean when we say "truth"? Is there a common stuff out of which all facts are made? Which is the most real kind of reality? What binds all things into one universe? Is unity or diversity more fundamental? Do all things have one origin? or many? How are mind and body related? Do they act on each other?".[7] This is what we referred to as "the definition by example" approach above.

So in the above discussions, we noted that James expressed his views on various problems of traditional metaphysics and presented how these problems were addressed by various philosophical communities and philosophers. Philosophers identify metaphysical problems, but their theories do not provide satisfactory solutions. But James thinks that if his

<sup>5</sup> Carroll John. W and Markosian Ned (110) p.2

<sup>6</sup> James, William (1916) p.29

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, pp.29-30

pragmatism is accepted, these disputes can be settled, and he tries to show how different views about the same problem can be correct.

We shall explore what James means by pragmatic reality before we go into how pragmatism proposes to settle the aforementioned disputes. James mentions two types of realities in his philosophy, one of which is pragmatic reality. The most controversial issue in James' philosophy is pragmatic reality. According to several academics such as, C.H. Seigfried, John Wild pragmatism has no place in a metaphysical debate. They think that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. They claim that James did not even deal with the metaphysical problem in his discussion of pragmatism. Some of them hold that James deals primarily with epistemology. Moreover, many scholars, such as *Charlene Seigfried*, argue that by using the pragmatic method, James is actually refuting metaphysics rather than discussing it. Some James scholars, such as Rosenthal [8] however, admit that metaphysics is discussed in pragmatism, even in a traditional sense.

Pragmatism is generally taken in a limited sense by those who hold that pragmatism does not contain metaphysics. They claim that pragmatism gives importance and emphasis to concepts like use, practice, need, consequence, the practical world, etc. Furthermore, pragmatism emphasises how truth is established by results rather than examining the essence of truth; as a result, pragmatism's interpretation of truth does not accurately reflect reality. The focus of metaphysical investigation is on beings and principles, whereas pragmatic reality is concerned with everyday objects. Thus, they draw the conclusion that pragmatism is devoid of metaphysics or does not discuss metaphysical issues.

However, if we make an effort to comprehend James' argument thoroughly, we will discover that he applies each of these ideas, like practice, use, and purpose to his philosophy in a technical sense. The term "practice" is used broadly by James. Practice includes engaging in daily activities as well as spiritual, psychological, and intellectual pursuits. James uses the word "consequence" in a broad sense as well. In his language "these may lie either in the way of making us think, or in the way of making us act" [9] Furthermore, when James used the word "need," he did not simply mean an active need. He says "after the emotional and active needs come the intellectual and aesthetics ones." [10] In defining reality, James claims that reality is what truth represents. So based on those concepts, it is claimed that pragmatism engages in discussing metaphysics. Therefore, it can be claimed that the ideas discussed above have metaphysical significance. It is highly

<sup>8</sup> Rosenthal, Sandra B. (1986)

<sup>9</sup> James, William (1916) p. 59

<sup>10</sup> James, William (1890) p.315

doubtful to say that those pragmatism wants to refute metaphysics. James analyses metaphysics in the pragmatic sense, as evidenced by the pragmatic solutions he uses to address classical metaphysical issues.

We will briefly discuss the various types of metaphysical debates and metaphysical theories that, James thinks, can be resolved with the pragmatic method. This discussion too demonstrates that, in a sense, pragmatism includes metaphysics.

The problem of substance is a metaphysical issue that philosophers debate. Empiricists and intellectualists disagree about the nature of substance. Some say that substance is the substratum of qualities, while others say that substance is the aggregate of qualities. Both rationalists and empiricists try to argue in their own way. As a result, controversy over substance can be observed. According to James, substance has a different pragmatic effect when viewed as a substratum of qualities rather than the sum of qualities. These qualities are the cash values of substances, according to James. James tries to show that both theories have some important truth claims, but that does not mean that pragmatism accepts all the claims made in these theories.

Another debate can be seen between materialism and spiritualism. According to materialism, matter is the ultimate reality. Everything in this world is governed by matter. This sensible world is mechanically developed. On the other hand, the ultimate reality according to spiritualism is Spirit or Consciousness. Spirit is the higher principle of the world. On this view, the world has a teleological aspect. All things are driven by the Spirit. As a result, the main claims of these two theories are different. According to James, some claims from both the theories can be correct on pragmatic grounds. If they are judged in a pragmatic sense, then it will be seen that if there is no difference between these two theories in terms of practical effect, then these two theories are actually the same. The pragmatic method is applicable to both theories. If matter or spirit is accepted as real, then what difference will it make in our practical lives? If it can make a difference, then these two will be accepted as real. James says that if one accepts matter, then the moral order is denied because everything is determined by it, and if the moral order is denied, then the hope of human life cannot be accepted. On the other hand, if spirit is accepted, then moral order is also accepted. This is the practical difference that these two theories imply.

Rationalist philosophers accept concepts as real but do not want to call percepts real; on the other hand, empiricist philosophers accept percept as reality and interpret concepts as

secondary. But James explains in his *Pragmatic Rules* that both are needed. Just as reality cannot be fully understood or grasped without a concept, reality cannot be fully understood or grasped without a percept too. As a result, both are accepted as real in pragmatism. In this way, it can be shown that James discusses the problems of traditional metaphysics while dealing with pragmatism, and he also discusses what metaphysics is.

We have discussed James's observations about traditional metaphysics. And in the context of that discussion, we have noted that he observes that there are various debates and even contradictory claims within traditional metaphysics. He thinks that accepting pragmatism can resolve these debates. James tries to show that each apparently contradictory metaphysical theory can, to some extent, be accepted if we adopt a pragmatic perspective. James asserts that every theory has some merit, so no theory can be completely rejected. For this reason, James' pragmatism acts as a mediator between different theories. He claims that pragmatism can play that mediator role. However, though James tries to reconcile these apparently contradictory theories, it does not mean that he is able to keep all the claims of those theories in his theory. In spite of this, if we accept James' pragmatic method, it is possible that metaphysical views that were previously considered incompatible can be shown to have important acceptable aspects.

In *The Principles of Psychology*, James clearly engages in metaphysical discussion. He states in the preface to the first volume of his book that many of the chapters in this book are metaphysical. And we notice that he gives many definitions of reality in this and many subsequent works of his. Some of those definitions are often interpreted as definitions of pragmatic reality, while others are interpreted as definitions of metaphysical reality. Accordingly we can see that he discusses two types of reality. Since pragmatic reality is much debated among James scholars, many do not want to call it metaphysical, so in the first Chapter of this thesis we will discuss whether James makes any metaphysical discussion when discussing pragmatic reality. However, here we may mention about another doctrine of James, which he calls doctrine of "pure experience," which he discussed in his later book entitled *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. While there is disagreement among James scholars about pragmatic reality, there is little debate about the metaphysical status of pure experience. James addresses pure experience in his later writings, which most of the scholars interpret to denote metaphysical reality. So it cannot be said that there is no discussion of metaphysics in James's philosophy. Explaining the nature of pure experience, James says that pure

experience is the primal stuff from which all things are created. Now the question arises: Is there is any relation between these two realities? If yes what is it? James himself does not make clear what the relation between them is, but we do get hints of apparent contradiction in his writings about this matter. As a result, there is a debate among James' scholars about what the relation between them is. The question arises as to whether there is any relationship between two realities at all, and if so, what kind of relationship. In my research, I have attempted to demonstrate how these two realities would relate.

The relation of pure experience to pragmatic reality depends on the relation between radical empiricism and pragmatism. It is accepted that pure experience is a part of radical empiricism, whereas pragmatic reality is a part of pragmatism. Now, if the connection between pragmatism and radical empiricism cannot be established, then it is difficult to establish the connection between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality. Since James himself did not give a clear answer about the relationship between these two, the question arises as to whether there is any relationship between them at all, and if so, what kind of relationship is it?

There is disagreement among James researchers regarding the connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism. Two kinds of seemingly incompatible claims in James's two works are the main source of controversy among scholars.

James says early in his philosophical career that “there is no logical connexion between pragmatism, as I understand it, 'and a doctrine which I have recently set forth as 'radical empiricism.' The latter stands on its own feet. One may entirely reject it and still be a pragmatist.” [11] James' remark is used by a group of academics to support their claim that these two realities have no connection to one another.

But in a latter book, James says, "it seems to me that the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail." [12] James' remark is used by another group of scholars to support their claim that these two realities are related.

In order to make our debate more convenient, we will now try to see what arguments the researchers have provided in the interpretation of the aforementioned phrase. If we categorise the interpretations of different interpreters, we can see that these interpreters can be divided into three groups in a broad sense. In the first group, I will put those commentators who think

<sup>11</sup> James, William (1921) p. ix

<sup>12</sup> James, William (1909) p. xii

that there is no relation between these two theories. In the second group, I will put those researchers who think that the relationship between these two theories can be shown. They, however, refute one of James' remarks. The final group will be of those James scholars, who believe that both of James' comments are correct, but that the relationship depends on how we interpret them.

Elizabeth Flower, Andrew J. Reck argues that there is no relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism. He was part of the first group.

John R. Shook, Ruth Anna Putnam [13], Richard Stevens [14], Richard P. Mullin [15], David C. Lamberth, etc. are among those who belong to this second group.

Ralph Barton Perry, Richard Gale. Wesley Cooper, Graham Bird [16], belong to the third group.

Since I have given their arguments in detail in the conclusion, I will mention only the gist here. Elizabeth Flower [17] interprets James's comment as saying that the two are distinct because radical empiricism is a theory about the nature and content of experience, whereas pragmatism is a theory about the meaning and belief of experience. These are the two distinct aspects of James's philosophy. According to Reck [18] these two theories are considered similar in their methods, but even if they are not logically related. David C. Lamberth [19] interprets James's comments as one that claims that two theories are not related in the sense that one helps to prove the other. Lamberth states that radical empiricism includes the pragmatic theory of truth, which is one of the components of radical empiricism. John R. Shook [20] discussed how radical empiricism and pragmatism are related to one another. Shook says that when James says that the truth of radical empiricism does not depend on the theory of pragmatism, James basically refers to the kind of pragmatism that other philosophers like Peirce, Dewey and Schiller were developing as theories of pragmatism in James's time. And ,on their view, James himself did not refer to his own version of pragmatism here. So when James says that radical empiricism does not depend on the truth of the pragmatism, he is not talking about his own theory. Here, James basically means another version of pragmatism. However, radical empiricism and what James himself refers to as the pragmatic theory of truth are interconnected, and even pragmatism is dependent on radical empiricism.

<sup>13</sup> Putnam, Ruth Anna (1997), <sup>14</sup> Stevens, Richard (1974 )

<sup>15</sup> Mullin, Richard P (2007 ) , <sup>16</sup> Bird, Graham (1986)

<sup>17</sup> Flower, Elizabeth and Murphey, Murray G. (1977 ) , <sup>18</sup> Reck, Andrew J. (1967 )

<sup>19</sup> Lamberth, David C. (1999 ) , <sup>20</sup> Shook, John R (2011)



Perry says that pragmatism and radical empiricism do not differ as methods, they are closely related. But if pragmatism and radical empiricism are seen as doctrines, then they cannot be said to be related, because then they can be independent. This way, numerous interpreters have indicated their claims regarding how these two theories relate to one another. We will try to see which of these different views is consistent with James' other views also James' other views also.

We shall now discuss about the views regarding the connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. We can observe that, in a broad sense, the interpretations of the many interpreters can be categorised into three groups. One group denies the connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. Another group asserts that there is a connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. The third group holds that while the relationship can be acknowledged in one sense, it can be denied in the other. That is, the relationship depends on how we interpret them.

Charlene Haddock Siegfried initially admits that there is a relationship between pure experience and pragmatic reality, but in her later phases, she denies that there is any metaphysics in the traditional sense in both pragmatism and radical empiricism. Some James scholars explain the relation between these two realities by referring to their basicness. Some scholars, such as Ellen Suckiel, argues that pragmatic reality is fundamental and that pure experience is dependent on it. On the contrary some scholar such as Sami Pihlström argues that pure experience is fundamental and that pragmatic reality is dependent on it. There is pure experience and pragmatic reality, and even though they are not related in one sense, they are related in another sense for Cooper and Perry.

The title of my research is Pragmatic Reality, Pure Experience, and Their Relationship: An Exploration of William James' Metaphysics. The aim of this thesis is to try to see whether both pure experience and pragmatic reality can be considered to be *equally* real and whether a relation of interdependence can be shown between these two notions of real in James' metaphysics. For doing this we shall critically evaluate the various claims made by James scholars regarding the relation between this two notions of real, and shall try to see whether we can get any important insight from their accounts that can help us to reach our goal. To proceed with these objectives we will apply the qualitative method of critico-conceptual analysis. My thesis is mostly divided into four segments. Let me briefly mention the chapter divisions and summarise what I have discussed in the chapters.

In Chapter 1, I shall elaborate on William James' conception of pragmatic reality

We find discussions of pragmatic reality in various works of James, such as *Principles of Psychology*, *Pragmatism a New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, *The Meaning of Truth*, and *Some Problems of Philosophy*. James gives some definitions of reality in his discussion of pragmatic reality. He says that anything that can affect my interest is real to me. Pragmatic reality is what I take to be real. Pragmatic reality is the one that fulfils our various needs. One may object to James' notion of practical or pragmatic reality as "...whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real." [21] The objection may be that many times objects of illusion also excite and stimulate our interest and in that case will James consider matters of illusion as real? The answer to this question is found in James' later work entitled *Pragmatism - a new name for some old ways of thinking*. Here James mentions another characterization of reality. James holds – "Reality is in general what truths have to take account of". [22] The answer to the above objection can be provided from this characterization. If anything even after exciting or stimulating our interest turns out to be false then it cannot be real in James' view. To be real it has to be an object of truth. James also talks about various constituents of reality in the discussion of pragmatic reality.

In Chapter 2 I shall present William James' view of pure experience

In the book *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James discusses the nature of pure experience. That is not to say that pragmatism or other texts do not discuss pure experience. James also discusses pure experience in other books, but we get the details in his later book. Explaining pure experience, James says that pure experience is the continuous stream that is the material from which all things are created. But that itself is not created by anything else. The stuff that we can interpret in different ways is neutral experience. We can read it in different ways. One can define this stuff as subject or object because, within it, these distinctions exist as possibilities. It is determined by the context or to whether something is subjective or objective, etc. Relations and functions create this context. For practical purposes, we use concepts to separate these. Primal matter does not mean matter in Aristotle's sense. It is not completely undifferentiated. James explains that in some cases, this pure experience is experienced. Subject, object, knower, and known—these are actually functions of pure experience.

<sup>21</sup> James, William (1890) p.295

<sup>22</sup> James, William (1921) p.244

James says “ the instant field of the present is at all times what I call the pure experience. It is only virtually or potentially either object or subject as yet.” [23]

Chapter 3 is entitled ‘Two types of reality and their relation: various interpretations’.

In this chapter, I have discussed the interpretations of James scholars on James’ view regarding reality and the relation between pragmatic reality and pure experience. Scholars I have discussed include Charlene Haddock Seigfried, Sami Pihlström, Richard Gale, Ellen Kappy Suckiel, John Wild, and Wesley Cooper.

Seigfried claims that pure experience is a metaphysical reality. Pragmatism is actually an epistemological doctrine with no metaphysical component. The gist of Siegfried's argument is that since traditional metaphysics is denied and refuted in pragmatism, it can be said that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. It is basically a theory of knowledge. In her earlier period, Seigfried accepted that there is a relationship between pragmatic reality and pure experience. But in the latter phase, Seigfried changes her mind. She says pure experience is also not a metaphysical reality. So these two cannot be called realities, and hence there is no relationship between them as reality.

Suckiel claims that James uses the concept of reality in two broad senses, namely metaphysical and pragmatic reality. Pure experience is metaphysical reality. Metaphysical reality is basic; pragmatic reality is secondary and depends on metaphysical reality. In this sense these two realities are related.

Interpreting the philosophy of William James, John Wild claims that radical empiricism or pure experience is the main metaphysical theory on which the pragmatic theory of truth is based. Pragmatism is a partially epistemological theory with no metaphysical element in the ultimate sense. Wild contends that the only way to demonstrate a consistent relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism is through an existential phenomenological approach. Wild claims that these two theories may be independent, but the relationship between them is only possible in this way. If we read James's theories with this existential-phenomenological approach, we can understand that for James, the main reality is pure experience.

Sami Pihlström has expressed a completely different view from other scholars regarding the relationship between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality. He claims that pragmatic

<sup>23</sup> James, William (1912) p.23

reality is the basis on which other metaphysics depend, but the pragmatic reality does not depend on any other fundamental metaphysical theory.

Gale, like Pihlström, recognises the connection between these two realities, but for different reasons. Richard Gale says pragmatic reality is the fundamental metaphysical reality, but pure experience cannot be called the fundamental metaphysical reality as it has certain limitations. Gale asserts that if pure experience is called a basic metaphysical reality, then many things cannot be accepted as reality in James's metaphysics.

According to Cooper, James's approach has two levels: one that is metaphysical and another that is empirical. According to him, these two levels are unique and separate from one another. He places pragmatism on the empirical level and pure experience on the metaphysical level. According to Cooper, discussing pragmatic reality does not require addressing metaphysical realities. Moreover Cooper asserts that it is possible to address metaphysical realities without also considering pragmatic reality at the empirical level. There is no connection between these two realities on an empirical level. A radical empiricist is not always a pragmatist. Cooper seeks to demonstrate that, if the metaphysical level is accepted, it can explain pragmatic reality. Cooper discusses the connection between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality at the metaphysical level.

In Chapter 4, I shall be concerned with critical evaluation of the interpretations of Jamesian view of the real

In this chapter, I have tried to evaluate the interpretations of various scholars discussed in the last chapter. We would examine the claims and arguments put forward by these philosophers. While dealing with Siegfried's interpretation we would thus ask: What is the meaning of Siegfried's claim that pragmatism denies metaphysics? Do the pragmatists say that traditional metaphysics is impossible, or do they say that traditional metaphysics is not adequate? James, we would argue, does not say that traditional metaphysics is not possible. James only claims that traditional metaphysics is not adequate because taking it in this sense would leave many things out of metaphysics that also have metaphysical value. Thus, it can be said that pragmatism does not make traditional metaphysics impossible but rather show that limited and inadequate. We have made an effort to present a number of arguments to refute Siegfried's claims.

Suckiel's reading, Wild's reading, and Pihlström's reading of James suggest that James will be prepared to accept the reduction of pragmatic reality to pure experience or the reduction of pure experience to pragmatic reality. These scholars either call pure experience basic or pragmatic reality basic. If these two realities are understood from the perspective of basicness, then the objection of reductionism arises. But throughout his philosophy, James has opposed both dualism and reductionism.

Cooper's central thesis is that reality differs as levels differ. There will be issues with how these two levels relate to one another if they are considered independent. Here the problem of dualism arises. But if we examine James' philosophy, we can find that he opposed dualism from the very beginning. As a result, James's claims will be inconsistent if we adopt Cooper's perspective. Therefore, it cannot be argued that the two levels are distinct.

Gale asserts that if pure experience is called a basic metaphysical reality, then many things cannot be accepted in James's theory of reality. Gale argues in support of his view that James admits in his ontology the existence of many things that are non-phenomenal, that do not appear in space and time, that do not have spatial or temporal properties. For example - contents of the abstract world are numbers and properties, contents of the super natural world are purely spiritual individual etc. However, if we call pure experience the basic reality, we cannot describe all the objects of these non-phenomenal worlds on the basis of pure experience, because as Gale claims, pure experience can be stuff of sensible world objects with spatial and temporal locations. Pure experience can be significant for intra-world unification but not for inter world unification. Here, inter world unification means the relationship between the seven worlds that James recognized. Gale holds that the relationship between the sensible world and the other six worlds cannot be unified by the theory of pure experience. If we read James's writings, especially *Pragmatism* and *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, we see that this interpretation is not acceptable. When James acknowledges the existence of pure experience, he says that the flow of experience can create a variety of objects with the help of "relation."

As I have discussed the doctrines and arguments of the above scholars in detail in the 3rd and the 4th chapters, only a few of their claims have been mentioned above here very briefly.

I have divided the conclusion into three parts. I discussed the relations between pragmatism and radical empiricism in the first part. In the second part, I have summarised the main arguments and refutations of various James scholars. We have discussed here whether we can

accept any of these scholars' arguments. In the third section, I went over to see how pure experience and pragmatic reality relate to the idea of process. I would like to argue here that James' philosophy can be explained better by considering his notion of reality as a process.

In Western metaphysics, mainly intellectualist philosophers defined reality as a fixed, permanent substance and explained "change" or "becoming" as appearance, although there were hints of process metaphysics, this metaphysics did not develop until much later. Process theory is mainly presented as a theory opposed to substantive metaphysics. The main focus of process theory is to explain reality through the concepts of change, motion, action, and continuity. In this process theory, priority is given to processes over substances or things, which are here described as subordinate. That does not mean that substance or thoughts are denied here. Rather the concept of substance, things, or properties are attempted to be explained or understood in terms of processes.

James' theories of pragmatism and pure experience incorporate concepts of process as well.

In the book *The Meaning of Truth*, James defines "experience" as a process that provides us with material to digest. When a subject creates pragmatic reality by selecting from the flow of experience according to one's needs, one cannot do so randomly. That, too, is a process. If we try to understand where the concept of process is involved in pragmatism, then the "reflex arc" theory can be cited as an instance. James discusses this "reflex arc" theory in his book, *Will to Believe*. This reflex arc is a triadic process that is physiologically based. There are three steps in this process, which cannot operate independently. According to this process, the sensory impressions we receive through our senses—we receive sense data by attending to something while ignoring the rest because of our interest—are then classified as conceptions. On the basis of this conception, we act. Through this act, an individual fulfills his needs. The purpose of the reflex arc is achieved by satisfying these needs. And through this triadic process pragmatic reality is created. Processes have an important contribution to make in the discussion of pragmatic reality. Thus, we see that process plays an important role in James's pragmatic reality.

In our conclusion we have also discussed how his theory of pure experience might be seen as a "process".

James explains pure experience as the continuous stream that is the primordial material from which all things are generated. However, that does not originate from anything else.

According to James, pure experience is initially chaotic but gradually divides into inner and outer states through acts and relations. This explanation of pure experience demonstrates that it can be viewed as a process. According to James, when the intellectual life of man is created from unanalyzed pure experience by using concepts, these concepts are nothing but secondary processes. We can easily explain how different objects and functions are generated by acts and relations in the flow of experience by referring to the process. For instance, knowing is how one aspect of experience relates to another. One portion of experience is called "knower," and another portion is explained as "known." This 'knowing function' is created within pure experience as a process. So, we can incorporate James' two views of reality into the process theory.

We will discuss in the conclusion what the advantages are and what problems can be avoided if in James' theory these two realities and their relation is interpreted in terms of process.

## CHAPTER 2: William James' view of pure experience

In William James' philosophy pure experience is an important and complex idea. The main focus of his mature Philosophy is pure experience. The nature of pure experience and its implication in James' philosophy is interpreted in various ways among James scholars. At first we will discuss what James expressed about the nature of pure experience and related matters regarding his claim.

While giving a description of pure experience, James says in the book *Essays in Radical Empiricism* that pure experience is the primal stuff of which everything is composed. Relations are also included in this. It is a flow of experience that plays a different role. In one context, this undivided portion of experience plays the role of the subject; in another, it plays the role of the object. Besides that, different types of dualism, like thought-things, knower-known, mind-matter, and body-soul, are created from this stuff as a function. In this sense, it is the stuff of everything. In this sense, we can describe pure experience as the metaphysical reality. It is the condition of all things. James illustrates his point with an example. He says in a store where colours are sold, a colour is stored in a pot among other colours, and when the price of each colour is mentioned, the colour in the pot is regarded as a selling item. When the canvas is painted with the same colour, it is considered to have an emotional function.

James clarifies his points with the help of an example of perceptual experience like "room experience."<sup>[46]</sup> The experience of the room can be interpreted as both physical and mental; it depends on the context. James illustrates the point in the following way: when a person sits in a room, she perceives some objects in her visual field. She can perceive objects such as books, computers, walls, tables, and so on. If we describe the room experience in this way, this description refers to the physical room. But at the time this room experience occurs in our minds, it is referred to as a mental experience. To elaborate, this room experience can be construed as mental if I compare it to other experiences or if I connect it to any prior memories of the room. I can remember some further experiences that took place in that room. I can relate them to the present-room experience; we can then interpret this experience as mental. So we can say that there can be a physical interpretation and a mental interpretation of the room experience that depends on the context.

Just as the objects of the perceptual world are bits of pure experience, conceptual manifolds like memories, imaginations, and ideas are also bits of pure experience in their first intention.

<sup>46</sup> James, William (1912) p.13



These worlds also come to us as a chaos of experiences, and on the basis of our needs, we classify and relate them to distinct groups of experiences. Depending on the context, these groups will be treated either as mental or a physical objects.

According to James, "pure experience" is the fundamental stuff from which objectivity and subjectivity are derived. In this sense, pure experience is both subjective and objective. The question that now emerges is: What does it mean to say that pure experience may be both subjective and an objective? There can be three probable senses:

- i. *Pure experience* is something that can be described both subjectively and objectively. It depends on the person who describes it. It is dependent on the knower. Whether it is subjective and objective depends on the person describing it.
- ii. *Pure experience* is essentially both subjective and objective, by its nature.
- iii. *Pure experience* is neither subjective nor objective, but it has the potential to become both.

which of these senses does James adopt to explain the nature of pure experience?

James cannot accept the second sense in his theory because he says that pure experience is a "pure" state, a simple thing that is yet undifferentiated. It is not an essentially subjective and objective itself but a precondition of both; it is only a stream of experience. Pure experience is the prerequisite for everything. "Pure experience" refers to a continuous stream of experiences that are connected by different relations and functions. James says "... virtually both objective and subjective, is at its own moment actually and intrinsically neither." [47]

The first and third options are ones James will readily accept. He attempts to demonstrate how many types of objects can be formed from pure experience, in his book *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, by using a variety of arguments. James demonstrates how pure experience can produce a variety of competing objects due to its neutrality. We can concurrently attribute seemingly incompatible properties to pure experience due to its neutral nature, for example, subjectivity and objectivity, physical and mental, knower and known, outerness and innerness, and so on. The neutral quality of pure experience allows us to simultaneously attach apparently contradictory qualities to it. James's language "...my central

thesis that subjectivity and objectivity are affairs not of what an experience is aboriginally made of but of its classification. Classifications depend on our temporary purposes.” [48]

In his book, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James adopts the third alternative. He says "The instant field of the present is at all times what I call the pure experience. It is only virtually or potentially either object or subject as yet. For the time being, it is plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple that." [49]

We will now talk about some of James' arguments in an effort to understand how we can interpret pure experience in the light of multiple conflicting features. These justifications will also demonstrate that these features are plausible, as the nature of pure experience is neutral and encompasses a variety of relational patterns.

James says we can imagine a universe of experiences whose neighbours are only physical or only mental. The status of any piece of experience in this imaginary world as mental or physical is unequivocal. When its neighbour is active, we call it physical; otherwise, it is mental. But then James says the world we live in is quite chaotic. In this hybrid world, there is scope for both. With the help of various examples, James tries to establish why pure experience can be described as having both the properties. He uses examples to demonstrate that pure experience can be physical-mental, subjective-objective, or inner-outer.

In our daily lives, we frequently describe things as either exclusively mental or exclusively physical, but James claims that things can be both. For instance, we consider beauty, love, and anger to be mental, while our bodies are accepted as physical, but James claims that all of these things can be considered "mental and physical." We'll try to understand James' points of view in our upcoming discussion.

James says there can be a state that can be read subjectively and objectively. James uses the example of secondary quality to demonstrate his point. An example of a secondary quality is heat. Heat from the fire is transferred to water, causing it to boil. James says if heat is read in this sense, then it is objective. But James says that some other philosophers besides Galileo and Descartes classified this "heat" as a mental phenomenon. Explaining this view of James, we can elaborate on his points. Locke called secondary qualities subjective because they vary from person to person. While drinking tea, some may call the same tea hot and some may call it less hot. As a result, the experience of heat can vary from person to person, so it is

<sup>48</sup> James, William (1912) p.141

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p.23

subjective. James here tries to prove that heat can be explained subjectively as well as objectively. Whether the existence of secondary qualities is mind-independent or dependent, this debate demonstrates that an experience can be both inner and outer, depending on the relation in which the experiences are connected. On one context it can be termed subjective and on the other context it is termed objective. If a secondary quality were not neutral it would not be possible to define it as both subjective and objective by different people. Thus, the debate regarding secondary quality justifies that pure experience may be classified as subjective as well as objective. James also says, “even the primary qualities are undergoing the same fate”. [50] We can elaborate on James' points. Shape and size are primary qualities. Primary qualities can be explained by a philosopher like John Locke as inherent properties of the object. It is not a changing property but a fixed and unchanging one, and it can be described as objective. But various philosophers, including Berkeley and Kant, have explained these primary qualities as subjective. Primary qualities are also changing because they depend on the position and distance of the objects. Shape is dependent on our touch and vision. So it is subjective in its relationship to the subject. So the experience of primary qualities is subjective as well as objective.

Pure experience can thus according to James be subjective or objective. But objectors may say there are some states that are purely mental or subjective, such as emotional or affective states. So if everything is created from pure experience and can be subjective or objective, these emotional states are not. So how would James explain this? In response, James says that emotional states can be subjective as well as objective, such as anger. Anger can be defined as a person's subjective feelings as well as a type of physical expression. Sometimes, when someone is angry, he will break a glass. Anger can be explained by the act of breaking the glass. Getting angry in this situation signifies doing things like smashing things, losing your temper, shouting, etc., therefore it is objective in this sense. James says it in the way that James Lange's theory suggests. Those who have other theories will also show it differently. As a result, it demonstrates that there is no such thing as emotion or feeling which is merely subjective. Whether it is subjective or objective depends on the perspective.

James contends further that objective or subjective descriptions or explanations can be attributed to pure experience. James uses the example of the body to explain his claim. We usually interpret the body as physical or objective, but James claims that the body can also be thought of as subjective. When we perceive or comprehend the body as a component of ourselves or empirical me, we refer to it as subjective. When we perceive anything, such as

<sup>50</sup> James, William (1912) p-147

when I say, "I see the sun," I am referring to both my body and myself. Thus, we frequently utter the phrases "My body is fit" or "My body is slim." We connect the body to the self while expressing ourselves in this way. When the body is doing physical movement, I see it as my movement. I don't see the body as just a physical object; it is something different because I consider it to be part of the self or subject. The body pertains to the subjects. It becomes part of the subject in that sense; it is subjective. When I say I am the body, it can be subjective to me. And, without a doubt, this body is objective from another person's point of view. As a result, the same body can sometimes be the subject and sometimes the object. Emphasizing James's point, [51] Wild argued for him that pure experience can be reduced to the concept of body. We can call this body subjective as well as objective.

James says experience does not come to us as inner and outer. We classify experience as inner and outer. James clarifies his claim by giving an example. Any given 'content' like *hard* can be interpreted as 'inner' and 'outer' both. We sort experiences by how that experience acts on its neighbors. For example, we describe an experience as "hard" when it has a specific action on the other portions of its neighbor. Context will determine whether "hard" can be interpreted as physical or mental. If hardness is acknowledged as physical, then it will interact with other neighbours in a spatial way, denting them and making them impenetrable to it; this interaction is called physical hardness. According to James "... it is 'strong,' it acts 'energetically' and aggressively. Here whatever is hard interferes with the space its *neighbors* occupy." [52] In contrast, the "hard" things in the mind are those that penetrate their mental neighbors without leaving any dents or taking up any space. If hardness is interpreted as mental, it will be related to the mental neighbors. In this sense, we get the idea of hardness. So when we call it mental hardness, we get it in conceptual form.

Furthermore, James claims that if mental and physical meant two entirely different properties, if they differed in nature, there would be no doubt about whether objects of experience is mental or physical. For example, what "beauty" means can be defined in different ways. Some will say beauty means beautiful things, but many will say beauty is something different from things; it is a psychological state. So many people may have doubts about whether beauty is a thing or a mental state. There is such a doubt; this doubt proves that there can be any interpretation possible for the same object of experience. But if a thing is essentially mental or physical, then there is no doubt about the nature of that thing. James's language "If physical and mental meant two different kinds of intrinsic nature, immediately, intuitively,

<sup>51</sup> James, William (1912 ) p.153

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.139

and infallibly discernible, and each fixed forever in whatever bit of experience it qualified, one does not see how there could ever have arisen any room for doubt or ambiguity.” [53] If there is a doubt about the nature of an object, then the question will be how to resolve that doubt. According to James, there are various relations formed through pure experience that can aid in the resolution of doubt.

A further argument James makes is as follows: when the flow of experience continues, an extremely complex network is created. Because of this extremely complex network, we can explain any experience by imposing various opposing properties or characteristics depending on the context that function or relation creates. It is not surprising that the same object is associated with different or opposing properties. For example a tigress is tender to her cubs but cruel to other living beings. As a result, there is both tenderness and cruelty in tigresses. We might therefore conclude that due to the nature of those objects as pure experience, they are able to function differently in diverse contexts.

James asserts in the debate above that the same objects can be interpreted or classified by these qualities like cruelty, tenderness, inner, outer etc. He claims that such features can be used, and we have knowledge enabling this. The question of whether anything is physical or mental, subjective or objective, inner or outside, inert or conscious, is therefore meaningless because all things are neutral. One object can be simultaneously read in both directions. These take place within pure experience because of its neutral nature. From the above arguments by James, it can be concluded that the nature of pure experience is such that it can be classified and interpreted in various ways. This classification is feasible because these are possibilities in pure experience. Pure experience is neutral, and it is because of this neutrality that we can describe pure experience in this way.

Now we will discuss how various objects or things are created from the flow of pure experience, and how James has emphasized some ideas for the explaining of those things, which are, however, within that pure experience. It needs to be noted that the nature of pure experience cannot be fully understood unless we understand some important concepts in James's theory. Relation, context, activity, and function are examples of such concepts. We have seen in the arguments above that these concepts are involved when pure experience is variously interpreted. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge of these concepts in order to understand James' arguments more clearly and to clarify James' position.

<sup>53</sup> James, William (1912) p.152

Pure experience is an unanalyzed state that continues in flow. In this flow the experiences get related in various ways. A subject or thought emerges when two or more streams of experience are linked by relation and function. After that pure experience becomes analyzed, and various objects like knower- known, body - mind are created through relations and functions.

Different experiences are related on the basis of various relations, and a relation in James' theory, is not something outside the stream. James asserts that we perceive relations in the same way that we perceive physical objects. These relations are also real to James. James's theory differs from classical empiricism in its emphasis on relations. Classical empiricism holds that the various elements of experience come to us in isolation. As a result, they admit certain trans-experiential things to connect these disparate, distinct experiences through a link that will establish the relations between these disparate experiences. Thus, the problem of various types of dualism in philosophy also develops. A traditional philosopher, such as Locke, acknowledges the objects and their properties. Properties are not the same as objects. There is a difference between these two. We perceive qualities, and an object as such is not perceptible, but Locke admits objects or substances to explain these qualities. Descartes admits God to explain the external world and its objects in the same way. But James's theory does not have this problem. According to James, various objects are created from the flow of experience through relation and action; when we experience something, it comes to us through a connected hub. As a result, no extra-experiential being is required to connect the components of the experience. James's mature philosophy is called "radical empiricism" because of his emphasis on these relations as empirically given.

Now we can illustrate these points with examples.

Suppose there are two trees on a plot of land. In this case, even though there are two objects, when I experience them, they do not come to me discretely, but trees, soil, and land are all connected together and become the object of my experience. That is, they are connected to each other. This one tree is next to the other tree; this second tree is not like the first tree; the second tree is near a pond on the land; the first tree is close to the second tree, etc. In this way, the objects, though they are different, are recognised in our experience as related. In this way, various objects come to us by association. Two things can be connected and presented

to us as one single object, or they can be presented as related but not as one single object. In this way, it can be said that we experience relationships directly.

James talks about different types of relations such as cognitive relations, conjunctive relations, 'space relations', disjunctive relations, external relations, activity relations, etc. Relations have different degrees of intimacy. The conjunctive relation is significant to James though it is not accepted as a directly perceived relation by other empiricists. But by acknowledging this relation, James is able to show the continuity between different experiences. He uses words like 'with', 'near', 'next', 'like', 'from', 'towards', 'against', and 'through' to refer to conjunctive relations. James says that these relations may not apply to objects in an imaginary world, but they do apply to our real world; that is, the objects of this world are connected by these relations to our experience. When we talk about the empirical self, we are using a conjunctive relation. In this case, memories, purposes, and fulfilment- all of which are always changing within a self- are used to form the self. Within a person, these changes happen constantly. This transformation takes place within self; these memories , purposes are not separate from the self. Pure experience as a flow contains conjunctive and disjunctive relations. Moreover, according to James different types of relations can be added to this flow to create different objects. Subject- objects are first created from this flow, after which the subject can create various types of objects according to its needs. We call this pragmatic reality. The formation of pragmatic reality, a type of relation, occurs in the flow of pure experience. Pragmatic reality stands for a function within pure experience.

Explaining the cognitive relation, James says that the relation of "knower" to "known" is the cognitive relation. James did not take "knower" in the traditional sense. In the traditional sense, the "knower" is a distinct entity from the "known." When the knower perceives the objects of the external world, a kind of relationship is formed between them, namely, a cognitive relation. James claims that the problem of dualism between knower and known arises here. In explaining pure experience, James explains how the cognitive relationship is created within that pure experience. James says "... there is experience from point to point of one direction followed , and finally of one process fulfilled . the result is that *their starting point thereby becomes a knower and their terminus an object meant or known.*" [54]

The question now is whether the relationship based on pure experience creates diverse objects automatically or whether there is an act in the flow of experience that results in the development of various objects. James says that during the flow of experience, one

<sup>54</sup> James, William (1912) p-57

experience gets related to another experience by the help of relation. When the elements are related they act on each other and on the basis of this action the division of subject-object formation takes place. Now the question may arise as to what James means by the term "action." Taking action in its broadest sense, James says, "Any apprehension of something being done is an experience of activity." [55] Usually it can have two meanings; one in the pragmatic level and another one in the level of pure experience. In the pragmatic perspective *act* means that a particular knower acts through the flow of experience on the basis of his need and interest and creates various realities. But when the term action is used in case of pure experience then it is not the act by a particular knower. From the viewpoint of pure experience it cannot be said that some body is acting within experience. In the viewpoint of pure experience, one part of pure experience is performing various acts on another part in a particular relation. During the subject-object distinction, the object is formed by function via relation. Relationships create context, and context serves as a function to create different things in the realm of pure experience. When a subject constructs pragmatic reality, it depends on the subject's needs, with needs being the context on which pragmatic reality is based. For example, for me, a pen is a thing used to write material for an examination. I use the pen as a writing instrument because it satisfies my need to give examinations. However, another person may regard it as genuine as a object of house decoration. So my relationship with the pen creates my context. According to the context, I then call the pen real.

Various events in the natural world can be seen to have cause-and-effect relationships. One event acts on the other events and changes them, and that same event is changed by another event based on the relationship, how it is related to other events, and the function of the various elements in that stream. In this way, one event is the cause of another, and the same event is the effect of another. This is viewed pragmatically as a cause-and-effect relationship. But in the realm of pure experience each event of this type is a stream of the real with its potentiality to count either as a cause or as an effect under varying contexts constituted by the network of relations. We have spoken about what pure experience is, how it relates to relation and act, what relation and act mean, what types of objects are formed from pure experience, and how relation and function are important. We will now discuss some possible questions and answers about this concept of pure experience and discuss how commentators of James interpreted pure experience. This discussion is important because through these discussions the nature of pure experience will become clearer.

<sup>55</sup> James, William (1912) p-161



James himself raises possible criticisms against the theory of pure experience and tries to answer them. James says someone may ask the questions that “if experience has not ‘conscious’ existence, if it be not partly made of ‘consciousness’, of what then is it made? “...but neutral and simple "pure experience" is something we know nothing about.” [56]

In response to this, James replies that even if all other things are made up of pure experience, there is no general stuff from which experience is created. This experience cannot be said to be made up of any thought, thing, or combination of thought and thing. That means pure experience is not made up of any stuff. In James’ word “I have now to say that there is no general stuff of which experience at large is made”. [57] Since everything else derives from pure experience, and since pure experience cannot be produced by anything other than pure experience itself, it can be concluded that pure experience is not created from anything else. Furthermore, he asserts that "pure experience" is merely a collective term for all these sensible natures, in which there is no fundamental material from which all things emerge.

If the term "primal stuff" can be used to describe pure experience, then it would appear that it is used in an Aristotelian sense. At this point, Ellen Kappy Suckeil [58] argues that, in contrast to Aristotle's prime matter, which is completely undifferentiated, pure experience is not wholly undifferentiated but is yet referred to as *experience*. Consequently, the prime matter of Aristotle and pure experience are not the same.

Experience generally involves the subject because "experience" means the experience of some experiencer. Some might question if this holds true in cases of pure experience. Does pure experience have any subject, and who can experience it? In general, when the term "experience" is used, the experiencer also comes into being. "Experience" refers to someone's personal experience. Accordingly when James is speaking about pure experience, then the question will arise whether pure experience has any subject, and who can experience it? In his reply, James says that "pure experience" is that flow of experience that is not the experience of a conscious subject or being. From the flow of experience in subsequent experiences in a specific relation, a conscious being or experiencer can be created. Pure experience is the pre-condition of conscious being. From this, it can be deduced that pure experience is the flow of experience, which is nobody’s experience.

<sup>56</sup> James, William (1912) p.26

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.26

<sup>58</sup> Suckiel, E. K (1982) p.133

If everything originates from pure experience, then there is nothing beyond pure experience. Bradley also says that experience is real and that there is nothing beyond it. But we know that Bradley's theory is called absolute idealism, so is James' theory of pure experience a kind of idealism? In response, James will say that he has a difference of opinion with Bradley because he does not explain experience the way Bradley does. Although James stated that all other things are created from pure experience yet he termed pure experience as neutral. Pure experience is not a mental substance or state. Apart from that, all other things that are created from pure experience are explained by James in the context of relations. Relations, according to him, is real and a part of pure experience. But we know that in Bradley's view all types of relations are unreal. So, it is clear how Bradley and James differ in their approaches in talking about and understanding reality. Thus, there is a fundamental difference between Bradley and James' philosophy. Hence, James' pure experience can never be considered to be same as Bradley's idealism.

Moreover, according to Bradley as well as other absolute idealists there is no difference between consciousness and experience. Whether it is thought, feeling or volition, these sentient experiences are real and existent. In their view, experience means conscious experience. But James differentiated between consciousness and experience. James does not accept pure experience as conscious experience. In the flux of pure experience, in a particular relation, any one experience may turn out to be conscious in context of other experience. So, occurrence of experience does not imply that it is conscious experience. In this regard also James' view is distinct from Bradley's view.

Pure experience is the primal stuff by which everything is created; thus, the question may arise whether the existence of the pure experience that James accepts implies that he subscribes to a kind of monism, and whether pure experience is one substance. Ayer used the term "neutral monism" to describe James' view of pure experience. In the history of metaphysics the problem of monism and dualism is a prime issue. Whether the fundamental reality is one or two? Those who say that ultimate reality is one, their view is termed monism and those who feel that ultimate reality consists of two substances that are real, their view is called dualism. But according to James pure experience is neither one nor two. According to James pure experience is a process which contains multiple realities. If reality is explained in terms of process then the debate of monism and dualism will not arise in case of pure

experience. He will neither term this process as a mental process nor as a physical process. Hence, the question of it being monism will not arise here. Someone may further ask whether this pure experience in the form of process is one; and in that sense is it monism? James says that even this process is not a single process. In the flux of pure experience multiple processes can go on, so in that sense it cannot be termed monism.

A further question that may arise in this context is why does James use the term experience to designate the ultimate process? The answer can be given after James in the following way. Reality according to James is a stream or flux. This flux can be easily explained by the term experience because experience is something which continuously flows throughout our total life. James says that this flow cannot be termed mental or physical. The nature of this flow cannot be captured, explained or reflected by mind or body because mind or body are fixed or stable substances but flow is ever changing. In James' opinion the notion of change as a reality cannot be explained by something that is stable or fixed. Change is possible only through relations, but if the reality itself is fixed, then change cannot be considered to be the nature of the ultimate stuff. But if the term experience is used then this flow can be explained easily.

James used the term 'experience'. If instead of the term 'experience', 'body' or 'mind' is used then it may again lead to the problems of traditional monism or dualism. Body or mind are generally recognized as contradictory substance in traditional philosophy. As Descartes says, the body has extension, the mind does not, and the mind has consciousness but the body does not. As a result, if the ultimate reality is said to be physical and mental substances, then the problem of dualism will arise. Similarly if the ultimate reality is mental, then how is the physical generated from it, or if the ultimate reality is physical, then how is the mental object created? These problems and the related ones of monism will also develop if physical or mental objects are believed to be the only true reality.

To give emphasis on this flow of experience for explaining neutrality, James used the term 'experience' in case of pure experience. Instead of 'experience' if the term 'material stuff' was used then knowing could not be explained. Because material thing cannot be a knower. Also if it were called immaterial thing then there would occur a problem in explaining how physical object is made from it and how are they related. Hence, neutrality was explained using the term 'experience' from which both material and immaterial can emerge; and

knowing can be explained as well. James used the term 'pure experience' in a metaphysical sense and not in a psychological sense.

In his work *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience* David Lamberth [59] claims that the idea of experience is ambivalent. In James, the word "experience" has two meanings: one is phenomenological, and the other is metaphysical. When he refers to experience in a metaphysical or conceptual sense, it is objective; nevertheless, when complex things of diverse types are observed in the real world, multiple relationships are presumptively supposed to exist between them. This experience contains a variety of objects and relationships. This objective metaphysical stuff is pure experience, as described by Lamberth. This pure experience is not reducible because the fact that all of the parts in this experience are equal and none of them are fundamental. Thus, we cannot reduce this experience into more fundamental elements. When experience is taken in a metaphysical sense, there is no need for a transcendent being that can describe the object of experience in a more abstract way.

According to Lamberth, there are four benefits to treating "experience" as a fundamental philosophical concept. To start, the term "experience" has the benefit of being neutral. The dichotomy dilemma arises when traditional metaphysicians debate which is more significant or fundamental. Some philosophers favour thought, while others prefer things. However, if the word "experience" is employed in place of "thinking" or "things," philosophers can overcome this bias because "experience" has the potential to mean both thought and things at the same time. Experience is neutral since it has neither a mental nor a material nature.

Second, "experience" refers to the concrete things that come to us through our senses. Thought and matter, on the other hand, are essentially abstract and beyond our senses.

Thirdly, the term "experience" is also helpful from the perspective of pragmatism, since pragmatism frequently discusses the context of experience, particularly in the area of the operation of truth. The term "experience" can thus contribute to a pragmatic theory of truth. According to his language "...James notes that experience is pragmatically convenient, by which he means that it coincide with pragmatism's appeal to the course of experience for the working out of truth." [60]

<sup>59</sup> Lamberth, David (1999) p.26

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.26

Fourthly, the word experience is used more by James because it implies inclusiveness. It does not exclude consciousness or only matter; it includes both, which help to convey the richness and complexity of life.

When Lamberth interprets James' notion of "pure experience" in a metaphysical sense, he uses the word "pure" in two different senses. One use of this word "pure" is in the collective sense, and the other is in the discrete sense. Pure experience in the collective sense participates in the basic features of any particular experience, although it does not become embodied and particular in actual experience. In this case, "pure experience" is used as a non-quantifiable, indeterminate noun phrase. In the second use of the word "pure," pure experience is taken as a discrete unit of pure experience. Here, it depends on the particular field or situation. In the collective sense, it is the metaphysical element, and in the discrete sense, it is the initiator of action, that is, the exchange between the various elements of experience in such a way that it counts as a special action. He explains the two uses of the word 'pure' with an example. When the word land is used, we understand it in a collective sense, but when talking about parts of land, it is used in a discrete sense. Hence pure experience is used in a collective sense as well as in a discrete sense. Both these usages are metaphysical. He says “ In its discrete sense, pure experience is a functional denominator...”

[61]

William J. Gavin uses the concept of pure experience in three senses in his book *William James in Focus*. Pure experience according to the first sense is immediately given or indeterminate given. It is the confused state where everything is included but not in categorized form. He thus quotes James “The instant field of the present is at all times what I call the ‘pure’ “experience”. [62] He claims that it supports his view that pure experience is the immediate flux of life from which various conceptual categories arise. The question is: to whom is pure experience given? In answer to this question, Gavin says a new-born baby, a drug-addicted person, or an ill person can experience this type of indeterminate experience.

"Pure experience" in the second sense is a descriptive term. Pure experience is something that existed before we became conscious of it. Pure experience is the state of the world before

<sup>61</sup> Lamberth, David (1999) p.30

<sup>62</sup> Gavin, William. J (2013) p. 48

consciousness arose. The state before or prior to the subject-object dualism is pure experience.

In a third sense, pure experience is something temporal. The distinction between present and past is founded on pure experience. Here, pure experience represents a process. Pure experience is a continuously changing process.

So from the above discussion, we have come across many aspects of pure experience. It has also been noted how the interpreters of James have tried to interpret the notion of "pure experience" as a metaphysical notion. Moreover, we also found ways in which things can be created from the flow of pure experience.

In the next chapter, we shall discuss the various interpretations regarding the relation between two realities given by James scholars.

### **CHAPTER-3: Two types of reality and their relation: various interpretations**

In this chapter, I am going to discuss how various James scholars have discussed the nature of the two realities admitted by James and their relationship. I will arrange my discussion in the following way: First, I will discuss the view which claims that James' philosophy does not contain any metaphysics as such and so it is not concerned with the discussion of reality at all. Then I shall discuss those views which consider pure experience to be basic and pragmatic reality non-basic. Finally, I will discuss those who call pragmatic reality basic and pure experience non-basic.

#### **3.1 Pragmatic reality and pure experience: An interpretation of Charlene Haddock Seigfried**

Regarding the relation of pragmatic reality to pure experience, Charlene Haddock Seigfried says that in a particular sense there is no relation between them. She says that although James' metaphysical theory centers around pure experience, pragmatism is in fact an epistemological doctrine; there is no metaphysics in it. There is no metaphysics in pragmatism in a *traditional sense* according to Seigfried. In this sense, Seigfried says, if pure experience is seen as ontological theory and pragmatism as epistemology, then it cannot be said that there is relation between them from metaphysical point of view. But Seigfried departed from her original position and asserted that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism and pure experience. I will discuss later why she said that pragmatism does not actually discuss metaphysics. Before that I will try to show how Seigfried discussed and refuted her opposite doctrines. She says there are many James researchers who have tried to prove that pragmatic metaphysics is possible. Seigfried mentions Rosenthal and Fontinell among them. Rosenthal says there is metaphysics in pragmatism. Seigfried represents Rosenthal's view as one which holds that independent reality is recognized in traditional metaphysics in the same way that pragmatism speaks of this independent real, but its main goal is to establish the notion of that independent real on the basis of concreteness. That is to say, those who are pragmatists were searching in metaphysics for a reality that is independently real and which will be based on concrete life or concrete experience. Actually traditional metaphysics speaks of the independent real abstractly, but Rosenthal here tries to say on behalf of the pragmatist that the independent real is discussed in pragmatism also, but its basis here is concrete

experience. Thus it can be said that American pragmatists are engaged in metaphysical speculation.

Fontinell, on the other hand, has developed pragmatic metaphysics based on the text of James. Although in a particular sense he says that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism, he tries to show in a different argument that there is also a kind of metaphysics in pragmatism.

Seigfried interprets Fontinell's [63] view and says that Fontinell asserts that there is no metaphysics in the theory of pragmatism in the traditional sense. If metaphysics is taken in the traditional sense, then metaphysics is the knowledge of the ultimate reality, where reality is described independently of human experience. Pragmatism is anti-metaphysical in that sense. But even then pragmatism has made metaphysical guesses or metaphysical possibilities with material from concrete experience and in that sense there is metaphysics within pragmatism. In Seigfried's language "He acknowledges that "pragmatism is anti-metaphysical if metaphysics is understood in its classical sense as knowledge of the ultimate and unchanging character of being- or reality-in itself ... unrelated to human experience" or of the "ultimate origin or end of the world process." But pragmatism also "does not hesitate to venture some metaphysical guesses or construct some metaphysical myths by way of extrapolation from concrete experiences to what characterizes reality or the world." [64]

Seigfried, expressing her own opinion, firstly says what cannot be called metaphysics. To be more precise we can say, that she has tried to say what features in a theory, can be taken to designate it as metaphysics. She says that through every human being has beliefs and unjustified assumptions about the world, that does not constitute metaphysics because, they are not systematic, nor formally related and do not include rules of inference or formal methodological principles. In a word, they do not have the features of a formal system. In her language "The unexamined assumptions and beliefs about the world that everyone holds do not constitute a metaphysics because they are not systematized, formally related, and do not include rules of inference or formalized methodological principles. In a word, they are not formal systems." [65] That is to say, every human being having any kind of belief and untested claim about the world is not possessing a metaphysics, because metaphysics signifies a system: metaphysics has to be a metaphysical system, and if it is a system it will have a formal structure. In this structure

<sup>63</sup> *Self, God, and Immortality: A Jamesian Investigation*

<sup>64</sup> Seigfried, C.H (1990) p.347

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 348



there will be logical relations between the truth or sentences. It is not there when ordinary people hold a body of beliefs. Similarly when pragmatists develop a theory they do not talk about any metaphysical system, they do not talk about any logical relation between them even if they make any assumptions. So to say that there is metaphysics in pragmatism creates a kind of confusion. Their demands are based on multiple confusions. As a result, any kind of belief or claim about the world of ordinary people, even the claims about the world of pragmatists, cannot be called metaphysics in this sense. Therefore, there is no metaphysics in pragmatism in a systematic sense.

She then added another feature, saying that those systems could be called metaphysics which would disclose the principle of ultimate reality. In her language “And among systems only those are metaphysical which seek to disclose the ultimate principles of being as such.” [66] Any of our beliefs will be a metaphysical belief only when those beliefs reveal what is reality or what is ‘being in itself’. In her words “The beliefs we all hold are analogous to metaphysical systems insofar as we take them as disclosing reality as it is in itself”. [67] But if we understand the theories of pragmatism, we will see that there is no reality without human interest. In that sense it can be said that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism.

She claims that common people's beliefs are not metaphysical. In our daily lives, every person has certain beliefs about the world, which are reflected in their speech. Even in pragmatist beliefs, there are these words of independent reality, so it may seem that every person and a pragmatist too has a metaphysics in a sense. Seigfried thinks that reaching this conclusion is nothing but a misuse of language. If we take the use of common sense language in a philosophical sense and confuse it with metaphysics and say that since we use these words, and pragmatists too use them, so all of them are metaphysical, then it is nothing but confusion. When Pragmatists use the term ‘real’, considering that they are using the term ‘real ‘ in metaphysical sense is also a result of confusion in use of language. In her words “But to call such beliefs 'metaphysical' and to conclude that everyone, including the pragmatists, therefore has a metaphysics in this sense, is not only to confuse colloquial usage with terms whose meanings derive from centuries of philosophical debate but also to lose the precision necessary to determine when a belief has been confirmed or denied. [68]

<sup>66</sup> Seigfried, C.H (1990 ) p. 348

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 348

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 348

Seigfried argues that pragmatists reject traditional metaphysics. In a traditional sense, some metaphysicians say reality is independent of the human mind and beyond human experiences. But Pragmatism recognises all things as realities that have a human element as their constituent. But if it is accepted that traditional metaphysics are refuted by pragmatists but that they engage in establishing another kind of metaphysics, then it will not be acceptable. We can't make any claims about the world because according to the pragmatists we never grasp reality as "a thing in itself." The pragmatist says that the world is relative to us, and also that it has a reality: there is no option to claim this. If any claim regarding reality is not possible, then it cannot be said that pragmatism has another kind of metaphysics.

She argues against Fontinell that the fundamental metaphysical arguments can no longer be accepted if those who acknowledge the metaphysics of pragmatism insist that "metaphysical generalizations must be grounded in immediate experience." [69] Seigfried says that pragmatism makes metaphysical generalisations based on immediate experience. But 'metaphysical speculation,' 'metaphysical grounding,' and 'metaphysical experience' are very important concepts in metaphysical discussion. If it is said that pragmatic metaphysics is grounded on immediate experience, it will become inconsistent with the above metaphysical concepts because these metaphysical concepts do not appear in our experiences. Expanding Seigfried's statement, if metaphysical speculation means asking the ultimate question about the world or reality, where the work of metaphysicians is not to discuss specific problems, they discuss general questions, and seek their answers, then immediate experience can never occur as its basis. Metaphysicians never limit their discussion to just the level of experience. They discuss whether there are realities beyond the perceptible world, discuss many realities that we do not find in the perceptible world, and are not even based on the perceptible world. Thus, pragmatism is incompatible with metaphysical speculation, even opposed to it, since it is not experienced by us. So it can be said that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism.

Moreover, in our common experience, the way the worldly objects are perceived by our senses is not the real form of those objects. As a result, it is appearance but not reality. As the basis of this appearance, there must be something on which the appearance is grounded and that is reality. This reality is generally recognized by philosophers as the basis of all things. The basis on which everything is explained is not directly found in experience. But this grounding is important to metaphysicians. Hence, pragmatism cannot give metaphysical grounding, so it is not metaphysics. But Seigfried says that all of these concepts have a

specific metaphysical meaning but also another, non-metaphysical meaning. So, as because all these words are used in pragmatism does not mean that metaphysics is done, in pragmatism these are used in a different sense. Seigfried says “ The pragmatists themselves were not always consistent in their usage...”. [70]

In this way Seigfried has tried to show why there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. But the question that may arise here is if the assumptions or claims of pragmatism are not metaphysical then what actually are they because they serve as a principle to the pragmatists on the basis of which they derive their other claims? Seigfried in response to this question says that these are not metaphysical: these are actually interpretive structures of experience. The structure of experience must be observed in order to understand what the experience is. In his words “If not metaphysical assumptions, what are we to call them, especially when they function as principles from which to derive other claims? They should be called interpretive structures of experience. [71]

She further said that we will look at James's text as a systematic method of interpretation. We should look at the writings of James in a way that can systematically interpret our experience. This is a kind of hermeneutics. It is not that the pragmatists are talking about reality from a privilege view point. A Pragmatist does not speak about the ontologically objective view point of metaphysics in traditional sense. So there is interpretation, not metaphysics. Seigfried explains that no metaphysical argument has ever been made with James's explanation, no matter how acceptable or forceful it may be to us.

From the above discussion it can be said that by the term metaphysics Seigfried meant traditional metaphysics. What the pragmatists do is not actually traditional metaphysics but they use their view as metaphysics. Pragmatism actually wants to give a constructive explanation of our experience; it is not at all metaphysics. It can be called theory of knowledge but not metaphysics. Seigfried accepted the traditional meaning of metaphysics in this way, and she refused to call pragmatism a metaphysical theory because there is no metaphysics in pragmatism.

In discussing this, Seigfried also states that pragmatism is not metaphysics but pragmatism is paving the way for metaphysics. How do I know a truth, how can I recognize and understand that it is real, these discussions are there in pragmatism but that does not mean that there is metaphysics. She emphasizes on the way of knowing. It

<sup>70</sup> Seigfried, C.H (1990) p.349

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p.349

is not the goal of pragmatism according to Seigfried to say which is real and which is not, but the goal of pragmatism is to find out how to know the reality.

Pragmatism helps to construct metaphysics. There is no need for metaphysics in pragmatism but pragmatism does not exclude it, according to Seigfried. Here she made two claims. One is that pragmatism does not exclude metaphysics; this does not mean that pragmatism requires metaphysics. But pragmatism can help to prevail metaphysics in terms of experience.

Seigfried then discusses radical empiricism. She says that two concepts of experience are accepted in pragmatism but there is inconsistency between those two concepts. If these two ideas go hand in hand, then there will be contradiction. He thinks that this contradiction can only be overcome if the theory of radical empiricism is accepted as the basis of pragmatism and also if whatever is said about experience is accepted. Those two interpretations of experience are as follows - In a sense, experience is 'malleable' or 'completely indeterminate', and experience in another sense is 'already structured'. If experience is completely indeterminate, then experience will have no necessary connection with established fact. Experience, in other sense, is objective that is already structured, where there is no need for the subject to give shape to the experience. Seigfried says “Although neither position makes sense in isolation, they cannot be joined without contradiction.” [72]

Seigfried thinks that this objection will no longer exist if we accept the way in which experience is interpreted and relation is discussed in radical empiricism. Seigfried feels that pragmatism must have a fundamental basis if it is to be freed from this contradiction. That fundamental basis is radical empiricism. According to Seigfried, James's own position is radical empiricism.

Regarding the discussion of radical empiricism, Seigfried holds that the two parts of radical empiricism are pure experience and pragmatism. According to Seigfried, radical empiricism is a metaphysical theory. It includes pragmatism and pure experience. According to radical empiricism, experience is the ultimate reality. James called this experience pure experience. The experience that comes directly to us is pure experience. The central point of pure experience is that subject-object and inner-outer are the two groups by which we classify experience. These names are based on the way one stream is related to another. But in fact those experiences are neutral. Pure experience is neutral. Although

Seigfried interpreted pure experience as metaphysical reality in his early works, her later works did not use pure experience in this metaphysical sense. She explains pure experience as a hypothesis rather than the ultimate reality. Seigfried says that if pure experience is accepted as a hypothesis, it has some advantages: it is actually a hypothesis. Seigfried, explaining James's view says that it is easier to interpret ordinary experience if pure experience is taken as a hypothesis, that is, it helps to unify ordinary experience. Although no one can experience this pure experience, James has tried to show that this experience is possible in a few cases. But Seigfried feels that it is not experience in real sense because it is not possible to communicate it with anyone. Whenever we understand it, we will understand it with our categories, and thus it no longer has its purity. But if this experience can be taken as a hypothesis then some philosophical problems can be solved and the main point of radical empiricism can also be accepted. According to radical empiricism, one will consider only those things which can be explained in terms of experience. In this sense, radical empiricism is the field of metaphysics in James's philosophy. Moreover, the dualisms that exist in philosophy are actually secondary because they are only a way to understand the world. But the basic element is pure experience. Radical empiricism actually describes different objects, it has descriptive advantages, and when it describes experience it turns experience from chaotic to orderly.

To show the importance of the notion of pure experience Seigfried refers to a doubt which is often raised involving the notion of experience. It is held that if James takes experience to be completely indeterminate then no account of objective things having fixed structure is possible. On the other hand if experience is taken to have a fixed structure then it would not be possible to accept change as real in James' Philosophy. Seigfried claims that this doubt is based on unclarity regarding James' notion of pure experience. If experience refers to the flow of pure experience, then we can interpret it as structured. When it is a continuous flow, and when it becomes a subject- object in relation to that flow, then the experience takes on a new form according to human interest and need. We can easily eliminate the mentioned inconsistency if we accept the metaphysical theory as the basis of the pragmatic theory which is actually pure experience in James's philosophy.

In discussing radical empiricism, Seigfried says that radical empiricism has two parts: one is pure experience, and the other is pragmatic method. If both are brought under one head, then the question is what is the relation of pragmatism with pure experience?

The relation between metaphysics and epistemology is the same as the relation between pure experience and pragmatism. Pure experience is the nature of reality according to earlier view of Seigfried, but how to know reality is pragmatism. Seigfried says “ Subjectivity and objectivity are not attributes of a primeval experience , but rather the results of a subsequent classification. This classification is a result of our interests and temporary purposes, according to the context different sets of relations come into play.” [73] She would say that there is no assertion about pragmatic reality in pragmatism.

In her early phase Seigfried argues that pure experience is a metaphysical reality.

Seigfried says that metaphysical reality is pure experience whose nature is unanalyzed. However, it is analysed by pragmatism. As a result, it becomes a constructed experience for us. Hence pragmatism cannot perform its function of selectivity if pure experience does not exist as primordial stuff. Hence pure experience in this sense is a metaphysical reality.

If the hypothesis of pure experience is accepted as a neutral continuous flux, then specific things and relation can be admitted to be formed from there. When that flux enters a particular context, we can simultaneously claim experience as malleable and already structured. Consequently, if pragmatism wants to accept experience consistently, it must accept pure experience as its foundation. Thus, pragmatism would have problems accepting both types of interpretation of experience simultaneously that we already mentioned above, but if pure experience were accepted then there will be no problem. So pure experience is the basis of everything.

Seigfried's interpretation of pure experience early in her discussion shows that radical empiricism has metaphysics in the traditional sense. But Seigfried tries to show in her later discussion that pure experience is a ‘limit concept’ because it seems to apply only to this particular world. Moreover, she tries to argue that radical pragmatism also lacks metaphysics in the traditional sense. She admits that the theory of pure experience helps to explain human experience but that does not mean that it contains metaphysics in the traditional sense. Radical pragmatism cannot be called metaphysics because it lacks the characteristics that metaphysics is supposed to have as a first philosophy. Metaphysics as first philosophy entails categories of being which enable subsequent investigations but James's radical empiricism emphasizes concrete analysis.

<sup>73</sup> Seigfried, C.H (1976 ) p.336

Seigfried says that James makes no distinction between traditional metaphysics and the metaphysics that will be possible after making the ‘radically empiricist natural history turn’ . But Seigfried claims that although these two superficially resemble each other, they are not the same. So instead of metaphysics he suggests to call it “radically empiricist hermeneutics.”  
[74]

So from Seigfried's discussion we can say that she in her later phase admits a kind of relationship between James's pragmatism and radical pragmatism, one helping to explain the other, one helping to complete the other, but since both apply to the phenomenal world, neither has metaphysics in the traditional sense. One only interprets the other.

### 3.2 Pure experience and pragmatic reality: Ellen Kappy Suckiel's view

In her work *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*, Ellen Kappy Suckiel elaborates and explores several claims to interpret James' view of reality. Suckiel claims that James approaches the questions of reality from two different perspectives: one is "common sense" and the other is "philosophical". While discussing reality from these perspectives, James uses 'reality' in different senses and also addresses different problems. She makes a distinction between two distinct senses, namely metaphysical sense and pragmatic sense. On the basis of these two senses Suckiel distinguishes between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality. She claims that pure experience is the metaphysical reality, which is the basis and upon which pragmatic reality depends. She further asserts that pragmatic reality can ultimately be reduced to pure experience, and that pure experience is the ultimate metaphysical reality. She observes reductionism in James' conception of reality. Suckiel attempts to reconcile some incompatible claims about the relations between these two realities in a coherent manner, but she fails. In the relationship between these two realities, she demonstrates inconsistency. So she claims that there is no coherent relationship between metaphysical reality and pragmatic reality. Suckiel, in response to some objections against James, refers to two levels in his philosophy: one is the metaphysical level, and the other is the common sense level.

I will now discuss Suckiel's claims and arguments in detail.

Suckiel argues in support of her view that James distinguishes between two perspectives or points of view. Suckiel says that when the nature of reality is viewed to be same as that of ordinary physical objects, that is the common sense point of view. James was referring to ordinary physical objects when he talks about reality in a pragmatic sense. Suckiel also argues that the questions asked by the pragmatic approach are the same questions that people raise about realities as they go about their daily lives. According to Suckiel, when James talked about pragmatic realities, the question that he engaged with was: "When is an object termed "real," what is the influence of that object on a person's life? In her language "When he deals with the nature of such pragmatic realities, he is concerned with the question of what it is for an object to count as real in an individual's life, given the nature of his experiences and his goals." [75]



In her discussion of pragmatic reality, Suckiel draws our attention to James's view that in his book *The Principles of Psychology*, James mentions seven different worlds. I am not discussing them here because I have already referred to them while discussing James' view. In those seven worlds, there are different orders of reality. James thinks that every such reality is equally valid within its own sphere. But compared to all these worlds, James says that the physical objects and the physical world that we get through our senses are the paramount reality. In Suckiel's words, "From among these worlds, however, James considers the world of physical objects perceived by the senses to be the paramount reality" [76] The question may be, why does James call this physical reality the paramount or highest reality? Suckiel tries to give her answer from the point of view of James and says that material things affect us and meet our needs or wants more than other realities. Therefore, from a pragmatic point of view, this reality is of utmost importance to a person. When James defines reality from a pragmatic standpoint, he refers to the physical object as pragmatic reality, as defined by Suckiel.

Suckiel says that reality from a pragmatic point of view is bi-polar. On the one side, there is a purpose-oriented subject whose needs and interests are there; on the other side, there is a flux of experience. In her language, "James's account of reality, when seen from the pragmatic point of view, is bipolar." [77] On the one side is the teleological subject with interests, values, and concerns, active in the knowing process; on the other side is the flux of his experience.

Explaining how a pragmatic reality is created by a subject in a pragmatic sense, Suckiel points out that in order to create a comprehensible world from the chaotic stream of experience, a subject selects some part of that stream and then arranges it according to his own needs. Suckiel illustrates the point with a concrete example. When a sculptor builds a sculpture, he first starts with a block of marble, and after cutting off some part of that stone, the remaining part is highlighted as the sculpture or statue. In the same way, Suckiel presents James's view as a subject creating objects from the flow of experience. When this work is done by that subject, then some need or interest works in him on the basis of which he creates that object. As a result, it comes out as a reality for the subject. That is the pragmatic reality. So, Suckiel's observation while presenting James' view is that pragmatic reality is constructed by an individual. If something is to be understood as a reality, it must be understood in the context of an individual.

<sup>76</sup> Suckiel, E.K (1982) p.127

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p.127

Suckiel claims that, while one cannot contradict James' views on pragmatic reality, one can attempt to demonstrate a paradox in James' view. Suckiel draws our attention to the fact that those who accept the realist view of physical objects can raise this question. According to the realist view, physical objects exist independently of the mind, and the subject has no role to play in their existence. Moreover, it would not be possible to say that everyone sees or knows the same object in the world if reality is accepted in a pragmatic sense. In response to this, Suckiel mentions James' possible argument. Suckiel says here that even if the subject constructs reality, that reality does not completely depend on the subject. The sense data that comes from outside does not depend on the person, but what I will receive depends on me. In this way, the objection can be answered from James's point of view. Another argument is found in Suckiel's writing in this regard which she develops with reference to James' notion of the species specific structure of our need and desires. In her language "In the first place, our experiences themselves are roughly similar. In the second place, we share a common physical nature, a common human condition, and in a general way, common interests and common conceptual categories for interpreting experience. Hence the worlds we constitute are by and large the same." [78] This argument leads to realistic interpretations of James' pragmatic philosophy.

Suckiel then discusses James' metaphysical reality. In her opinion, the ultimate nature of reality has been analysed at the philosophical level in James's theory of radical empiricism. In the book, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James shifted away from the discussion of pragmatic reality and discussed the nature of reality in a metaphysical sense. Suckiel emphasises that this is the basis of pragmatic reality. James' main goal here is not to refute pragmatic reality but to lay the foundation of pragmatic reality and Suckiel analyses James view by saying that metaphysical reality includes pragmatic reality. In her language, "James's theory of radical empiricism is his attempt to analyse the nature of reality on the critical philosophical level of thought. His intention is not to reject the pragmatic realities of common sense, described in ordinary language, but rather to show their ultimate metaphysical basis, and to place them in the context of a metaphysical theory. [79]

To James, pure experience is the ultimate metaphysical reality. "Pure experience" is a continuous flow of experience. We attempt to comprehend this flow by applying concepts to it. We divide pure experience into thought-things, subjects, and objects. But in fact, there is no division in this flow.

<sup>78</sup> Suckiel, E.K (1982) p.140

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.132

Suckiel thinks that there is no ontological existence for these divisions. These may have pragmatic significance. In her language, "... distinctions between mental and physical, subject and object, knower and known, consciousness and the object of consciousness, are considered by James to be only common-sense or practical distinctions, having no ontological status." [80] These concepts do not reflect the actual experience. These are created as a result of action in the realm of pure experience. Pure experience is actually neutral. In her answer to why it is neutral, Suckiel says that any given experience can be interpreted as either physical or mental, depending on the context of other experiences with which it is related, and in that sense it is called neutral.

Suckiel says that in the traditional sense, when a subject experiences something, the elements of experience come to the subject in distinct ways. Here the "problem of uniting experience" arises. Classical empiricists answer it one way, like Hume, while rationalists answer it another way. Kant gives another explanation in his theory. But if James's conception of experience is accepted, Suckiel argues, this problem does not arise because James does not explain experience in isolation. James says that experience is a continuous process, so elements do not come in discrete ways. Thus, there is no need for trans-empirical realities to unite distinct experiences. James calls this pure experience as the basic element. In the words of Suckiel, "James calls pure experience a" *materia prima*." [81] Although Suckiel says it's not a primal stuff as supposed by Aristotle.

Suckiel gives an example of how different kinds of objects are made from pure experience. Suppose a person is sitting in a room. When a person is having a perceptual experience about his house, he cannot differentiate between his experience of the house and the object of that experience, which is the house. As the experiences go on, the objects appear in front of his mind. At this time, consciousness and objects of consciousness are not experienced as such. When we experience something, then consciousness and the object of consciousness are not represented separately in our experience. As a result, their differences in experience are not captured. Suckiel claims that from this, James concludes the consciousness and object of consciousness are identical because the person is directly connected with the room itself. Consciousness is the object there. As a result, the relation of consciousness to the object is direct in this case. In fact, both of these are parts of experience.

<sup>80</sup> Suckiel, E.K (1982) p.134

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p.133

Suckiel says that the dualistic problem of how a consciousness is connected to its object would not come up in James's theory.

Suckiel then discusses in detail the relationship between the two realities and explains some of the problems that remain after showing this relationship. Suckiel says that although James discusses the existence of these two realities in his various texts, he does not discuss the real relationship between them. In her languages “James always speaks as though his two approaches to the question of reality were consistent, but he does not specifically address himself to the relation between them.” [82]

Suckiel first shows that these two perspectives are actually consistent on many important points, but their relationship is not entirely free from problems. Suckiel mentions these “two views to be isomorphic”. [83] Suckiel has tried to establish here that pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality as pure experience can be accepted together and in that sense they are mutually compatible. For example, when I am experiencing something which I am accepting according to my needs, it becomes pragmatic reality. That pragmatic reality is again a part of pure experience. As a result, Suckiel explains there is no problem in showing the relationship between the two. In other words, in the case of pragmatic reality, the subject or thought constitutes its object. This thought is a part of pure experience. The object is also pure experience. Now that thought is constructing the object, it means that two situations are being created in a special relationship in pure experience. Relation is also pure experience. Thus, both are functional aspects of pure experience, so there is no difficulty in accepting these two approaches together. In this sense Suckiel says that these two views are consistent.

But Suckiel then points out a complex problem, and he thinks that the solution to this problem cannot be found in James's theory. Suckiel points out that in some places James has characterized reality as ‘what it is known as’ and she argues that if reality be characterized in this way then pure experience can no more be regarded as its real stuff because pure experience cannot be considered as ‘known as’. Suckiel arrives at this conclusion on the basis of James’ claim that pure experience is undifferentiated and is free from subject-object distinction within it. Suckiel would insist that if something cannot be considered to be an object then, it cannot be characterized as ‘known as’.

<sup>82</sup> Suckiel, E.K (1982) pp.135-136

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.136

Accordingly Suckiel concludes that no satisfactory account of relation between pragmatic real and metaphysical real can be given if we try to develop a coherent account of James' theory of reality by taking into consideration *all* the characterizations of the real mentioned by James. Suckiel interprets James' view of reality as reductionism. Because she contends that what we take for granted as pragmatic reality is really a product of pure experience. This pragmatic reality does not have a fundamental existence in the metaphysical sense; it is just a function of pure experience. So it can be reduced to pure experience.

Suckiel explains that experience is the key metaphysical reality in James's philosophy. She says that in James's philosophy, the word "experience" is used in different senses. Experience is an ontological, epistemological, and methodological principle in James's philosophy. In different texts, James uses the concept of experience in different senses. Suckiel shows that James uses the concept of experience in three different senses.

Suckiel notes that in the second volume of *The Principles of Psychology*, James takes the word 'experience' in the subjective sense of what is known by intuition. Anything that affects us can affect our thoughts, affect our feelings, and even affect our actions. In this case, "experience" means someone's experience. Experience in this sense is subjective. This is the first meaning of the word "experience."

After this, she says that the second meaning of experience is given by James in his books *Pluralistic Universe* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In this case, he uses the concept of experience to represent the characteristics of the divine being. The divine being is the realm of experience in which all other realms of experience are included. God, or the divine, is a broad sequence of experiences that people engage in through religious experiences. Following Suckiel, we can say that to experience here means to be aware of the divine being. In the case of the divine, the field of experience is very wide, in which our experience participates. We can also use this religious experience in a subjective sense because James would acknowledge the existence of a divine being based on his influence in our lives. If the divine being had no influence on our lives, James would not admit his existence. As a result, we can speak of religious experience as well as personal or subjective sense of experience. In *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James takes the term "experience" in a special sense. Here he takes the concept of experience in a metaphysical sense and calls it "pure experience." This pure experience is the fundamental reality.

But the important question is whether there is any correlation between these different experiences, and if so, whether they are compatible. Suckiel discusses this issue and claims that James' theory does not provide the solution. This issue is quite challenging to resolve. However it is beyond the scope of the present dissertation.

### 3.3 John Wild's reflection on pure experience and pragmatic reality

William James's philosophy is interpreted in many different ways, especially in the context of his metaphysical discussions. We see the views of various James scholars regarding the relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism as metaphysical theories. Some scholars think that there is a relationship between them, although there are differences between them regarding the nature of that relationship. Again, some scholars deny that relationship. John Wild is one of those who think that the main metaphysical theory in James's philosophy is radical empiricism as well as pure experience. According to Wild pure experience is the fundamental ontological discussion of James philosophy. He claims that pragmatism is not a metaphysical theory. Wild further claims that pragmatism is a partly epistemological theory within which there is no metaphysical element in the ultimate sense. Therefore, from a metaphysical perspective, there is no connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. In his words "the distinction between the physical and psychical is no longer ultimate and ontological. It is secondary and in part epistemological- two different ways of reading the same phenomena". [84] According to Wild, we divide the physical and the mental from the viewpoint of pragmatism. The way an experience meets my needs and purposes is what I consider to be my experience. As a result, we create dualism from the point of view of pragmatism. Wild also claims that if we understand James's philosophy as a whole, we can see some apparent inconsistencies between some tenets or issues in his *Principles of Psychology*, *Pragmatism a new name for some old ways of thinking* and his later book *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Wild thinks that there is an apparent inconsistency in the later texts of James as James tries to refute the same theories which he acknowledged and tried to establish at the beginning of his work. He thinks that this inconsistency regarding some issue can be overcome if we understand James's philosophy from a particular point of view. He has tried to explain the whole philosophy of James from the point of view of existential phenomenology. According to him, there would remain no apparent inconsistency in explaining James' philosophy from this point of view. But if we read James' writings from existential phenomenological approach then this apparent inconsistency regarding some issue can be removed, inconsistency will not exist anymore and Wild claims that the above mentioned books of James can be explained with this existential phenomenological approach.

<sup>84</sup> Wild, John (1969 ) p.371

If we have to show a consistent relationship between the theory of Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism, Wild claims, that is possible with this Existential Phenomenological approach. Wild claims that these two theories may be independent but the relationship between them is only possible with the help of this approach. He also adds that if we read James's theories with this Existential Phenomenological approach, we can understand that for James, the main reality is pure experience.

We will now see how Wild explains the theory of pragmatism and shows the dualism in *pragmatism*. Wild says in his book *Principles of Psychology and Pragmatism a new name for some old ways of thinking*, James explains the concept of experience, saying that in any experience, the concept of self is associated with the concept of experience, signifying that experience means someone's experience, the experience of a subject. It cannot be said that there is experience but there is no subject. There can be no experience without a subject. Experience has an intentional structure. As a result of this intentional structure, experience always indicates someone or something, that is, experience means experience of an object. So there is a duality in experience where one is the subject and the other is the object. Wild says that according to James, they cannot be reduced to one another, resulting in dualism. In Wild's language "in *the Principles*, James definitely stated that every experience belongs to a personal self. There is no thought, or experience, which is nobody's thought." [85] One of the goals of James's philosophy was to overcome dualism. For example, psychophysical dualism is one of them. As a result, James wanted to construct his theory in such a way that dualism does not exist in it because he is actually a supporter of pluralism.

Wild represents James' philosophy by claiming that the basic theory of pragmatism is based on the theory of meaning. According to this view, if we want to get a clear idea about an object in our thinking, we have to see what kind of practical effect that object may involve; that effect determines whether we have a clear idea about the object. Physical objects are always associated with direct or sensory experience. So having an idea about an object means that it is present in front of me. In his words " ... Perception , for James, involves the actual physical presence of being , brute fact. And this is still true of his pragmatic writings." [86] So, Wild claims that when James speaks of sensory experience, he is referring to one or more physical objects in the external world. Here, too, James acknowledges the existence of dualism while explaining experience.

<sup>85</sup> Wild, John (1969) p.362

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p.332



Wild introduced pragmatism and said that pragmatism refers to the pragmatic theory of truth. This pragmatic theory of truth is actually epistemological. Wild says “James’s constant use of the term practical, and his choice of the word pragmatism to characterize his whole epistemological point of view.”<sup>[87]</sup> As a result, Wild thinks that the main discussion of epistemology in pragmatism is what James wanted to do. Wild argues in favour of why pragmatism is epistemological. He argues that pragmatism is epistemological, with no metaphysical element in it as an ultimate sense. Wild’s arguments are:

According to Wild the basic thesis of pragmatism is to explain the concept knowing. Knowing is a relational activity that happens in experience, if we perceive anything in actuality, knowing will follow. Wild makes the same claim, agreeing with James that in explaining knowing, it is said that if we have a belief or idea in our mind, it does not mean that it has reality, that idea may be mental being. But if something is to be really real, it must be verifiable by experience. If an idea or belief has effect on my life or future experience then it is true. But if that idea has no effect on my life, then my idea cannot be said to be true. It is through the process of knowledge that concepts or beliefs are related to reality. Wild says that in pragmatism knowledge is not a trans empirical activity. In the words of Wild "knowing is a way of being-in-the-world, which may be phenomenologically described and analyzed. This is a basic thesis of James' pragmatism.” <sup>[88]</sup> Since Wild refers to the theory of truth as the whole in pragmatism and emphasises the process by which truth is produced, we can say that he refers to epistemology in pragmatism.

Wild further argues that the main theory of pragmatism is its concept of truth. According to pragmatism, a belief is true if it corresponds to the reality, but if we want to understand reality in a better way it is possible through action and also what kind of action the reality enables us to take. For example, if we want to understand what a clock means, then we must know what the dial looks like, we have to build an image of it in our mind, but that is not enough knowledge to know the clock. The real knowledge about the clock is when we know how the clock works. Moreover, in case realities of which we cannot create any idea, our real knowledge is based on their actions, and how it is useful to us. So, basically pragmatism is concerned with the workability of ideas.

<sup>87</sup> Wild, John (1969) p.336

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.355

How an active being proves something to be true through his actions is essentially what pragmatism does. And this is actually the work of epistemology.

In pragmatism, what is recognised as reality depends on the interests and needs of the subject. Moreover, in pragmatism whether an experience is called physical or mental depends on the knower's interest and need. The knower can call an experience physical or mental according to their needs. Thus categorizing an experience in this way is done by the method of pragmatism, so what pragmatism does here is an epistemological discussion.

Now we will discuss how Wild interprets theory of pure experience. He says James in his later work, in the book *Essays in Radical Empiricism* describes the nature of experience as "pure experience." Wild ascribed two senses in describing the nature of pure experience. When we describe pure experience from different perspectives in one sense it is subjective while from another point of view it is also objective, experience is nothing but pure experience. In other words, pure experience is that which is neutral or ambiguous. Pure experience itself is composed of units that are neither material nor physical but rather neutral but the immediate stuff or pure experience we are giving to these two adjectives. This pure experience is the metaphysical reality in James's philosophy. Wild gave the example of a typewriter to illustrate the point. He said a person has a typewriter on his table in front of which he is sitting. He can explain his experience in the objective sense as well as in the subjective sense and that depends from which point he is interpreting this experience. If he takes it as an instrument in front of him, he can call it an object. That experience is not dependent on him; in this sense, the person is a part of the experience; it is objective. On the other hand this experience will be subjective if he considers that he is viewing the typewriter. But the experience of the typewriter on the table in front of him is actually neutral.

Pure experience is the fundamental reality upon which pragmatism depends. Wild's argues for his claim. Wild says Psychophysical dualism is a significant problem in traditional philosophy where philosophers tried to answer it from various viewpoints. Since the time of Descartes it has been customary to recognize the two as separate substances, and since then there has been controversy over their relationship. Wild says when James went on to explain conscious experience in his books *The Principles of Psychology* and *Pragmatism*, although James himself never wanted to accept any type of dualism, the problem of dualism remained in his theory.

He was able to solve this philosophical problem with the help of his doctrine of pure experience. So pure experience is a doctrine that helped to overcome the problems of James's earlier writings, in the sense that it is James's main metaphysical theory.

Further, Wild claims that James, in the books, *The Principles of Psychology and Pragmatism* accepted the intentional structure of experience, which led to another problem of dualism, the problem of knower-known dualism. Wild claims that James gave the solution to this problem with the help of the concept of pure experience because in pure experience there is no intentional structure. In the stream of experience, some experiences are mutually related with other streams and as a result knower-known is formed. So it can be said that it is James's mature philosophy that helped to eliminate the faults of his earlier philosophy. Pure experience in this sense is his main theory.

Besides that Wild also claims that in pragmatism, when something emerges as an experience, whether that experience is physical or psychical is determined by the needs of a subject. This is possible because pure experience is read in two different ways. So the physical-psychical division that can be made through pragmatism is possible because there is this pure experience. As a result, pragmatic categorization is possible only if pure experience is read in different ways. In this sense the theory of pragmatism rests on pure experience.

Wild says that one of the tasks of radical empiricism, according to James, is to understand the sensible world and its basic structure. So when pragmatism tries to understand the world in an empirical way, it has to do it in terms of these basic structures. Therefore, if radical empiricism does not clarify this structure in advance, the theory of pragmatism cannot be understood. In this sense Radical Empiricism is basic.

Wild further argues that selective attention, consciousness, continuous transition, searching for truth are the main ideas in pragmatic philosophy because with the help of these concepts our distinct experiences are united by pragmatic method and they create a meaningful world. Although these were previously seen as activities of the separated mind, this would have raised the problem of dualism against James' philosophy, which James wants to avoid.

However, the dualism problem discussed above is not applicable to James' theory of pure experience because we can know them through acquaintances, for which there is no need to accept the existence of any separate entity. When we perceive immediate experience, these do not come to us separately; they are given to us in a relational way. So if the above main ideas of pragmatism are understood in connection with the theory of pure experience, the problem of dualism is avoided. Thus, the charge of dualism levelled against pragmatism can be eliminated if pure experience is accepted as the fundamental reality.

In another argument given by Wild it is held that when radical empiricism interprets experience that experience is the basic form and category upon which our human thought is built on. Pragmatism deals with human thought whose basis is the nature of experience explained in the theory of radical empiricism. In this sense, radical empiricism is the foundation of pragmatism. In the words of Wild "it is radical empiricism which looks to experience for light on the most basic forms and categories that underlies our human thought." [89]

In this way Wild tries to establish that pure experience is the basic reality and pragmatism depends on it.

Wild wants to understand James's theory in a particular approach. In this context Wild argues that pragmatism and radical empiricism must be understood from the point of view of existential phenomenology, otherwise the inconsistency in James's theory will be remain. He says that if James's philosophy is understood in terms of existential phenomenology, then only the compatibility between the previous book and the later book can be shown regarding some issues. By showing this consistency, the relationship between these two theories can also be shown.

Before explaining the inconsistencies that can be observe in James's philosophy, I will first mention the way Wild tried to show where the elements of existential phenomenology are present in pragmatism and radical empiricism and then I will try to show how Wild will talk about eliminating the inconsistencies.

Explaining the claim that existential phenomenological approach is included in pragmatism, Wild says that no trans-empirical existence of the knower is admitted when knowing is interpreted in pragmatism. Knower can be explained in pragmatism as a living being in the world. Which ideas or belief will be accepted as real by this knower, is determined by the theory of truth of pragmatism. Pragmatism acknowledges the importance of the world I am a knower that means I am someone who has an active lived life; this awareness is emphasized by Wild. Importance of this awareness lies at the root of pragmatism. This is the approach of existential phenomenology which is there in pragmatism. If I understand the existential phenomenological approach, then the claims made by the pragmatists regarding the status of knower, status of the knowledge, status of the world can be easily understood and explained. If I interpret these from the point of view of phenomenology, then I can show that here, the meaning of knower is one who has living reality. A knower is a being that participates in an active lived life. In this way pragmatism explains knower-known relationship or knowing process in terms of existential phenomenology.

In addition Wild comments, existential truth is the truth that pragmatism is concerned with. In pragmatism, truth is an objective relationship between idea and realities, but the fact that we have an idea in our mind does not mean that the object actually exists. Through verification, the relationship between ideas and objects is confirmed. The truth of an idea does not depend on the 'similarity of the idea to the object' or on the 'ability to form an image in the mind'; it depends on verification. A belief or idea is true if it leads to some action in the world where I found reality. So an active subject experiences something within this world and acts on it. As pragmatism emphasizes these concepts it includes existential phenomenological element.

Now we will discuss how Wild shows that this existential phenomenological element is also included in radical empiricism

Wild says that radical empiricism contains the concepts of existential phenomenology. Pure experience is a key concept in James's theory. In theory of pure experience there is a notion of living body; Wild believes that understanding the pure experience in terms of living body will be beneficial. Wild says we cannot neglect this body when we have any experience. We understand experience as our experience in which the concept of body is attached. Wild did not explain what we commonly mean by "body" in this context.

This living body is actually the embodied self. He also says that whatever we experience, its center is this body; it is the center of interest, the center of action, etc. This living body is in this world. When this living body is called a center then it is not held to be a permanent center, various things in the world and the world is systematized around this vital center. All these ideas actually go with the theory of existential phenomenology.

Moreover, when pure experience is explained, then it is said to be presented to us directly. This immediate experience does not come to us in isolation, but in a relational way. When an experience is given to us whom we know as direct acquaintance it requires no language to understand. In phenomenology, experience is said to be given. There is a difference between the interpretations of Husserl and Wild because Wild believes that the division of noesis and noema is not done in radical empiricism, where everything is given as a flow of experience and everything is present there. However, Husserl distinguishes between noesis and noema. So radical empiricism includes existential phenomenology because everything is a stream of experience.

Why the approach of existential phenomenology should be taken to understand James? Wild replies that in the book *The Principles of Psychology* James shows a relation between brain and conscious state through which a form of psychophysical dualism remained. Moreover, when James explained the concept of experience in the book called *Principles of Psychology*, it included the theory of dualism because the concept of self is involved in explaining the experience. Experience means someone's experience. As a result there is a self that experiences the resulting dualism. So when the experience is being explained here, that experience is dualistic. Here the duality of Mind Knowing and Thing known remains. As previously stated, James' philosophy was always devoid of dualism.

Again, when the concept of intentionality is explained in the book called *Principles and Pragmatism*, then according to this concept consciousness means the consciousness of some object. As a result, dualism remains here too.

Even within the discussion of pragmatic epistemology, we find the issue of dualism, i.e., the issue of dualism remains within pragmatism. In pragmatism, knowledge arises when a subject acts on an object; a distinction is made between the subject and the object upon which it acts. As a result, dualism remains within pragmatism. As an epistemology, pragmatism left a gap

between the knowing mind and things known, so that the distinction between appearance and reality in traditional philosophy seems to remain here.

But when James discusses his theory of radical empiricism, 'reality' is taken in the sense of pure experience, where there is no dualism. As a result, an apparent inconsistency can be noticed between the discussions of some issues in these two books. Wild tries to show that this inconsistency does not exist if James's whole philosophy is understood in terms of existential phenomenology.

John Wild, in his book *The Radical Empiricism of William James* locates this apparent inconsistency and tries to find a way to overcome it. According to John Wild, it would be possible to eliminate this duality if the whole of James's philosophy could be explained from the point of view of existential phenomenology. In his commentary, Wild emphasizes the notions of living body, life world, existentialism, and phenomenology.

Wild draws our attention here by saying that in his book *Principles of Psychology* James says that any experience means that there is a relation between the conscious experience and the brain, and that this led to dualism. But later James came up with the idea of Living Body where James focused on Body. By 'body' here he means the 'Living Body as a whole' which includes the self. Wild has shown that the body can be explained in two contexts. In a context where the body, like all other objects in this world, exists as a finite object and can be measured and that body also plays an important role in the constitution of the same world where this body exists objectively. In other context, the body is the centre of everything. Body is the main centre of everything we experience in this world. The body here is not a separate substance from the world, but the living body that exists in this world. In Wild's language "the world experienced... Comes at all with our body as its center, center of vision, center of action, center of interest. ...everything circles round it and is felt from its points of view." [90]

By living body Wild did not mean any permanent centre. Rather, he tries to explain it in the same way as the existentialists would explain it. According to Wild "the various things and regions of the world are 'systematized' in relation to the acts and interests of this vital centre, which is always here and now." [91]

<sup>90</sup> Wild, John (1969) p.376

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p.377

The question is, why did Wild present the whole philosophy of James as existential phenomenology? Is there any analogy that makes him think that James' theory can be interpreted in the context of existential phenomenology? The answer is that Wild says that from the very beginning of what James has emphasized in his work, we can say that his theory is very much in line with the existential phenomenology. For example, James acknowledged the existence of seven worlds in his book *Psychology*. Among them the sensible world is the most paramount reality to James because we live in it and can meet our various needs and wants. We observe this world without being isolated from this world but from within this world, with which our activity is connected. As a result, the real existence lies within this world. Moreover, there is no doubt about the existence of this world and that is inevitable. Wild claims that, from the above consideration, we can conclude that this emphasis on the world represents existential phenomenology in James' philosophy.

In his next period, James describes pure experience as the primal stuff, where, by 'pure experience' James means a stream of experience. The question is, Can pure experience be reduced to a living body? Wild discusses the living body in his existential phenomenology, and acknowledges its importance, so what does this have to do with pure experience? In response, Wild argues that on the basis of the stream of experience, James overcomes the duality of the subject and object, and in the same way, if we focused on a living body, then dualism would also be avoided. In Wild's language " This effort, however, did lead him to focus certain phenomena..." , "...and focuses the whole living body both as a psychic center of intentions and an object in the world" [92]

Moreover, the objection of Solipsism against James can be answered if his theory is understood with this emphasis on the notion of living body. That is, if everything is created from within the flow of experience, such as subject and object, then there may arise the objection of solipsism. But if the living body is regarded as a representation of pure experience, then there will be no objection because the living body, like all other objects, exists in this world and can be an object in itself. If we accept the living body, then the basic claims of the theory of pure experience are also included. A living body can be both the subject and the object, depending on how I look at it as pure experience. So we can say that the concept of living body helps to understand the concept of pure experience and the

<sup>92</sup> Wild, John (1969) p.412



objections that the predecessors try to raise against pure experience can also be resolved. Wild tries to show that the pure experience can be better understood by eliminating some of the issues raised against it and trying to understand it from the point of view of the living body. In this sense Gale interprets James's theory with an existential phenomenological approach.

The body is a representation of pure experience. But here one may ask how the body will be a representation of pure experience? How is that possible because body is not experience? According to Wild, the body is a centre in the broad sense of being the centre of interest, action, vision, and so on. Different kinds of experiences are created based on the body as a fixed centre. It encompasses all the characteristics of pure experience. There can be changes in the body, the body can be called the subject or object from different points of view, and these are also the characteristics of pure experience. So it can be said that the body can represent pure experience.

Wild claims that if the body is accepted as the model of pure experience, then it is easy to understand pure experience. But despite that, one may doubt and the question may arise how can body be counted as a pure experience? What is the real relationship of pure experience with a body? There are two things to say here. A pure experience is something flowing. This flow can be seen as body. But we know that a body is an object. So how can the body be referred to as pure experience? This question can be answered if we try to see the body as a neutral entity. The body is both a part of experience and a product of experience. And it makes experience possible. Each of these is characteristic of pure experience also. Pure experience produces a variety of elements that are neutral, which become subject and object in different contexts. We can easily feel or understand the body so the concept of this body is being used. The body here is nothing more than the pure experience. Body is no different from pure experience. If we do not look at the body from the point of view of the object, then we can easily understand how the body can become a pure experience. This according to Wild is a visionary of the existential phenomenology.

Regarding the relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism, Wild says that these two doctrines are independent. Pure experience is the main metaphysical theory in James's philosophy, and pragmatism is the main epistemological theory. Hence the two are independent in the sense that they are unrelated as metaphysical theories. But if we look at it from the point of view of existential phenomenology, the relationship between these two

theories can be shown. We have discussed above that the main tenets of pragmatism can be explained from the perspective of existential phenomenology, and the theory of pure experience can also be explained. As a result, the relationship between these two theories can be shown from the perspective of existential phenomenology.

### **3.4. Wesley Cooper's reflection on pure experience and pragmatic reality**

Wesley Cooper claims that James's system has two levels, one metaphysical and the other empirical. He says these two levels are different and even distinct from each other. He placed pragmatism at the empirical level and pure experience at the metaphysical level. He claims that a person can spend his entire life accepting a particular level. Whatever level he takes will have a worldview shaped by that level. He says that if one accepts the metaphysical level, it can also explain the pragmatic reality, i.e. it is possible that the metaphysical reality can help to explain and understand the pragmatic reality as well, but it may not be necessary. It is not necessary to take metaphysical realities to explain pragmatic realities. Cooper says that metaphysical realities are not necessary to discuss pragmatic realities. Cooper, on the other hand, also claims that one can only discuss metaphysical realities without discussing pragmatic realities or the empirical level. In Cooper's opinion there are two major themes in James' philosophy. One of the themes is about dividing these into two levels. Cooper claims James wants to keep the division. To show that these two levels can be divided is one of the aims of James's theory, according to Cooper. Cooper also claims that one can discuss pragmatic realities without discussing metaphysical realities. That is, there is no relationship between these two realities at the empirical level. One may be a pragmatist but not a radical empiricist. But Cooper also tries to show that if one accepts the metaphysical level it can also explain pragmatic realities. Regarding the relationship between metaphysical realities and pragmatic realities, Cooper claims that at the metaphysical level, metaphysical reality is basic upon which the pragmatic reality depends. Moreover, Cooper claims that the nature of metaphysical realities is proto-mental. He holds that that if the nature of reality or pure experience is accepted as proto-mental, many apparently contradictory philosophical theories like neutral monism, naturalism, panpsychism, and phenomenology can be accommodated in James's philosophy.

We can start out by explaining why Cooper refers to pure experience as "proto-mental" and what advantages come with it. We will first discuss Cooper's understanding of pure experience before moving on to this discussion.

According to Cooper pure experience is the basic element or fundamental category. It is fundamental in the sense that pure experience is the material of all things; everything is made up of pure experience. In Cooper's view a type of external realism, can be derived from

James's system of pure experience. According to this view, there is a world which is the world of pure experience, a world which is not created by our ideas or representations.

In Cooper's words, "James's system implies a doctrine of external realism, according to which there is a world, namely a world of pure experience, which is external to our representation (conceptualizations, ideas, etc.) of it. [93]

Here Cooper distinguishes between two phenomenon, one is the element of pure experience and the other is my experience of that element. Cooper says James is not always clear about the difference, but it is too crucial to understand James's pragmatic world because everyone knows and understands this world. According to Cooper, "... there is a crucial distinction between an item of *pure experience*, on one hand, and *my experience of that item*, on the other hand. James isn't always tidy about this distinction, but it is crucial. " [94] Cooper explains the matter with examples. He says how are you and I looking at the same pen? In this case pure experience is being taken twice, once you take and once I take. In this case, James distinguishes between the two perspectives. When I have a pen, it is a pure experience as an item, and when I look at that item, it is no longer a pure experience, it is my experience of pure experience. To explain James' view, Cooper explains the matter from the point of view of a psychologist. There is a difference between the view of a psychologist and the view of a subject whom the psychologist is studying. In order for a psychologist to understand the mental state of the subject, the psychologist has to study the mental state of the subject with the subject's point of view, excluding his own point of view. Whenever the psychologist removes his point of view and understands the mental state of the person, he enters into metaphysics. A subject's own experiences, which the psychologist is observing, are pure experience and when I want to know that experience, it is my experience of that pure experience. This is why there is a difference between pure experience and my experience of pure experience. Cooper makes a distinction between *pure experience* and *my experience of pure experience* in this passage, as is to be noted, and also establishes the primacy of pure experience here.

Explaining the nature of pure experience, Cooper further says that pure experience is equivalent to a mental state or like a mental state but not essentially mental. Cooper uses the term 'Proto-mental' to describe the nature of pure experience. This pure experience is not conscious, although there are some features of the stream of thought in it. He cites James's

<sup>93</sup> Cooper, Wesley ( 2002) pp. 68-69

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 69

book, *Principles of Psychology*, in which James acknowledges the five characteristics of thought, three of which are the features of pure experience.

These features are continuity, change, and (collectively) purposiveness. Among these three characteristics continuity and change are the absolute characteristics of pure experience which are actually non relational features of pure experience in the sense that these features are not formed by being associated with any subject. But the third characteristic, or purposiveness, develops in relation to other pure experience. This purposiveness does not apply to any individual because Cooper says "...that brings in the characters of thought, personal ownership, and privacy, which are to be excluded." [95] So it is not the property of a particular person. Therefore, the contribution of the individual in the formation of this feature of thought is not accepted. Cooper thinks that the world of pure experience is purposive, and because of this feature we can explain pure experience as a stuff having the character of consciousness. Pure experience is called protomental because of this feature of purposiveness. Cooper says "because they characterize the stream before as well as after the subject's achievement of dividing his or her experience into inner and outer, public and private. So experience that has these protomental features is suited to being organized into physical objects as well as mental states." [96] A subject can categorise this stream of consciousness as outer, inner, public, or private since those qualities are present in pure experience, which is proto-mental, and the experience that is created after this classification also has these features. While explaining these features of pure experience Cooper distinguished between two aspects, one is mental and the other is proto-mental. Mental in the narrow sense refers to essentially mental, which is described as personal, internal, and subjective. Pure experience is not mental in this sense.

James doesn't acknowledge any subject behind pure experience when he talks about the idea of "purpose". The question may be, why need the subject he accepted to explain the experience? We find an answer in Kant's discussion. Kant says that experiences require a unifier to unite, and the subject serves as that unifier. But James says that when we have an experience, the experience comes in unified form. That's why James never believes in any self to unify experience. In the case of pure experience there is no question of it because the subject is formed with pure experience.

<sup>95</sup> Cooper, Wesley (2002) p.42

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p.41

Therefore, subject is not required to unify pure experience. James claims that there is no owner of pure experience and no subject to make it so. Every ordinary experience has a subject since the subject is the one who is experiencing it. The subject is the owner of the experience. When we have an experience, it is someone's experience. In the case of pure experience, this 'someone' is not required. This sense of being 'owned' are given in pure experience. Owner is not needed for a pure experience. Pure experience is owned by itself. Pure experience, Cooper explains, provides unity and a sense of ownership.

In Cooper's language, "Rather than positing a subject behind experience, an anterior unifier and owner of experience, James holds that the unity and the sense of being "owned" are given in experience...". "There is no purposive agent that unifies and directs pure experience, according to James's radical empiricism; rather, pure experience, when it becomes a thought that appropriates other experiences to itself, natively contains the sense of being personally owned and purposefully directed by such an agent." [97] When pure experience becomes thought, it becomes subjective. Even though it is subjective, it is formed from that pure experience. Thought becomes pure experience means that it is then being related to a subject and it becomes subjective consciousness.

In Cooper's view, the concept of "Protomental" is an important concept in the interpretation of pure experience. If we consider pure experience to be "protomental," many philosophical ideas can be reconciled. To illustrate this, Cooper discusses four apparently inconsistent doctrines. Cooper also explains why he discusses these four doctrines. According to Cooper "I have chosen to discuss these four scholars because they represent, in clear and persuasive fashion, four current and often conflicting interpretative schools." [98] The four types of interpretations of minds are Neutral Monism, Naturalism, Panpsychism, and Phenomenology. Cooper claims that these four may be partially true, but none of them is entirely true because they do not emphasize the features of Protomental. To illustrate the importance of the feature of Protomental, Cooper says these four interpretations can be reconciled, or it can be demonstrated that they can all cohere when explaining pure experience as a prototype. If we examine it from the perspective of the protomental, we can combine these four interpretations. Let us elaborate this point.

<sup>97</sup> Cooper, Wesley (2002) pp. 43-44

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.38

According to the first view, there is a single stuff from the metaphysical point of view which is neutral. This stuff is basic or fundamental rather than body or mind. The pure experience here is that stuff. Since that stuff is one, this doctrine is called neutral monism. Everything is generated from this stuff. A.J. Ayer speaks of this neutral monism. Cooper says that the purposiveness of pure experience cannot be explained by considering Ayer's view. If pure experience is neutral then it cannot be purposive. According to Cooper neutral things are never purposive. But he says the pure experience is "purposive" in James' view. If pure experience is purposive then it can no longer be called neutral.

Accepting Cooper's opinion, if it is said that pure experience is not neutral because it is "purposive," then would Cooper call pure experience "mental"? He claims that pure experience is not mental because it lacks some of the characteristics of mental stuff, such as being inner, private, subjective, and so on. But pure experience has purposiveness as a feature of mental thing, thus it is protomental. James would like to acknowledge this protomentality but this theory cannot be accepted if we accept Ayer's theory.

Moreover, according to neutral monist, the division of mental and physical in James's theory is not due to inherent property, but on the pattern and context in which pure experience enters. Cooper says that this interpretation of neutral monism can be accepted on two levels of his own theory. Neutral monists have rejected the claim that the mental is fundamentally metaphysical. The reason for this denial is that they have seen or read James only from the point of view of Panpsychism. But Cooper, in explaining James' position, said that for his theoretical work, James had used mental states in two senses: "purpose" and "private." When neutral monists deny the fundamentality of mental state, they use mental state in the second sense, which is the sense of "private". That is to say, the neutral monists have denied the existence of mental state as a matter of privacy. Cooper claims that when a neutral monist denies that the ultimate reality is mental, they do so in the sense of "private" rather than "purpose." Ayer denies that the pure experience is protomental according to Cooper. But if we go through James's theory, we will see that pure experience can be called protomental because it has the characteristics of a mental state like purposive.

Cooper discusses naturalism now. According to this theory, mentality is not a metaphysical quality or property. This world is made up of physical objects, their qualities and their relationships, and the mental states are nothing but the functional states. J. Flanagan advocates the theory of naturalistic physicalism . According to Cooper although Flanagan's theory is correct on a psychological level or empirical level, it does not apply to James' metaphysical level.

Marcus Ford represents James' philosophy as panpsychism. According to Ford, James' metaphysics is metaphysical realism which is kind of panpsychism. Cooper states that Ford interpreted James' theory of "pure experience" as metaphysical realism. According to this metaphysical realism, pure experience is essentially psychical. The essence of pure experience is such that it can experience itself. Experiencing oneself means that there is a purpose to experiencing oneself. So it can be said that there is a purposiveness of pure experience.

Ford says “panpsychism construes James’s world as teleological at bottom. [99] Cooper states that Ford adopted two of the five features of thought that James recognized in his *Principles* as arguments in favor of his view. These two characteristics are that every thought is a part of some kind of personal consciousness and thought chooses some of the various objects and may reject the rest; it depends on *thought's interests*. Ford cites these two features of the thought as arguments for his views. The first character refers to the personal, and the second refers to the purposive; on the basis of these two characteristics, Ford established his conclusion. Cooper's two-level view acknowledges the purposiveness of pure experience but rejects it as private and subjective. Pure experience does not mean one's personal experience (not owned). Even if one accepts the attribute called ‘purposeful’, that attribute is again not a private quality of the subject. Purposeful has been used in the context of the whole world. According to Cooper, the mistake of panpsychism is that they use mental state in personal or private sense and ascribe this as feature of pure experience.



Cooper then explains to those who have interpreted pure experience in the "panpsychism" sense which comes close to his two-level view. Thomas Nagel speaks of two types of panpsychism. According to the first type, physical objects are basic, but every physical object has proteomental properties or qualities. When these objects are arranged in the right way, the nervous system and consciousness are created as a result. According to the second type of panpsychism, there is a common source of mental and physical states that is fundamental, which is neither mental nor physical, but this common source can explain the origin of the two. Such as 'man' who have both physical and mental elements. According to Cooper, Nagel's second type of panpsychism goes hand in hand with James' interpretation; one type of radical empiricism is this type of panpsychism. This common source of Nagel is pure experience in James' philosophy. But Nagel is more concerned with the first type in his discussion or he wants to prove or establish the first type of panpsychism. The reason for this, it seems, is that the natural presupposition is that we do not want to go beyond the physical beings.

Wilshire seeks to understand James's philosophy in the context of phenomenology and emphasizes introspection. By the method of introspection we get the mental states as they appear. We can know by introspection how mental states appear. So the experience that comes with introspection is the primary experience. The experience I get from introspection is fundamental according to Wilshire.

Cooper refutes this view. A phenomenological reading is important for James at the metaphysical level because Cooper contends that it can focus specifically on pure experience as "simply what appears." Cooper, however, disagrees with Wilshire's assertion that introspection apprehends pure experience. Cooper says that the stream of thought, like the physical world, is made of the material provided by pure experience. Cooper says introspection actually applies to the stream of thought. When various mental states occur in us, introspection can help us find answers to all of these questions: what mental state is occurring in me, and what is the source of that mental state?

Pure experience cannot be obtained through introspection, and if introspection occurs, it occurs only in pure experience. So what we get through introspection cannot be said to be the ultimate reality. The experience I have with introspection is not a pure experience, although Wilshire thinks that since it is given, as it appears, it will be a pure experience.

But it is not a correct reading of pure experience because pure experience cannot be obtained by introspection. Two points are important here, one is introspection is applicable for stream of consciousness and not for pure experience, and the second is, introspection itself is the product of pure experience. So Cooper does not accept the theory that the experience I got through introspection is pure experience. The experience we get with introspection is not pure experience, although Wilshire thinks that since it is given, it appears to be pure experience. But that is not the true reading of "pure experience," because pure experience cannot be obtained through introspection. So we can conclude that these four different views have attempted to understand pure experience, but none of them has emphasised the protomental features. Cooper tries to show that all four of these can be partially true, but none of them is completely true because they do not emphasise the features or features of the protomental.

After explaining the nature of pure experience, Cooper tries to show how other empirical realities arise from this pure experience through a two-level view. In support of the claim that James's system has two levels, Cooper mentions another thematic idea *construction* in James's philosophy. Cooper says physical reality and mental reality are constructed from pure experience. On the other hand, moral and social reality is constructed with the help of pragmatism. As a result we get two types of realities from these two levels. In terms of these two types of realities we can say that the two levels are different because we are getting these different realities from these two levels according to Cooper. Cooper claims James' entire philosophical system has two levels, one is metaphysical level and the other is empirical. Since his philosophical system has two levels, reality too has two dimensions one is empirical reality at the empirical level and another is metaphysical reality at the metaphysical level. So the two types of reality come from two different levels.

Cooper argues that the questions and explanations of reality at the two levels are different. Different questionnaires and interpretations demonstrate the distinction between the two levels.

For example, questions related to reality at the empirical level, what does reality mean to a person, how reality is, determined by the person's needs and wants, how the human element is involved in the origin of reality, etc. are answered from the perspective of the person. But one may raise the objection of subjectivism here.

From James's point of view, the answer is that although human elements are involved in the construction of reality, there are elements that do not depend entirely on the individual. The charge of subjectivism against James does not hold here. Cooper tried to argue that reality is not dependent on individual. To this point, Cooper himself responds by stating that when a person tries to grasp reality in accordance with his needs, those realities are not the individual's but biologically determined. It is determined by species specific needs and thus it cannot be said that it depends only on one person. The above discussion makes it evident that certain questions are relevant for the empirical level. On the other hand, when the questions related to reality are discussed at the metaphysical level, the questions that are important are whether what we think of as reality, how did this reality originate, what are the types of reality, whether there is such a thing as basic reality, and if so, what are its characteristics. Does reality originate from nothingness or is there any other element from which this reality originates etc. So we can see that the questions regarding the two levels of realities are diverging. Based on this we can say the two levels are different too.

The way in which the nature of reality is described at the empirical level and the way in which the nature of reality is described at the metaphysical level are different. Thus the difference in the nature of the reality proves that the levels are different too. For example, in the description of pragmatic reality, James says that reality is that which fulfills the needs and wants of an individual, the contribution of the individual in the origin of the reality cannot be denied. But on the other hand, while describing the nature of metaphysical reality, James says that pure experience is an unanalyzed state in which there is no dualism, in this pure experience is the basic material from which everything is made but which itself is not made from anything.

Moreover, according to Cooper the nature of pragmatic reality is biologically determined. When man accepts something with a biologically determined interest, it is accepted as a pragmatic reality by him. Consequently, human nature is responsible for determining whether a belief is pragmatically true or not. But Cooper believes that metaphysical realities are not determined by human nature. As a result the nature of reality is different here and so are the levels.

Cooper also states that the cultural field or inheritance of our daily lives constitutes the field of pragmatism. Cultural inheritance varies from society to society. Thus, what is accepted as a reality in one society may not be accepted as a reality in another society. As a result, cultural inheritance often creates pragmatic realities.

For example, people's ideas about morality differ from society to society. This moral reality is the epitome of pragmatic reality. But the metaphysical reality is never determined by society. As a result, it is seen that the nature of the two realities is different. So it can be said that the two levels are different.

Pragmatic realities do not have subjective independent existence. Everything that exists in the world is created by taking metaphysical realities as elements. But the nature of metaphysical reality is such that it exists independently of mind. It is not itself made of anything else. Thus, Cooper tries to show that from the nature of reality as described by James, we can say that the levels are different too.

Cooper argues that the two levels are different because when we discuss these two levels, we can understand the discussion of one level independently of the other level. Due to the distinction between the two levels, one level can be excluded when discussing the other level, just as the empirical level can be disregarded when discussing the metaphysical level. We are able to comprehend the discussion at one level independently of the other.. Based on this it can be said that these two levels are different. Cooper shows that it is not necessary to discuss the metaphysical level in order to discuss the empirical level.

Cooper explained that the two levels are different and distinct. Now the question is what is the relations as per Cooper between the realities that James has discussed at these two levels? That is, what is the nature of the relations between pragmatic realities and metaphysical reality? Is there a relations between them or is there no relationship at all between these two? We will now discuss the answer in detail from Cooper's point of view.

Cooper presents James's quotation of the relations between these two realities as evidence for himself. That is, Cooper claims that what Cooper means about the relationship between the two is actually what James says in his book. According to Cooper, the relationship between pragmatic realities and metaphysical realities can be shown at one level and not at another level. He thinks that if we judge from the empirical level, there is no relation between these two realities. But if we judge from the point of view of metaphysical level, then the relationship between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality can be shown in two ways.

The question will be why there is no relationship between these two realities at the empirical level? In response, Cooper says that James in one of his book says that there is no logical connection between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality.

One can be a pragmatist without being radical empiricist. That is, a person can spend his life only on the empirical level. All the needs of his life can be fulfilled by staying within the pragmatic reality. In that case the person may be indifferent to the metaphysical reality. It may not be necessary to discuss metaphysical realities when discussing pragmatic realities. Hence Cooper claims that in this context there is no relations between these two realities. For example, a person can be busy in his daily life with those things that fulfill his daily life needs. But he may not have any additional questions or inquiries. One can be satisfied with pragmatic realities. Therefore, based on this, it can be said that there is no relations between these two realities at the empirical level.

Cooper divides James' philosophy into two levels and acknowledges the connections between them. Cooper divides James' philosophy into two levels, and on the basis of these two levels, he acknowledges two realities and accepts the connections between them. If we look at Cooper's discussion, we can understand that he tries to show the relations between these two realities in the later discussion of his book. He thinks that if one discusses these two realities from a metaphysical level, then the relations between these two realities can be shown. Cooper explains the relationship between these two realities in two ways.

Cooper says that if we take the empirical view of pragmatism or if we look at it from an empirical level, it cannot be said that pragmatism has any relation to pure experience. Cooper says that if we want to grasp the explanation given to realities in radical empiricism, then there may be no need to discuss pragmatic realities, but if pragmatic realities are viewed from a metaphysical level, then the relations between them can be shown. In this case the basis of pragmatic reality will be pure experience.

Cooper says that when we have an experience, the experience that pragmatism discusses can be of two kinds. The experience that pragmatism deals with may be pure experience or it may be a product of pure experience. If this experience be interpreted as pure experience then their relations will be tightened. If this experience be interpreted as practical experience then their relations will be flexible. Taking experience in these two senses can show a kind of relations between pragmatism and pure experience. According to pragmatism, true belief guides us in the course of our experience and that guidance is its pragmatic value.

If that experience refers to pure experience, then the connections between pragmatic reality and pure experience will be strong. And if it is said that the guidance given in the field of experience is actually practical experience, then even if the concept of experience is used, it will not strengthen their relations. The matter can be explained with the help of an example.

In our daily life we believe something when it is useful in our life. But if we can't verify a belief through our experience, we usually don't accept it. The belief that I acted on and got any results can be an experience of daily life. So in this case, the true belief is verified by the experience accepted by the common people. Here then, pure experience is not meant, but the experience that is analyzed after pure experience is meant. In this case, pragmatic truth theory acts on ordinary experience rather than pure experience. It can show that there is a "loose connection" between pragmatic reality and pure experience. Here pragmatic theory of truth does not act on pure experience but, act on ordinary experience. So in this sense relation between pragmatic reality and pure experience is not tight sense. Ordinary experience is nothing but analysed form of pure experience. Cooper therefore says that in pragmatism, when a true belief acts in experience, if it refers to ordinary experience, then it makes the relation between these two realities flexible.

But then Cooper tries to prove by argument that these two realities can be shown to be related in a tight sense. He argues in the following way. Pure experience is the primal material of pragmatic reality and the world. Based on this, the pragmatic reality is developed. The pragmatic reality will not develop if the material on which it depends and acts on is not available. That element is the unanalyzed neutral and is called pure experience. The question is why is the pragmatic reality based on the material called or accepted as unanalyzed? In response to this, Cooper cited the writings of James and says that when the process of experience begins, it should be considered as unanalyzed because then there is no subject-object in the experience. Subject-object are formed from the flow of experience through subsequent relationships. Consequently, when the subject- object is not present then existence of pragmatic realities cannot be admitted. Moreover, the answer to the question of how pragmatic reality is formed is that the way a subject accepts an experience according to his needs it arises as a being to him. As a result, the same experience may become physical for some or mental for others. This possibility can be admitted because of the nature of that first unanalyzed experience which is neutral. It is feasible because it is neutral and protomental, to use Cooper's terminology. So seeing pure experience as the basis of pragmatic reality strengthens the relationship between the two realities.

One can debate why pragmatic reality should be based on pure experience rather than something else. Traditional metaphysicians acknowledge that something else, such as "being," might serve as its basis. Cooper answers why nothing but pure experience can be the basis of pragmatic reality.

According to Cooper, pragmatic realities are based on “constructive activity”. Now the question will be what is the basis of this constructive activity? What is it based on? In response, Cooper claims that the basis of this constructive activity is something that cannot be found in experience, implying that the "basis" is experience-independent. To accept this position would contradict James's empiricism, as James himself repeatedly stated that his inclination was towards empiricism. So it cannot be said that this constructed activity is based on anything other than experience. It is therefore non-Jamesian. According to radical empiricism, what we experience is real, and what is real is experienced. This is the principle of radical empiricism, and this principle plays an important role in James's philosophy and his conception of reality as well. Therefore, if the construct is real or has to be, he has no chance to believe anything non-empirical. There is no opportunity to accept anything non-empirical as a ground, it is not possible because if it is accepted, it will contradict James's notion of real. Thus Cooper argues that it cannot be said, as traditional metaphysicians do, that there is Being, which is not itself experienced, that is the basis of empirical being.

Second, if it is accepted that there is no basis for human constructive activity, it develops randomly, then that too cannot be accepted in James's theory, Cooper thinks. To accept this would be illogical and would be guilty of vicious regress. In response to how this would be wrong, Cooper said it would be absurd because any activity itself is a construct. But it would be absurd to assume that there is no material with which this activity is constructed. So each phase of construction is a construction without having material out of which it is constructed. That is illogical. It's irrational because it's cyclic but it's vicious. Vicious because no where we will find the material. Actually I'm trying to get the element that the construction is made of but can't find it. Hence the fault here is vicious and regressive. But what he emphasizes in his discussion is that metaphysics can be discussed completely leaving aside the empirical level or the pragmatic reality. If we try to understand the pragmatic reality from the empirical level then the metaphysical reality has no importance there too. Moreover, to understand empirical reality one need not take into considerations pure experience. Furthermore, Cooper thinks that James speaks of pragmatic realities only at the empirical level. Based on this, Cooper claims that these two levels are separate and that these two realities can be mutually neutral at the empirical level.

### 3.5 Pragmatic reality and pure experience: Sami Pihlström's view.

Sami Pihlström's claims regarding the relationship between the two kinds of reality is different, and even completely an opposite interpretation from that of other scholars of James. We have generally noticed that most of James' commentators has tried to show or establish that pure experience is the basic metaphysical reality in James' philosophy and pragmatic reality depends on this reality. Many are reluctant to accept the pragmatic reality as a metaphysical reality. But if we read Sami Pihlström's explanation, we will see that he claims that the main metaphysical entity in James philosophy is the pragmatic reality; there is no reality more fundamental than pragmatism, on which pragmatic reality depends. That is, pragmatism does not depend on any other metaphysical reality greater than itself. Pragmatic reality is the fundamental reality. He also claims that no metaphysics would be possible without the support of pragmatism. Likewise he claims that no metaphysics can be more fundamental than metaphysics related to ethics. In his opinion, it must be acknowledged that there is morality involved in every metaphysics; otherwise metaphysics would neither be possible nor meaningful from human point of view. Let us try to show what Sami Pihlström has claimed and how he has argued in support of his point of view.

In the language of Sami Pihlström "... I insist that a truly Jamesian pragmatist must reject any such grounding of pragmatism in an allegedly more fundamental metaphysical theory. Any metaphysics, even James' preferred radical empiricism, must be a pragmatic construction...". [100] He also says "No metaphysics can be more basic than ethically engaged evaluation of the conceivable practical results, in terms of future experience, that the pragmatic method urges us to pursue. It is pragmatism itself, then that is required for any metaphysics, including radical empiricism, to be humanly possible and meaningful" [101]

Sami Pihlström says that if any metaphysics is to be made possible, it must be done from the perspective of pragmatism. If metaphysics is not practiced from the point of view of pragmatism, then metaphysics will not be possible, especially not possible humanly. He claims that to call something as real, it must be meaningful to us. If it is not meaningful, then there is no point in calling it real. If any metaphysics is to be meaningful, it must be connected to our lives, because something meaningful happens only when it is associated with human life. That is connected to our practical life. If it is not related to human life, then

<sup>100</sup> Pihlström, Sami (2007) p.8, para.25

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p.8, para.25



it is not humanly meaningful. In this sense, any metaphysics must be associated with practical life in order to be humanly meaningful. Pihlström claims that there is a close relation between any kind of practical activity and ethics. In case of any practical activity the question of ethics is relevant. Any kind of practical issue has an ethical dimension. Pihlström wants to say here that any human action in our practical life connected to ethical issue is logically possible. It is not like ethical issues cannot be raised in the work of this practical life. If there is a human action then we can raise the issue of ethics. Pihlström here accepts the term ethical in a wider sense and also claims that it is co-extensive with practice. Based on this Pihlström says that in this sense any metaphysics has a moral aspect. The meaningful metaphysical reality that is associated with practical life has an ethical part. So the moral context applies to all metaphysics in this way: if one ignores it, the metaphysics and the reality recognized there can never be valued from a human point of view. Hence it should be called worthless or meaningless. So what we can say from Pihlström's point of view is that when a metaphysician is engaged in metaphysical discussion to establish a truth and try to establish a theory that is an example of human activity. I am doing this activity with a goal or purpose and this purposive human activity has its own moral value. As a result, the goal of this action is not possible without ethics. So we notice that Sami Pihlström is trying to show that in order for something to be real, it has to have a moral perspective. If there is a moral perspective, then that real is meaningful. Morality is associated with the pragmatic real. For that reason, the real of pragmatism is meaningful. Because when a metaphysician is doing metaphysics, he has a goal of his action, and according to the goal or purpose he is doing metaphysics. His goal is to find the reality for some purpose. That is the pragmatic approach. So it is not possible to do that without the pragmatic issue. Any metaphysics will have a goal, a purpose, which will be met by trying to establish that metaphysics. And working towards this goal is the aim of pragmatist. In that sense, any metaphysics can be done by relying on the method of pragmatism. In that sense pragmatism is the basis of all other metaphysics. Pihlström tries to show that no metaphysics would be possible even James' radical empiricism without the application of pragmatism.

In this case, one may ask why there should be a theory of ethics in metaphysics. After all it may be held, ethics and metaphysics are two separate fields of philosophy, and then what is the meaning of the statement that if it is not ethical then reality will be meaningless? Why Pihlström says that reality must have a moral basis. How he associates reality with morality?

In answering this he first discusses what is meant by metaphysics or theory of reality or what their function is and he employs a more broad sense of morality when talking about how ethics relate to metaphysics. Sami Pihlström answers these questions in detail.

Sami Pihlström first goes on to answer what is meant by theory of reality or metaphysics or what its function is. He maintains that, the work of metaphysics or ontology is to investigate the transcendental condition of categorising activities. On the basis of these categorization activities, we get reality. It is the work of theory of reality to tell them and to judge them. Sami Pihlström says “It is the task of ontology, general metaphysics, to examine the transcendental conditions for the possibility of the various structures reality may receive through our categorizing activities.” [102] As a result, without doing these things, no theory of reality or metaphysics would be meaningful or even possible. In this case, Pihlström emphasizes the importance of human interest by following James and explains that there is a connection between morality and human action.

He says that there is an ethical aspect involved in each of these categorizing activities. Each of these categorizing activities is important because it is always associated with ethics. It has relation with morality. Now the question is what does Pihlström mean by moral and how did he show that ethics is involved with these categorizing activities?

At first Sami Pihlström says that when he uses the word ‘moral’, he takes it in a broad sense. In the broadest sense, moral means human practice. According to him, ethical values and problems are associated with all kinds of human practices. He says that categorizing activity means something by which I try to understand the world or the reality, the structure of the reality. When I do this, it depends on the person's interest and purpose. In this case, interest and purpose is not my interest and purpose, here the interest and purpose of Human being has been mentioned. There is a common way of looking at things in the whole human species. Human interest and purpose will be what will not only meet my needs, but also the needs of other people. The essence of the concept of morality is to transcend oneself. Morality is admitted when an action is not just about oneself, but when it is done with concern for others. According to Sami, any work can be in harmony with the needs of others. Any work has a moral dimension because this it can affect other human beings. This is a possibility inherent in any work I do. Moral relevance is always present because any work is capable of influencing the lives of others. For any action it is possible that the action may have some

<sup>102</sup> Pihlström, Sami (2007 ) p.4, para.12

impacts, some effects on another person's life. In that sense all actions are morally relevant, here morally relevant means they come under the preview of morality.

Therefore, whenever we do any work with human interests and purposes, it can serve and interest not only me but also the interests of others. The structure of interests and purposes too has a tendency to transcend me and to transcend individual being. As a result, all our actions have inherent potency to transcend the individual or become associated with the tendency to transcend the individual. It is moral in the broadest sense.

There is another reason why, according to Pihlström metaphysics can never be independent from ethics. The argument for this claim is –What is real to me determine what kind of life we should live or spend as human beings. The life we live as human beings are determined by our conception of reality. Depending on the things that I believe to be real, I lead my life. That notion of reality is relevant for my life, so it has some effects on the moral aspects of my life also. I accept certain realities, and on the basis of these realities, whether my life will be moral or not depends. Pihlström explains the subject with the help of examples. Suppose, I believe that other people are not real, and I am only real, then the way I lead the life will be a selfish life. If I am alone then solipsism will happen. Life will become less moral. But life will be different if other people are admitted to exist. From an ethical point of view, one can choose between these two options. Which of the two conflicting theories do I believe in, the one that will make my life more moral? Ethical values are being emphasized here. In this sense, morality is related to ethics. Therefore, it can be said that ethics is associated with metaphysics; ethics determines what I consider to be real. In this way Sami tries to show that metaphysics has a deep relationship with ethics. If you want to understand a reality, you have to understand the moral issues that are involved with that reality. If one does not understand the moral issues, one cannot understand the reality. Sami Pihlström says metaphysics might not be possible without a crucial connection to, or entanglement with, ethics. This is to say that we cannot arrive at any understanding of reality as we humans, being ourselves part of that reality, experience it, without paying due attention to the ways in which moral valuations and ethical commitments are constituents of that reality.

Sami Pihlström then tries to show why pragmatism is important in any metaphysics. Pihlström represents James as arguing that in every real metaphysical conflict, some practical issues are involved, even if not in direct way, but indirectly. Moreover, if no practical issues are involved, then the dispute is not really a dispute, but a futile discussion. Practical issues are always involved when we discuss a theory of pragmatism, because pragmatism, when it acknowledges the existence of an object or reality, depends on what that object or reality serves in our practical life. In this case the result or outcome makes metaphysics possible from James' point of view. In Pihlström's language "James famously argued that in every genuine metaphysical dispute, some practical issue is, however remotely, involved. If there is no such issue involved, then the dispute is empty. [103]

Pihlström claims that ethics is involved in the discussion of pragmatism because when we determine what the world is like or what the world might be like through practical research, it depends on our ethically structured practices. As a result, we see that ethics is always involved when we discuss pragmatism. Pihlström then goes on to say that the kind of results that practical experts base their decisions on should be ethical. Sami Pihlström illustrates where and how the ethical issue is related to in each of the metaphysical issues in James' writings. And we choose and determine metaphysical issues through ethical issues, as claimed by James are discussed by Sami Pihlström in the following examples.

Firstly, the discussion of the substance as a metaphysical entity is important. All the traditional philosophers have discussed substance in different ways. Substance is generally understood to be the substratum of quality, without which there can be no quality. It is thought that substance and its quality are different. When substance is discussed in pragmatism then there is no mention of any substance which is independent of quality. The substance is understood or known by associate it with quality. Pihlström explains that James does not separate substance from quality because, if the substance is seen as connected to the quality, it can produce good or bad consequences in our lives, whereas it cannot otherwise. If the qualities are not there, then the abstract product will not be able to have any effect in our life. Then the question will be, why instead of saying that the qualities are real, philosophers hold substance as real. James may support that the substance is the aggregate of the qualities and there is nothing wrong in saying that, as said by Berkeley. James will accept this possibility. That means substance is that which is always related to the quality.

<sup>103</sup> Pihlström, Sami (2009) p.91

It is through these qualities that the substance can be good or bad in our life. These consequences cannot be produced if substance be taken as something abstract like an idea.

Secondly, every substance has an ethical significance. We can classify the substance as material or spiritual. What is the nature of ultimate reality - material or spiritual? According to spiritualism, spirit, or consciousness, is real. On the other hand, according to materialism, matter is real. Now the question may arise: which of these two theories is correct? Acknowledging these two realities will have different consequences. This debate of materialism or spiritualism is a metaphysical problem. The question that is important when pragmatism with its method tries to understand this problem or when method of pragmatism is applied to this debate, is whether the world is governed by a higher or lower reality? If I say that the world is governed by a higher element then how will it guide my future experience and if it is guided by a lower element then how will it guide my experience? What kind of practical difference will they bring to our lives if one of them is accepted? That practical difference will tell their pragmatic importance. If it doesn't make a difference, then this debate is practically meaningless. According to materialism, everything in the world runs mechanically, and every event in the world is controlled by the natural law. In this case, the morality of the person is also being controlled. Spiritualism, on the other hand, says that there is a higher principle whose purpose governs everything and that there is scope for morality. Sami Pihlström claims that if one of these two theories can bring any result in our future experience, then it is important from practical point of view. In pragmatic sense, that result is full of ethical values. As a result, it is seen that if we call substance as material its ethical significance will be different in our experience than if we call the substance as spiritual. In Pihlström's language "for James, accordingly, ethics seems to function as a ground for evaluating rival metaphysical hypotheses and determining their pragmatic core meaning."<sup>[104]</sup>

Thirdly, there is a debate among philosophers about how many fundamental realities there are. Some philosophers who say reality is one are called monists. Some philosophers say that reality is two; they are called dualist. The question now is whether ultimate reality is one or two. Monism and Dualism thus presents another metaphysical problem in philosophy. Reflection reacting to the discussions by monism and dualism, pragmatist may say that one of the reasons why monism is not an accepted theory is that if we accept monism, our quality of ethical life will be ruined.

<sup>104</sup> Pihlström, Sami (2009) p.92

Moreover, if we accept monism, then it cannot be said that an agent has ethical responsibility because that absolute substance will become responsible. On the other hand if dualism is accepted then also there will be problem to explain ethical life. In the case of dualism there will be problem to show relation between two substances. Thus, as in Descarte's theory the relationship between body and mind cannot be adequately shown. Thus, it is not possible to explain the action with which notion of ethics is involved. Any ethical action has to be voluntary but the relation between volition and physical change remains unexplained in dualism. So the theory of dualism will create problems in admitting ethical actions. James is a pluralist; he admits anything to be real if it has any practical consequence. Accordingly the possibility of ethical life would be much greater explain if plurality of reals is admitted in Jamesian way. Following Pihlström it can be said here that the moment a real becomes pragmatically significant moral values will emerge in it. And it shows, Pihlström will claim, if a problem of metaphysics has to be meaningful from a pragmatic point of view, then it can be from a mental point of view too. Our quality of ethical life is much better if we accept the plurality of substance. So which of these two theories is acceptable or which is not is determined by how they affect our lives. If they cannot make that impact, it's pragmatically meaningless. The moment it becomes pragmatically significant, moral value will emerge in it. As a result, if this problem of metaphysics has to be meaningful from a pragmatic point of view, then it can be from a moral point of view too.

Fourthly another metaphysical issue is freedom of will and determinism. If you accept the freedom of the will, then we cannot accept determinism at the same time. Similarly, if we accept determinism, we cannot accept freedom of will at the same time. Accepting one does not imply accepting the other because the claims of these two theories appear to be contradictory. According to determinism, all the events of the world are controlled by natural laws. On the other hand, according to the freedom of the will in this world, we as human beings have freedom. So far, nothing is completely determined. So the problem of free will and determinism is how to keep both together. The problem of freedom of will is related to the human point of view. If the pragmatic importance of freedom of will is to be recognized, then it can be considered as future oriented. Because if freedom of will is accepted then we can see novelty in the world, where a human being can bring change into the world according to his needs but if everything is already controlled then we cannot explain the novelty in the

world. The ability of human beings to act according to their own needs can be possible if we accept freedom of the will. When that person acts according to his own needs, then morality will automatically be added to as Pihlström has shown above. Therefore, it can be said that when a metaphysical problem is explained in the context of pragmatism, it is associated with ethics: this is the position Pihlström argues for.

Keeping conformity with the above claims Pihlström maintains that in James' philosophy only pragmatic reality can be considered to be reality worth the name. He reiterates that seems James would emphasize on the practical dimension of our actions and needs in the matter of categorization. James would be inclined to accept pragmatic reality as the one and fundamental reality. In Pihlström's language " ...the transcendental role that practices of various kinds play in enabling our categorizations of reality." [105] He further says "it is only within purposive human practices that reality is, for us, in a way or another. It is only within such practices that objects (or entities falling under any ontological categories) can be identified and reidentified." [106]

It is important to note here that Pihlström not only considers pragmatic reality to be the only reality but he has even proceeded to claim that the notion of pure experience as a real cannot be accepted consistently with various claims of pragmatism and pragmatic reality. To put in Pihlström's words " I am more interested in the picture of metaphysics that can be based on his pragmatism than on his own metaphysical beliefs. I am not even convinced that radical empiricism, claiming that reality ultimately consists of " pure experience", is consistent with pragmatism, which rejects all such ultimate accounts of the fundamental constituents of the world." [107] So Pihlström would be inclined to deny any relation between pure experience and pragmatic real.

<sup>105</sup> Pihlström, Sami (2007) p.4

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p.2

### **3.6. Pragmatic reality and pure experience: A view of Richard Gale**

In his interpretation of James's theory of reality, Richard Gale claims that James valued pragmatic reality over pure experience in discussions of metaphysics. This pragmatic reality is more important since James uses it in his philosophy more frequently and discusses how different problems can be solved using it. Moreover, pragmatism acts as a mediator between theories of realities of various kinds and is consistent with the kind of ontology that James wants. When he discusses James' notion of reality, he makes various assertions and attempts to support them with arguments, which we will discuss below. Gale claims that the fundamental reality in James's philosophy is pragmatic reality, he adds that James subscribes to the doctrine of ontological relativism. Gale contends that there is no logical connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism. But pragmatism helps radical empiricism to prevail. Gale also claims that radical empiricism and pure experience too are logically independent, neither pure experience nor radical empiricism requires the other. Pure experience is not entailed by the three tenets of radical empiricism, nor are these three tenets derived from pure experience. Furthermore, Gale contends that, the principle of pure experience applies only to the sensible world. James recognised seven worlds; but, only intra-world unification is possible through pure experience. Regarding the relationship between pure experience and pragmatic reality Gale doesn't make any specific claims. But because our research focuses on their interrelation, the relationship between these two realities is crucial to us. Gale does not state the nature of their relationship explicitly, but his explanation implies what kind of relations they have—if any at all. He says that Pure experience is applicable only to a sensible world. Pure experience does not explain the other worlds which we mentioned in the first chapter. Pure experience may be needed to explain this sensible world. Pure experience is not applicable to other worlds. So the theory of pure experience is not wider than pragmatism, and pragmatic reality is wider than pure experience; in this sense, pragmatic reality is more fundamental than pure experience. Further Gale claims that the doctrine of pure experience was not significant to James because the latter abandoned it towards the end of his career. On the basis of this, we might claim that pragmatic reality and pure experience are related in a narrow sense.

We will now discuss Gale's assertions on pragmatic realities and why he considers the theory of pragmatic reality as a theory of ontological relativism. Gale presents James's view by saying that pragmatic reality is what a person freely selects based on his interests. Gale asserts



that James accepted a plurality of worlds, which we mentioned in the first chapter, based on this notion of reality.

Gale says in the chapter "The Perception of Reality" in his book *The Principles of Psychology*, James acknowledges the existence of seven worlds, each of which has reality. There are numerous objects in relation to the worlds which we select based on our requirements. Gale claims that because different people's interests differ, realities can differ as well. Even the same subject's interests can change over time, meaning that what he formerly believed to be real may no longer be real at a later time. For instance, a pen may be real to a student but may not be real to someone who is illiterate. Again, the pen will be real to a student if it meets his needs; if there is no ink, it may not be real to that student. Therefore, the same thing might not be recognized as reality by several individuals or even by the same individual at various times. As a result, it can be claimed that each person's experience of reality is unique and relative. Gale refers to James' perspective on reality as ontological relativism. In his words "James's ontological relativism was central to his promethean philosophy, for it held that what is real (actual, existent) is relative to the passing interests of an agent. For each of James's many selves there is a world toward which its distinctive desires and interests are directed. As a person's interests change so will the world that is taken to be actual. [108]"

Gale reminds us, following James, that these worlds have existence. Each of these worlds is a self-contained unity. Each of these worlds might have its own ontology, conceptual framework, underlying assumptions, and doxastic principles. An interest-based person can now select which of these worlds best suits his needs. Among these worlds, those that will fulfil the subject's needs will be accepted by the subject as real.

Gale claims that pragmatism is significant and that it is a more widely accepted notion because of its wider scope in James' philosophy. According to Gale, the task of a philosopher is to establish unification between the sub-worlds of this Universe. James did not, however, specifically say how it was possible. Gale tries to answer it and shows that if the primacy of pragmatic reality is admitted then this unification is possible. Pragmatism is more important, according to Gale, because pure experience cannot unify these sub-worlds, but pragmatism can make an indirect unification of these sub-worlds through the mediation of the subject. The existence of these worlds and their interactions can therefore be explained more effectively by pragmatism than by pure experience. Pragmatic ontology is more significant in this regard. Inter-world unification is possible through interest-based selection by a subject. So many worlds can be mediated indirectly through the subject. For instance, it is possible to reconcile the moral and scientific worlds. While the scientific world is real to the scientifically minded, the ethical world is real to the ethically minded, so the debate about which world is more important will no longer exist. Therefore, despite being referred to as indirect unification, pragmatic reality can bring different worlds together. This makes the existence of pragmatic reality more significant.

Gale continues by outlining James' philosophy of "pure experience." Gale claims that James' most significant contribution to technical philosophy is pure experience. Why did James introduce the doctrine of pure experience? What is the need for or importance of this doctrine? Gale says that with the doctrine of pure experience, James attempted reconciliation between conflicting points of view. The ontological dualism of the mental and physical, the epistemological dualism of subject and object, idealism and materialism, and the inner-outer dualism can all be reconciled by the notion of pure experience. Each individual is composed of neutral stuff or pure experience that is potentially mental or physical. Gale points out that "No event is mental or physical simpliciter, but is so only when related to earlier and later events in a certain manner". [109] Gale wants to say that whatever is given in experience is neither mental nor physical. When an event is related to another event in certain specific manner, we call pure experience either mental or physical. As a result, the ontological dualism of mental and physical no longer exists, and the philosophical debates that arise as a result of dualism ceases to exist.

<sup>109</sup> Gale, Richard (2005) p.142

Moreover, the history of philosophy shows that subject and object are seen as two discontinuous entities. Philosophers face a difficult challenge in figuring out how a subject interacts with an object that has distinct characters. The gap between them can be filled, nevertheless, if the two are constructed from the same ontological material, namely pure experience. Gale has made an effort to show that the doctrine of pure experience achieves reconciliation among various dualisms that are related to this sensible world. For instance, subject-object, inner-outer, subjective-objective, etc.

Gale discusses some of its drawbacks when describing the doctrine of pure experience. According to Gale, the sensible world is the only place where pure experience is admissible. But as we've already seen, James acknowledges in his philosophy the reality the existence of seven worlds. According to him, there are many possible worlds in which the elements of existence are either exclusively mental or exclusively physical; there is no possibility of them being both. Therefore, since pure experience does not apply to these worlds, it cannot be called a metaphysical reality or the foundation of anything.

Moreover, Gale claims that all the things that can be reconciled with the theory of pure experience can also be explained with the theory of pragmatism. In his words "This is yet another instance of James's promethean humanism that the world is what we make it. Just as we determine by our interest-based acts of attending which world is the actual world, we determine by these acts whether a sensible particular is mental or physical." [110] In other words, what is claimed in the theory of pure experience may also be presented from a pragmatic point of view. Gale further argues that James abandoned the theory of pure experience after 1905. Therefore, it may be claimed that it is not accepted by James as metaphysical reality in the long run.

Gale also notes that James admits in his ontology the existence of many things that are non-phenomenal, that do not appear in place and time, that do not have temporal or spatial location. For instance, abstract world contents like quantities and relations, and abstract objects; content from the supernatural world like completely spiritual people; etc. But if we define pure experience as the essence, it cannot encompass all the things in these non-phenomenal world, according to Gale. He claims that pure experience only encompasses things in the sensible world that have physical and temporal places. Gale contends that pure experience can therefore be viewed in a limited way as a metaphysical object that exclusively pertains to this sensible world. Moreover, Gale also says that there are different types of dualism in the sensible world, such as subject-object, idealism, materialism, and mental-physical dualism, and the problems centering them can be reconciled by applying the concept of pure experience. Thus only intra-world unification can be done by pure experience, but not the inter-world one. Here, inter-world unification means the relationship between the seven worlds that James recognized. The relationship between the sensible world and the other six worlds cannot be explained by the theory of pure experience. According to Gale, pure experience can be recognised as the basis of the sensible world. Therefore, due to its limitations, pure experience cannot be referred to as basic in the metaphysical sense.

We will now talk about what Gale thinks about the connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism as well as the connection between radical empiricism and pure experience. In his discussion of the relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism, James makes two seemingly contradictory comments. James made two remarks about the relationship between these two theories, saying that 'there is no logical relationship between them'. In his later writing, James says that, 'pragmatism helps to prevail radical empiricism'. Now there is a debate among James researchers regarding what James actually meant.

Do they have a relationship or not, if they have one, what kind of relationship do they have? Or are these two remarks mutually inconsistent or can they be kept together? In this context, Gale presents some of his own conclusions about this relations and claims that both of James's remarks are correct. Now we will enter the discussion following Gale. Gale first discussed James's first remark and expressed his own opinion about this remark. According to the first remark there is no logical connection between pragmatism and radical empiricism. Regarding the relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism, Gale presents some of the commentator's arguments before arguing for his claim, saying that there are many James researchers who think that there is a relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism. They say radical empiricism entails pragmatism but not vice versa. The argument in favour of their opinion is that radical empiricism has a postulate that is postulate of empiricism. This postulate is "...the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience." [111] Scholars have considered this postulate to be identical with the pragmatic theory of meaning. Gale says that in James's theory it is assumed that meaning gives truth conditions. So pragmatic theory of meaning entails pragmatic theory of truth and the conjunction of these two is pragmatism. Gale says "since one of the conjuncts in radical empiricism, its postulate of empiricism, entails pragmatism." [112] From the above statement, it is deduced that radical empiricism entails pragmatism. On the basis of this argument, some of James' researchers think that there is a relationship between these two.

Gale will attempt to counter this claim and demonstrate that there is no relationship between the two through his counter argument. We will have that discussion, but first we will talk about the background information that is necessary to comprehend this topic. In order to understand Gale's argument that there is no relationship between these two doctrines, one must first understand how Gale understood empiricism. Gale distinguishes between two sorts of empiricism. The first is pragmatic empiricism, also known as pragmatic theory of meaning or *future-oriented operationalistic empiricism*, while the second is British empiricism, also known as *content empiricism*. Explaining pragmatic empiricism Gale says it is the theory "...according to which the whole meaning of an idea is a set of conditionalized predictions stating what experiences would be had in the future upon performing certain actions"[113]

<sup>111</sup> Gale, Richard (2005) p.114

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p.115

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p.113

On the other hand, content empiricism is described as— “... that finds the meaning of an idea in terms of the sensory or experiential contents that its analysis comprises, regardless of whether they are future or not”.<sup>[114]</sup> So here Gale distinguishes between these two types of empiricism. While explaining this Gale says that many commentators misunderstood that radical empiricism includes pragmatism but not vice-versa. That means pragmatism can be derived from radical empiricism but radical empiricism is not derivable from pragmatism. According to Gale, James’ writing is somewhat responsible for the mistakes made by the commentators. The reason behind their wrong explanation is that they presuppose that empiricism of radical empiricism is identical with James’ operationalist theory of meaning. Since theory of truth is derived from operationalist theory of meaning and theory of meaning is derived from radical empiricism thus it can be said that theory of truth is derived from radical empiricism. As pragmatism is a theory related to both meaning and truth therefore it can be said that pragmatism is derived from radical empiricism.

Gale feels that commentators overlooked that empiricism can be of various types. In pragmatism operationalist theory of meaning is a type of empiricism. But empiricism that is accepted by traditional philosophers does not include operationalist theory of meaning. The presuppositions of radical empiricism include traditional empiricism, which is termed ‘content empiricism’ by Gale, yet it does not include pragmatic empiricism. Since content empiricism and pragmatic empiricism are two different types of empiricism thus it cannot be said that being able to include one type of empiricism implies that all other types of empiricisms are included too. So Gale's conclusion is that pragmatism is not a necessary component of radical empiricism. James' first remark ended up being true as a result.

Gale then discusses the second *remark*, which argues that pragmatism helps to prevail radical empiricism. Gale claims that James's second remark is also correct. To support this claims Gale contends that pragmatism eliminates some counter-examples to radical empiricism's empirical postulate. Some of radical empiricism's major assertions might be refuted if counter-examples are not removed. Pragmatism helps to eliminate counter examples, and in doing so, undermines the acceptability of radical empiricism. Gale’s language “...it eliminates certain prominent counter-examples to the empirical postulate of the latter, consisting in the truth, correspondence, and reference relations.” <sup>[115]</sup> If we try to understand this point with the help of an example, then its main point will stand: suppose an idea is true if it corresponds to experience or reality. But if there are ideas or concepts that are

<sup>114</sup> Gale, Richard (2005) p.113

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p.115

not found in experience, then how can we understand the truth? This part cannot be explained by the postulates of radical empiricism because we cannot experience those ideas or concepts. But if we accept the theory of pragmatism, we will see that in this case also pragmatism can explain it with the help of the future experience. If those concepts have an impact on our life then they can be called true.

Moreover, James admits the existence of metaphysical realities such as God, the self, and free will which cannot be analysed with empirical content. These items cannot be explained by accepting the postulates of radical empiricism, but they can be explained in terms of pragmatism. All these concepts have an explanatory role in our experience, which shows that there is no difficulty in accepting their existence in James's philosophy. Thus, even if radical empiricism is not entailed by pragmatism it helps to prevail radical empiricism. With the above argument, Gale states that both of James's remarks about the relationship between radical empiricism and pragmatism are correct.

When interpreting James's philosophy, many James scholars such as R.B.Perry and David Lamberth recognise a deep connection between pure experience and radical empiricism. All these researchers explain pure experience as part of radical empiricism. In James's theory, pure experience is explained as the metaphysical reality. But Gale takes a different view in this context. According to him, there is no logical relation between pure experience and radical empiricism; one does not follow from the other. Gale says that from the postulate of radical empiricism that, "only empirically definable entities are to be discussable in philosophy" [116] the notion of pure experience does not follow, and radical empiricism does not follow from pure experience either.

According to the postulates of radical empiricism, all the entities that can be defined empirically are the subject of philosophical discussion, but that does not mean that all empirical truths that are discovered following this postulate are philosophically significant, according to Gale. Humans require water to survive, which is an example of empirical truth obtained through this postulate, but this truth is not important for philosophical discussion. Similarly, pure experience can be consistent with the postulate of radical empiricism because pure experience is presented to us as a confused state; in this sense, this state is a part of experience. In this sense, pure experience gains some support from radical empiricism. But Gale claims that pure experience is not important for philosophical discussion; these two doctrines are logically independent in this sense.

<sup>116</sup> Gale, Richard (2005) p.142

What is the connection between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality is the topic of our investigation. Gale does not directly address this issue, but we may infer from his writings that he does not acknowledge metaphysical reality in addition to pragmatic reality since for him, pragmatic reality is the primary reality, and that includes metaphysical reality. As a result, there is no connection between pure experience and pragmatic reality. Gale came to this conclusion because he did not accept the logical relation between pure experience and radical empiricism; they are interpreted as independent, and he has even said that James abandoned the concept of pure experience. Gale would claim that the concept that can be excluded from James' theory and can be explained as a narrow concept cannot be called a metaphysical reality.

This chapter we have discussed various interpretations of the relation between two realities. In the next chapter we will be discussing and critically evaluate these interpretation.



## CHAPTER 4: A critical evaluation of the interpretations of Jamesian view of the real

In the previous chapter we have discussed thoroughly various views of the James' scholars on the nature and type of relationship between pragmatic reality and pure experience. In this chapter, we will critically evaluate these different interpretations of James' view of the real.

### 4.1 Critical exposition of Charlene Haddock Seigfried's view

Seigfried claims that there is no relation between pragmatic reality and metaphysical reality. Pragmatism is an epistemological doctrine with no metaphysical component. Seigfried maintains in her earlier phase that pure experience is a metaphysical reality. So there is no relationship between these two realities in the metaphysical sense. She also claims that just having any belief or assumption about the world does not make the belief or the assumption metaphysical. In her opinion in order to be a belief or a theory must have some characteristics; a theory which does not have these characteristics will not be metaphysical. Pragmatism also has certain beliefs and assumptions about the world, but based on these it cannot be claimed that there is metaphysical discussion in pragmatism. She claims in her latter phase that while there is metaphysics within radical empiricism, it is not metaphysics in the traditional sense, but rather *radically empiricist hermeneutics*. Eugene Fontinell and Sandra Rosenthal claim and argue for their view that pragmatism contains metaphysics. But Seigfried tries to refute their view by showing that there is no metaphysics in the real sense in pragmatism but rather epistemology.

The gist of Seigfried's argument is that since traditional metaphysics is denied and refuted in pragmatism, it can be said that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. It is basically a discussion of theory of knowledge. Here the question may arise, what is the meaning of the statement "pragmatism denies metaphysics"? Do pragmatists say that traditional metaphysics is impossible or do they say that traditional metaphysics is inadequate? Pragmatism does not say that traditional metaphysics is not possible. James only claims that traditional metaphysics is not accurate because taking metaphysics in this sense would leave many things out of metaphysics which also have metaphysical value.

For example, if it is said that metaphysics means metaphysics in the traditional sense, then in the ontology of that metaphysics we can no longer call the changing, uncertain things of the world realities. But these are also the characteristics of reality in pragmatic metaphysics. Thus, it can be said that pragmatism does not consider traditional metaphysics impossible but rather limited and inadequate. In Pragmatism the possibility of such metaphysics that is distinct from traditional metaphysics is admitted. Consequently, Seigfried's statement that pragmatism is only epistemology, and there is no metaphysics, is not acceptable.

Seigfried says in another argument that because of the emphasis on immediate experience, pragmatism lacks the basic concepts of metaphysical theory such as metaphysical grounding, speculation and basis. So based on this it can be said that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism. But we do not find Seigfried arguments tenable. For James immediate experience is pure experience. James did not acknowledge this experience in the ordinary sense. James recognised it as the stuff of all things. Seigfried himself describes pure experience as hypothetical state. Consequently, there is metaphysical grounding in pragmatism. Also it can easily be shown that there is metaphysical speculation in pragmatism if we keep in mind that James discusses the question of the forms and constituents of real in *Pluralistic Universe* and *pragmatism*. While discussing the constituent of reality James has pointed out that a subject acts on pure experience to construct pragmatic reality though the whole of the construction does not depend on the subject. Thus James indicates that the basis of pragmatism is the metaphysical stuff. As a result, it can be said that pragmatism is not only epistemological but also metaphysical.

A different argument in this context is that when Seigfried says that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism, she is assuming only one sense of metaphysics, but the pragmatists did not call it the only metaphysics. If the question is whether traditional metaphysics is applied in pragmatism, then the answer is no. Pragmatism does not have traditional metaphysics. Pragmatists try to show that metaphysics can be done in an alternative sense other than the traditional sense. By metaphysics Seigfried understood only traditional metaphysics. But if we read the history of metaphysics we find that other metaphysics are possible and accepted. As in process metaphysics, the way in which realities, elements of realities, types of realities are recognized is fundamentally different from traditional metaphysics. But it is a significant

metaphysical doctrine in the world of metaphysics. Moreover, James himself wanted to make a metaphysics that would be inclusive, which would be wider than the range of other metaphysics. As a result, James himself discussed metaphysics in his discussed reality. But if we accept Seigfried's view, it will not be consistent with James's view. So it can be said that Seigfried's view is not acceptable.

Seigfried has claim that neither pragmatism nor radical empiricism can be admitted to contain anything metaphysical. She tried to establish this claim with reference to the criterion which she sets for admitting any discourse to have metaphysics or to have a metaphysical content. She talked about the features like metaphysical ground and metaphysical speculation as identifying marks of metaphysics. She argued that neither pragmatism nor radical empiricism satisfies this criterion. But Seigfried's argument is unacceptable because both the theories that James presents can be shown to satisfy Seigfried's criterion itself. Let us begin with the theory of radical empiricism. Here James admits pure experience and clearly claims it to be 'foundation' of all things. He admits it as the basic stuff of the world from which everything is created. And thus it is the metaphysical ground of everything.

If the criterion that Seigfried talked about is present then any inquiry can be called metaphysical but they cannot be said to be present in pure experience. Just as pure experience can be said to be the foundation of all things, likewise it can be said that James speculates and admits it. Because James himself admits that the basic stuff of this world or any world is pure experience based on which everything is created, in this sense it can be called metaphysical ground of everything, and pure experience is a hypothesis according to Seigfried in that sense it can also be called speculation. Hence pure experience can be said to have a metaphysical reality. Moreover if pure experience is taken as hypothesis, as Seigfried herself admits, then it can clearly be called a metaphysical speculation.

Seigfried says that to be metaphysical the system must be formal. In this sense also we can call radical empiricism a metaphysical system. For here everything is logically connected within pure experience, upon which elements of pragmatic reality act to create other elements of same reality. Moreover the elements of pragmatic reality themselves are elements of pure experience and pragmatic reality themselves are elements of pure experience. Consequently, the principle of pure experience contained in radical empiricism cannot be said to be non-metaphysical.

Seigfried also claims that any metaphysics should be systematic: in a metaphysical enquiry there should be certain principles from which all elements of the ontology of that theory would be deducible. Now if we look to pragmatism then we find that it does not include anything as real which is not deduced from the pragmatic principles. In pragmatic ontology only those elements are admitted which have practical effects on our thought or action. So Seigfried's charge that pragmatism is not systematic and therefore not metaphysical does not stand scrutiny.

Seigfried has argued that since pure experience is held to be something immediately given experience it cannot be fundamental element of reality: being an object of immediate experience it can at best explain the sensible world and nothing else. But James himself has admitted the reality of other worlds. So Seigfried observe that pure experience is only limit concept in the sense that its scope is limited to the explanation of the sensible world. However our submission on this point is that Seigfried's observation is an outcome of a limited understanding of the notion of pure experience. It is true that James admits pure experience to be immediately given, but this givenness does not exhaust the real nature of pure experience. According to James pure experience is the ultimate stuff of everything- everything originates from pure experience. The scope of pure experience is wide one. Through various relations among different streams of this experience many objects including the non-phenomenal one can be created. James never limits the scope of pure experience to sensible experience alone.

If we look closely into Seigfried's discussion of the markers of traditional metaphysics it would become clear that she mostly emphasized the metaphysics of the intellectual philosophers. The metaphysics of the empiricist philosophers do not always satisfy the criterion of metaphysics specified by Seigfried. The metaphysical system of an empiricist is found to be flexible and inclusive as regards its structure and content respectively. Since James was more inclined towards empiricism he would admit many aspects of the real which cannot be incorporated in a rationalist requirement of the real. He would like to claim that since Seigfried has taken a very narrow sense of metaphysics, she was led to think that pragmatism or even James' Philosophy in general does not have any metaphysics. Thus we cannot but differ from Seigfried.

Another argument given by Seigfried to show that pragmatism does not have any metaphysics in traditional sense is that James himself has refuted various aspects of traditional metaphysics. This argument is however, indefensible because it is based on a conclusion between the rejection of various views notion of traditional metaphysics and rejection of traditional metaphysics in general. James never says traditional metaphysics is not possible at all. If by traditional metaphysics we understand a search for the foundational truth of everything then definitely James has offered metaphysics in the traditional sense. Though the nature of the ultimate stuff which James admits is different from the stuff admitted by most of the traditional metaphysical theories in the introduction of the present thesis we have given various evidences to show why it cannot be doubted that James has discussed many of the issue of traditional metaphysics.

#### **4.2. Ellen Kappy Suckiel on James: a critical exposition**

Ellen Kappy Suckiel claims that James used the concept of reality in different senses at different times in his philosophy. She points out that James' concept of reality can be divided into two broad senses. Those two types of reality are metaphysical and pragmatic reality. These two realities are distinct. But Suckiel also asserts that although these two realities are distinct and pragmatic reality is dependent on metaphysical reality. Pragmatic reality is not independently real; it is real in terms of metaphysical reality. In this sense metaphysical reality is basic and pragmatic reality is not basic but secondary. There is a relationship of dependency between these two types of realities. Pragmatic reality is dependent on metaphysical reality. Metaphysical reality is more real in this sense. In showing the relationship between these two types of realities, Suckiel claims that in a sense they can be shown to have a consistent relationship. This point has been discussed in Chapter-3, Section- But Suckiel argues that there is an inconsistency in James's philosophy. She claims that if we accept the principle of experience as real is what is known to be, then the relationship between these two types of realities appears to be incoherent. If this description of reality is accepted then pure experience can no longer be called real, and only pragmatic reality can be said to exist. But James considers pure experience to be metaphysically real in his philosophy. As a result, an inconsistency will arise here. And Suckiel also asserts that if this definition is admitted, there can be no other relation between the two kinds of reality. Moreover, Suckiel also claims that there is no ontological existence of the category of subject-object or of knower-known; they are nothing more than functions.

Suckiel asserts that if a distinction can be made between a common sense point of view and a metaphysical point of view, then pragmatic reality and pure experience can be distinguished, and even the nature of these two realities can be better understood. Suckiel says that the reality obtained from the common sense view is only pragmatic reality. In this case, Suckiel is assuming only the physical world as a pragmatic reality. This claim of Suckiel is questionable. For James, the pragmatic world is much wider. The worlds that James admits within pragmatic reality are not all common-sense worlds. For example the objects of abstract worlds are also pragmatically real. So the common sense view of the physical world is only a part of the pragmatic world. As a result the identification of the sensible world with the

pragmatic reality is not acceptable and thus the claim that differentiating between the common sense view point and metaphysical view point one can differentiate between pragmatic reality and pure experience is not acceptable.

The questions that are discussed in the discussion of pragmatic reality show that in the life and goals of an individual, how an object is connected to one's life will determine whether it will be real. But the questions that are discussed in the case of metaphysical realities have nothing to do with the life of the individual, so the nature of the two questions proves that the two realities are different. However, Suckiel's argument may give the impression that these two realities are *in fact* distinct. But this opinion is not acceptable because some questions may be different during the discussion of two realities, but it cannot be said that the realities are also different. Since, one can raise question regarding metaphysical reality while discussing pragmatic reality, it cannot be said that the questions must be entirely different in all cases. For example, 'Is what I call "real," truly real?' 'Is reality completely made by me, or does it have elements that are not made by me?' One can ask these questions in a discussion of pragmatic realities, but these are also metaphysical questions. Therefore, because some questions about two realities can be different it does not necessarily follow that the two are *in fact* entitatively different.

Suckiel discusses pragmatism and says that there are two aspects of pragmatic reality. On the one hand, there is the purpose-oriented subject, and on the other hand, there is the flow of experience. One can conclude from her statement that pragmatic experience is fundamental, consisting of pure experience, and that pragmatic reality is more real in this sense. But Suckiel has tried to argue that pragmatic reality is secondary or non-basic because there is a flow of experience on the basis of which the subject experiences something and, pragmatic reality thus depends on pure experience. Therefore pure experience, Suckiel claim, is primary and in that sense pure experience is more real. From these two comments of Suckiel, we can observe that her speaking style is inconsistent. In short she seems to claim that pragmatic reality is non-basic, and pragmatic reality, on the other hand, includes pure experience as an aspect, so in this sense, pragmatic reality is basic. These two cannot be accepted simultaneously; if accepted, there will be inconsistency. Here Suckiel may have meant that because there is a flow of experience, a subject can construct reality according to his needs. As a result, Suckiel wants to imply that since pragmatism is dependent on pure experience, it is secondary and pure experience is primary. Therefore, there is consistency in Suckiel's explanation.

Even if Suckiel's point of view is accepted as consistent, her final claim will be rejected because James provided different definitions for discussing reality which do not go with Suckiel's view. If we review those definitions, we will see that some of them apply only to pragmatic reality, while others are equally applicable to both realities. Among the definitions given by James there are some which do not make it possible to show the relationship between these two realities, and even those definitions which show their relation do not indicate that one reality is basic and the other is non-basic. Moreover if we try to understand James's philosophy, we see that he recognises both realities as equally important. He has given some definitions of reality, which, if accepted, allow us to say neither is basic but both are equally real. That definition does not imply that pure experience is the only metaphysical reality. Suckiel herself acknowledges this in her discussion of pragmatic reality when she says that one of the two aspects of pragmatic reality is pure experience. Suckiel assumes that there is no general definition of reality in James's philosophy that applies to two realities. But it can be countered by referring to some definitions of reality given by James that apply to both realities. In the second volume of his book *The Principles of Psychology*, James states that what is free of contradiction is real. According to this definition, we can accept pragmatic reality, and we can also accept pure experience as real.

The claim that pure experience is basic because without it pragmatic reality would not have arisen is untenable. It is precisely by taking the flow of experience as material that pragmatic realities are formed, but pure experience cannot be called meaningful if there is no pragmatic reality. Pragmatic realities are also of equal importance in this sense. Without pragmatic reality, pure experience would remain only an unanalyzed state. But pure experience has yet another aspect where James takes it to be store house of the possibility of all creations. For the actualization of these possibilities what is required is Pragmatic reality. So we can say without being basic that both are equally important to build and make each other meaningful. Moreover, since pragmatic reality is part of pure experience, both are of equal importance.

Suckiel denied the ontological existence of these categories of subject-object, knower-known. If these are denied then the ontological existence of the pragmatic reality will be fragmented. For if pure experience is the basic material, pragmatic reality is created out of it. These categories are created only when this pragmatic reality is created. Therefore, if these



categories do not exist, the ontological existence of pragmatic reality is refuted. But we know that Suckiel admits the existence of pragmatic reality and even places it within the realm of metaphysics. Now, if we see it as the results of pure experience, we can see that they also have an ontological existence. If it does not exist ontologically, then relations cannot be said to exist ontologically. If relations do not exist ontologically, many important features of pure experience cannot be retained. James himself would admit the existence of the subject object in the flow of experience. In that series of experiences, when a relation is made, one part is the subject and the other is the object. The flow of experiences and their relation is the nature of pure experience. All the categories are parts of pure experience. Consequently we have to accept that these categories have ontological existence.

Suckiel explains the incoherence relation of pragmatic reality to pure experience with reference to definition given by James which says that reality is what is known as. Pure experience in this sense can never be an object to be known. But James has tried to illustrate that in a sense pure experience can be known. James recognized two types of knowing, one is knowledge by acquaintance and the other is knowledge by description. Pure experience can also be known if we accept knowing in an acquaintance sense. In the primary level of experience we get to know pure experience as given to us. Here we can know pure experience, though it is not known in another sense. Moreover Suckiel has taken the expression 'known as' in the sense of propositional knowledge which is descriptive in nature. But if we go through the various writings of James we will find that James was not very happy with the expression 'known as' because of its association with propositional knowledge only. Specifically in the context of radical empiricism when James uses the expression 'known as' he means 'whatever is experienced'. In the editorial preface to James' *Essays in Radical Empiricism* R.B. Perry has clearly mentioned this point to bring out how the principle of reality as 'known as' when taken in the sense of reality as experienced relate pragmatism to radical empiricism. Since pure experience is all through a state of experience James will consider pure experience as something experienceable and it is in this sense he would also consider pure experience to be something 'known as' though not in the sense of propositional knowledge.

The principle on which Suckiel makes this definition of reality is that whatever is experience able is real and whatever is real is experience-able. But here Suckiel assumes experience as knowing. It is known by experience. But if we try to understand what James is saying, we can understand that he does not equate knowledge with experience. What is found in experience

is not necessarily what is known. For example, we experience pure experience in the acquaintance sense but cannot say that it is known in the traditional sense. What is experienced in the primary state cannot be known held to be in the traditional sense. Consequently, Suckiel's claim of inconsistency in James' view of reality cannot be accepted.

### 4.3. Critical view of John Wild's interpretations

Interpreting the philosophy of William James, John Wild claims that radical empiricism or pure experience is the main metaphysical notion on the basis of which the pragmatic theory of truth or pragmatism has evolved. Wild also claims that pragmatism is an epistemological theory within which there is no metaphysical element in the ultimate sense. Wild also claims that if we understand James's philosophy as a whole, we can see some apparent inconsistencies in James' theory when he discusses some tenets or issues in the *Principles of Psychology*, *Pragmatism a new name for some old ways of thinking* and his later book *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. But Wild holds that we read James' writings from an existential phenomenological approach then this apparent inconsistency can be removed. Wild claims that these two theories may be independent but the relationship between them can be shown with the help of this approach. He also holds that if we read James' theories with this existential phenomenological approach, we can understand that for James, the main reality is pure experience. It is however doubtful whether James's metaphysics can be better understood from an existential phenomenological view point. We will proceed with our observation in the following way.

Wild interprets pure experience in terms of the notion of a living body. He even thinks that if pure experience is understood in terms of a living body then some problems which are found in James' metaphysics and which lead to inconsistency in James' philosophy can be avoided. Wild points out that though James could avoid the dualism of subject-object, knower-known by introducing the notion of pure experience, this notion itself becomes problematic: the problem lies in the fact that pure experience would contain the dualism of subjective-objective on the one hand and the possibility of solipsism on the other. Wild claims that to come out of both these problems James introduced the notion of a living body which can show how the same thing can be both a subject and an object. In Wild's opinion James considers this living body or the embodied self as a representation of pure experience. Wild reminds us that James did not believe in a subject that is independent of a body. And this body is important because everything we experience is centred on this body. So Wild will claim, if we understand the concept of pure experience in the analogy of a living body, James will be better understood.

The above defence of James does not seem to be acceptable. If we read the writings of William James we see that he explains the nature of pure experience as unanalysed, undifferentiated experience. But we cannot explain the human living body as unanalysed, undifferentiated. Moreover pure experience is not a combination of body plus consciousness. It is actually the pre-condition of physical and mental existence. But we cannot interpret the body in this way. Pure experience is experience from which all other objects or things are created. But the living body cannot produce all other objects like pure experience. Again pure experience is defined by James as streams of experience. These streams combine through various relations to form other objects. We can call the living body as a concrete form of this flow of experience. From this flow it is created but this human living body is not pure experience itself.

Against Wild it can be further held that even if it is accepted that the subject-object can be created from the living body, it cannot be equated with pure experience because some part of pure experience can be either subject or object, and there can also be a possibility that some part never be a subject. But this possibility cannot be admitted in the case of the living body, because a living body contains always the possibility of becoming a subject. In other words a living body can never be a mere object seems human living bodies are always associated with mental state. This is precisely the reason why subjectivity and objectivity can co-exist in a living human body. So an effort to understand pure experience in terms of living body is bound to fail.

Against Wild it can also be held that the issue of solipsism as a problem in pure experience need not be avoided by bringing in the notion of living body. It is true that James would claim that the problem of solipsism does not arise in the realm of pragmatic reality if the notion of living body is emphasized. But that is not a reason why the same notion should be brought in for dealing with the charge of solipsism in the level of pure experience. We would argue that this charge is based on the misconception that pure experience is a single entity. It is a misconception because James has clearly said that pure experience consists in infinite number of streams of experience. Many of these streams can become subjects and each of the subject can see the other subject as a separate knower. So there is nothing in the notion of pure experience which can make the problem of solipsism inevitable. Accordingly the notion of living body need not be invoked to solve the problem of solipsism.

Another reason for using the analogy of the body for understanding pure experience is , as Wild says , that the body systematizes any experience. A variety of experiences can be associated with the body and the body can systematize those experiences. What Wild says up to this point is understandable. But the question is whether the importance which Wild accords on the body is justifiable ? Our answer is in the negative for two reasons. First, for dealing with any experience a living body has to have some elements which are not produced from the body. So even if we admit the role of body in systematizing experience , pure experience as a source of the elements remain outside the body. So the body in this case can not capture the whole of pure experience, rather it appears to represent pure experience marginally. The second reason is that the role which the body plays in relation to experience is nothing but an activity of the body as a part of pragmatic reality. Just as nothing else in the pragmatic reality can be a complete representation of pure experience, body too cannot. So it is futile to emphasize on the notion of living body for understanding pure experience as a whole.

Wild explains that there will be some problems if we try to understand pragmatism as a theory of knowledge, but if we understand it with the existential notions like being in the world, life world, living person, etc, these problems will not exist. But if we read James' writings, we will see that he discusses reality in pragmatism, which is metaphysical as well and therefore it cannot be said that most part of pragmatism is epistemology. Moreover, although James emphasizes the sensible world, he also talks about the other seven worlds. He also admits the possibility that a conceptual world may be more real than a sensible world. As a result, Wild's interpretation of pragmatism as an epistemology does not match with this interpretation of James. Moreover, in the discussion of reality, James says that there are three constituents of reality namely, the flux of sensation, relation and previous truth. Some of these parts exist independently of humans over which we have no control. Thus everything even of the sensible world does not depend on the activity of the living person. Accordingly existential phenomenology alone cannot explain either pragmatism or pure experience.

#### **4.4.Cooper on James' view: a critical evaluation**

Cooper claims that James's system has two levels, one metaphysical and the other empirical. He said these two levels are different and even distinct from each other. He placed pragmatism at the empirical level and pure experience at the metaphysical level. He claims that a person can spend his entire life accepting a particular level. Whatever level he takes will have a worldview shaped by that level. He says that if one accepts the metaphysical level, it can also explain the pragmatic reality, i.e. it is possible that the metaphysical reality can help to explain and understand the pragmatic reality as well, but it may not be necessary. It is not necessary to take metaphysical reality to explain pragmatic reality. But Cooper says that metaphysical reality are not necessary to discuss pragmatic reality. Cooper, on the other hand, also claims that one can only discuss metaphysical reality without discussing pragmatic reality or the empirical level. There are two major themes in James' philosophy. One of the themes is dividing these into two levels. Cooper claims James wants to keep the division. These two levels can be divided and its establishment is one of the aims of James's theory, according to Cooper. Cooper also claims that one can discuss pragmatic reality without discussing metaphysical reality. That is, there is no relationship between these two realities at the empirical level. One may be an applied pragmatist but not a radical empiricist. But Cooper also tries to show that if one accepts the metaphysical level it can also explain empirical realities. Regarding the relationship between metaphysical reality and pragmatic reality, Cooper claims that at the metaphysical level, they can be shown to be related in two ways. Moreover, Cooper claims that the nature of metaphysical entity is protomental. Cooper claims that if the nature of reality is protomental, many apparently contradictory philosophical theories can be accommodated or accommodated in James's philosophy.

Since James says that one need not accept pure experience to be a pragmatist, Cooper assumes that metaphysical realities are irrelevant if we try to understand pragmatic realities from an empirical level. While this is true, James does not mean that the two levels are truly separable. If the question is asked what we mean by empirical level, and if by 'empirical level' it is meant that where I am concerned with the data obtained from experience then pure experience will also include empirical level because the data which we get in empirical level

are generated from pure experience and presented to the knower through experience. Either it should be accepted or it should be said that the empirical level means the level where we do not seek answers to some questions, to be more precise we do not discuss any question beyond some specific questions. However, these specifications are bound to be totally arbitrary. So the boundary drawn between the two layers is not a rigid boundary. One may raise a question regarding pragmatic reality at the empirical level but he can bracket the metaphysical discussions. The empirical level can stay up to this point but if you ask questions after that it will become metaphysical. But it can be noticed that metaphysical questions need not be totally avoidable in the empirical level. It is problematic to distinguish between these two levels when the metaphysical questions arise from the empirical level.

If someone confines oneself to certain questions at the empirical level, then one need not take into account radical empiricism. But there may be some questions at the empirical level; the answers to these questions are not available from the empirical level. Some questions can be answered at the empirical level but not all questions that can be raised in the empirical level can be answered from within the same level. For example, a person can ask the question of pragmatic reality from the empirical level that what are the conditions of pragmatic reality are there things that are constituents of pragmatic reality, and if so what is their nature? Since pragmatic reality does not depend entirely on us, what is the nature of that uncontrollable part? What is the origin of this practical world? Is it entirely up to us when we shape the chaotic, undifferentiated experience to our needs? Or is there something in this chaotic, undifferentiated experience of the external world for which we accept it as reality? Is it entirely up to us when we create reality? All these questions we can usually raise from being at this empirical level. But we do not get answers to all these questions at this empirical level. To get the answer, we have to enter the metaphysical level because it can be answered from the metaphysical level. But if questions which cannot be answered from the empirical level can nevertheless rise in that level then the empirical level cannot be strictly separated from the metaphysical level. So, to find the answer to these questions, the metaphysical entity has to be brought in; but if it is said that the two levels are different, then the answer to all these questions will remain out of reach.

Moreover, it is not clear what Cooper means by empirical. Cooper is wrong to take empiricism in the sense in which philosophers take it traditionally, because what is meant by

experience here does not go together with the pragmatic experience. Many of these are not matters of sense experience but of other experiences that are pragmatic.

A pragmatist may not be a radical empiricist, Cooper accepted a meaning of this, according to which they are logically different. Because the discussion of pragmatic realities has the potential to raise questions that we can answer at the empirical level. But from a theoretical point of view we have to say that they are interrelated. One is not completely different from the other. They are elements and actions of each other.

Cooper's claim that only the metaphysical level can be discussed independently of the empirical level is not acceptable to me, because a part of metaphysical reality is pragmatic reality. Pragmatic reality is formed by acting on metaphysical reality. So when we come to understand experience, metaphysical reality in its totality cannot be understood apart from empirical reality.

Cooper tries to argue that because the two levels are different, the realities that emerge from these two levels are also different. He says moral and social realities are developed from the empirical level and physical and mental realities are developed from the metaphysical level. But if we look at James' theory, we see that the main metaphysical reality is pure experience, it is neither physical nor mental in nature. What James calls neutral, while Cooper calls it protomental. Since pure experience is protomental, it can be physical or mental depending on the needs and wants of the knower. If we accept, as Cooper does, then the concept of knower can be found mainly at the empirical level in James's philosophy. Only when a relationship of pure experience with the need of the knower is formed, the physical and mental realities develop. Then it appears that the physical and mental realities can be discussed at the pragmatic level or even the physical and mental realities can be developed, in the pragmatic level though Cooper will not admit these possibilities at the empirical level and quite unjustifiedly he will restrict the possibilities at the metaphysical level only. Hence two realities cannot be said to be different because of the difference in the two layers.

Although the two levels are different in terms of reality differentiation, if we look at James's theory, we can see that the two realities are not completely different. The two realities are closely related. For example, when James discusses reality, he says that truth represents that which is reality, and that reality has three elements. Just as there is a human element involved in every element of pragmatic reality, there are also parts that are impersonal. That impersonal element is pure experience. So the two realities cannot be said to be different, on



the basis of which it cannot be said that the two levels are also different. The two realities are different means that a person can be satisfied only with the human element of reality, but if a knower does not limit himself to the human element of reality, then these two realities cannot be said to be completely different. Even at the empirical level these two cannot be called different. Hence, just as reality cannot be said to be different from the metaphysical level, so also reality cannot be said to be different from the empirical level.

The essence of Cooper's arguments is that realities are different because levels are different. When these two realities are said to be separate, there will be problems regarding the relationship between them. And here a problem of dualism arises. But if we look at the philosophy of James, we can see that he was against dualism from the beginning of his philosophy. Thus, if we accept Cooper's view, then there will be an inconsistency with James's own view. So it cannot be said that the two realities are different. Nor can it be said that the two levels are different.

According to Cooper it is possible to discuss the pragmatic reality at the empirical level without discussing the reality at the metaphysical level. But this opinion of Cooper is not acceptable. When James discusses the nature of pure experience as a metaphysical reality, he says that pure experience is the basic material from which everything in the world is made. In this sense pragmatic reality is formed by taking elements from pure experience. James says that the first thing that appears before us in experience is chaotic and undifferentiated sensation. Now when a subject tries to understand this experience, he uses some concepts according to his needs to analyze this chaotic, undifferentiated experience and creates entities. So if the whole of experience is discussed at the empirical level it cannot avoid the discussion of pure experience. In James' word "This notion of a first in the shape of a most chaotic pure experience which sets us questions, of a second in the way of fundamental categories, long ago wrought into the structure of our consciousness and practically irreversible, which define the general frame within which answers must fall, and of a third which gives the detail of the answers in the shapes most congruous with all our present needs, is, as I take it, the essence of the humanistic conception." [117]

Now if a subject wants to understand his individual experience then he will understand that his experience involves a subject and a given object. His knowledge is that he is having this experience by being in a relationship with it.

Now if he raises the questions like- “how does one know the external object correctly?, What is the true nature of his initial experience?- then he actually enters the discussion of reality at the metaphysical level. But he will not get the answer to all these questions at the empirical level. Moreover, if he wants to know how the subject-object, known-knower dualism is created, how the relationship between them can be shown, etc, which are significant problem in philosophy, he will not get the answers at the empirical level. For having the answers we need to enter into the discussion of reality at the metaphysical level where pure experience is reality. If one discusses pragmatic reality without the discussion of metaphysical reality then these questions and related problems cannot be discussed. If, as Cooper admits, we say that the two levels are different and unrelated, then we cannot fully understand pragmatic reality either. The reason is that for understanding pragmatic reality we need to deal with the new materials given through pure experience. In the words of James, “Experience is a process that continually gives us new material to digest. We handle this intellectually by the mass of beliefs of which we find ourselves already possessed, assimilating, rejecting, or rearranging in different degrees.”<sup>[118]</sup>

If, as Cooper admits, the two levels are different, then it also follows that metaphysical reality can be self-contained. That is, without discussing pragmatic realities and without considering pragmatic realities, we can discuss metaphysical reality, discuss metaphysical problems, and give explanations. But if it is said that one can discuss the metaphysical reality without discussing the empirical level, then the following problem will arise. In James opinion from the pure experience that exists as a metaphysical entity, various types of worlds are created, one of which is empirical world. If one is to understand how various things are created from pure experience, then one has to discuss pragmatic reality which contains various things created from pure experience. But if one says that metaphysical reality can be discussed without discussing the level of practical reality, then we cannot fully understand pure experience because the different entities that result from pure experience will be left out. According to James, in one of its presentation pure experience is chaotic, undifferentiated experience. To understand what arises out of pure experience, how it arises, also requires one to understand pragmatic reality.

<sup>118</sup> James, William (1909) p.61

Explaining the mutual dependency between the two levels, James said “Strange mutual dependence this, in which the appearance needs the reality in order to exist, but the reality needs the appearance in order to be known. [119] Therefore, if the two levels are different, Cooper's position does not go with this statement of James.

Pragmatic reality and pure experience cannot be said to be different because of the difference in level. A subject can discuss pragmatic realities and empirical experiences in two ways. One - either he can discuss pragmatic reality only as pragmatic reality or he can study pragmatic reality as the result of metaphysical reality. When one studies only as a pragmatic reality, he may not consider the discussion of metaphysical reality, in which case their discussion can be done in a neutral way. But if one wants to study pragmatic reality as the result of pure experience, then these two realities cannot be said to be unrelated even from the viewpoint of pragmatic reality.

On this point one may argue that James himself has said that there is no logical relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism. He also asserted that one can be a pragmatist without being a radical empiricist if these remarks of James be accepted then how can we go against cooper and claim that pragmatic reality cannot be grasped without taking into consideration pure experience? In response to this we would like to observe that the claims made by cooper may seem to be consistent with the above remarks of James but the fact that cooper's claim is not acceptable will follow if we take into consideration another remark of James where James says that pragmatism help radical empiricism to prevail. If pragmatism and radical empiricism be totally unrelated by virtue of belonging to two different level then it is not possible for the former to help the latter prevail. Obviously the onus will come on us to explain the first remark of James and to show how pragmatism and radical empiricism be logically independent if one helps the other to prevail. Here our response would be that when James says that pragmatism is logically independent from radical empiricism he wants to mean that for being a pragmatist one need not necessarily accept radical empiricism. It would be possible for one to confine oneself to follow certain principle of pragmatism , and thus to be a pragmatist, without entering into any metaphysical question to answer which one has to take recourse to radical empiricism . One may be totally involve in the issues of practical life, which are out and out matters of pragmatism, without in any sense depending on the issues of radical empiricism. But that does not mean that the whole of pragmatism in Jamesean sense can be understood without involving the concept of pure experience.

<sup>119</sup> James, William (1890) p.301

#### 4.5. Objections to Sami Pihlström's opinion

Sami Pihlström view contains three major claims : (a) the function of general metaphysics is to state the conditions for categorising activity; (b) pragmatic reality is the basic reality on which all other realities depend, and (c) pragmatism is necessary for any metaphysics to be meaningful and possible.

Pihlström argues that the task of metaphysics or ontology is to give the transcendental conditions of categorising activity. One can hardly dispute this characterisation of metaphysics. But what is notable is that he does not consider this to be the whole of the specification. He goes on to add that this categorising activity must be linked to practical activity. That means the conditions of the categorisation which are done in practical life only should be the object of metaphysical enquiry. This characterisation of metaphysics however can well be disputed. Before we enter in the discussion as to why we consider it disputable we would like to recall that with the help of this characterisation of metaphysics Pihlström would proceed to relate metaphysics with morality and also to show that pragmatic metaphysics is basic. So if this characterisation is challenged then the associated claims will also become questionable. The reason why we find this characterisation problematic consists in its reference to the notion of practical activity. If by practical activities we mean the activities of everyday life then the above characterisation of metaphysics will exclude not only traditional metaphysics of various types but also pragmatic metaphysics will be excluded. Let us explain our claim. The search for the truth about reality has often being under taken for understanding our experiences which have nothing to do with practical life. Knowledge for knowledge's sake has been the motive there. Thus to claim that metaphysics should be relevant for practical life would exclude the large portion of traditional metaphysics. This requirement will exclude even some sub-worlds which James has admitted to be real from pragmatic viewpoint. Though each of these sub worlds satisfy the criterion of being pragmatically real only if they satisfy some one's pragmatic needs, since the notion of pragmatic needs and that of practical life are not co- extensive so some world may sail to be related to practical life even when they are related to pragmatic need, and so they would fail to count as real from Pihlström viewpoint. So Pihlström characterisation of metaphysics as something which is intimately related to practical life is questionable.

Our second objection against Pihlström is that he confuses between the standpoint of the construction of metaphysics and the stand point of the real which metaphysics is all about. Pihlström has claimed that all metaphysics is pragmatic construction. What he wants to bring home is that any metaphysics is to be rooted in pragmatic life of human beings. Even if for the sake of argument we admit that all metaphysics is pragmatic construction, we would insist that all types of real cannot be taken to be a result of pragmatic construction. We would like to point out that we need to make a difference between the order in which different type of reality came into existence and the order in which they are discovered or admitted in metaphysics. This point becomes evident from James' metaphysics itself. For James pure experience exists as real prior to the creation of pragmatic reality out of it. So in the order of existence pure experience comes first and pragmatic reality comes after that. However while doing metaphysics James would start it emphasis on pragmatism and only in later phase will talk about radical empiricism. Accordingly Pihlström's claim is invalidated by James view itself.

Pihlström has claim that any metaphysics would require pragmatism to be humanly possible and meaningful. In other words, in his opinion, only pragmatic theory of meaning can make any metaphysics significant. This claim too is contestable because it would lead to the acceptance of such a position which James will never accept. Let us explain our point. If for being possible and also for being meaningful a metaphysics has to depend on pragmatism then it can easily be shown that all metaphysics are ultimately reducible to pragmatism. However one of the important features of James' philosophy is non reductive attitude. So Pihlström's view would go against James on this point. Moreover the possibility of reducing everything to pragmatic real would imply the possibility of reducing pure experience to pragmatic real also. This position is also not acceptable to James. Not only would James allow to reduction of pure experience to any other stuff but he would never agree to consider pure experience as subordinate any other real.

#### 4.6. Criticism of Richard Gale's view

Gale interprets James's theory of reality and says that pragmatic reality is a metaphysical reality in James's philosophy. This reality has primacy because this pragmatic reality is primarily discussed by James. Moreover, it can act as a unifier between the variety of realities that exists and it is consistent with the kind of ontology that James wanted to do. He makes these claims while discussing the existence of James' view of reality and tries to argue in favour of those claims. By using the notion of pragmatic reality he tries to arrive at some of his conclusions. Gale asserts that pragmatic reality which is essentially ontologically relative. He claims that there is no logical connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism. But pragmatism helps radical empiricism to prevail. Gale also claims that radical empiricism and the notion of pure experience are logically independent. None of them implies the other. Gale also claims that the theory of pure experience does not apply to the other worlds recognized by James. Pure experience can only unify intra worlds. Gale also claims that the task of the philosopher is to unify the seven worlds recognized by James. He thinks that through pragmatism indirect unification is possible among these sub worlds. Although Gale does not clearly state in his discussion what is the relationship between pragmatic realities and pure experience, it follows from Gale's claims and arguments that this pragmatic reality has no relation to pure experience in any metaphysical sense because James not only did not emphasize this pure experience in his later writings, but he also excluded the concept. He also claims that pragmatic reality is the original metaphysical reality but pure experience cannot be called the original metaphysical reality as it has certain limitations. It needs to be noted here that in Gale's opinion both of the two remarks made by James regarding the relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism are correct. It may be recalled that James remarked that there is no logical relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism and pragmatism helps radical empiricism to prevail.

Gale argued in favor of his claim that James was correct. Gale's observations and arguments about the above mentioned remarks cannot be accepted. We will discuss why Gale's opinion is not acceptable. In this regard we will discuss the view of Perry who disagrees with Gale's decision.

Arguing that these two theories are closely allied, Perry says that the postulates of radical empiricism which James accepts are “the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience.” [120] On the other hand if pragmatism is defined as “the meaning of any proposition can always be brought down to some particular consequence in our future pragmatic experience,... the point lying in the fact that the experience must be particular rather than in the fact that it must be active”, [121] then this pragmatism can be said to have a relationship with radical empiricism. Perry thinks that if pragmatism can be interpreted in this way, then we can call pragmatism related to the postulate of radical empiricism because in both the theories the importance of experience is recognized in accepting something and developed these theories with the idea of this experience. As a result, if we accept Gale's interpretation, their relationship cannot be shown, but if we accept Perry's statement, then we can reach the conclusion that they are related. Since James himself says that there is a relationship between the two theories it can be said that Perry's opinion is consistent with James' view. So it cannot be said that radical empiricism has no logical connection with pragmatism.

It can also be said here against Gale that when James explains the theory of radical empiricism in the book ‘*essays in radical empiricism*’, he holds that the pragmatic method is included in his theory of radical empiricism. Pragmatic method begins by accepting a postulate according to which “...there is no difference of truth that does not make a difference of fact somewhere...” [122]

It may be added further, in explaining the nature of pure experience, James has highlighted its characteristics in different ways. One of them is that pure experience is the unanalyzed state that is presented to us in the form of givenness. Gale presents James's view and says that an important component of radical empiricism is that philosophers should consider or argue over those things that can be explained in terms of experience. Experience is therefore an important reality for James. Now if the unanalyzed state or pure experience is not accepted as basic then the above remarks of James cannot be accepted and radical empiricism cannot be understood. Consequently, if pure experience is not accepted, the original theory of radical empiricism will not stand. For showing that there is no relation between radical empiricism and pure experience Gale argued that the notion of unanalyzed

<sup>120</sup> James, William (1912) p.ix

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p. x

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p.159

experience is not philosophically significant just as many other empirical truths are not philosophically important. This argument has been discussed in detail in the third chapter. What Gale misses when he shows that the two theories are unrelated is that he equates unanalyzed experience with the empirical truth that life requires water. Pure experience is not the same as empirical truths that are common to us in everyday life. Although it is experience, in fact it is a precondition of ordinary human experience, without acknowledging it, a pragmatic reality, a subject, cannot develop. Therefore these two cannot be called the same empirical truth. We must admit that pure experience has a philosophical significance. Moreover, there is a difference between what we get in ordinary experience and what we get in pure experience. In ordinary experience we find a variety of dualisms, which a subject creates to meet his needs, but the material from which this reality is formed is pure experience. Hence there is a difference between these two.

Gale asserts that if pure experience is called a basic metaphysical reality, then many things cannot be accepted as realities in James's theory of reality. We have already said that Gale makes this claim. After stating what arguments Gale establishes for this claim, we will discuss why we do not find this argument tenable. Gale argues in support of his view that James admits in his ontology the existence of many things that are non-phenomenal, that do not appear in space and time, that do not have special or temporal properties. For example - content of the abstract world are numbers and properties, content of the super natural world are purely spiritual individual etc. But if we call pure experience the basic reality, then it cannot apply to all the objects of this non-phenomenal world, because Gale says that pure experience applies to the objects of the sensible world which have special and temporal locations. Consequently, Gale argues that pure experience can be understood in the limit sense as a metaphysical reality that relates only to this sensible world. Moreover, Gale also says that there are different types of duality problems in the sensible world, such as subject-object, idealism, materialism, mental physical, and they can be reconciled by applying the concept of pure experience. Pure experience can unify intra-world but not inter world. Here, inter world unification means the relationship between the seven worlds that James recognized, that is, the relationship between the sensible world and the other six worlds that cannot be unified by the theory of pure experience.



Gale says that the theory of pure experience cannot be applied to any world other than the sensible world. Therefore, pure experience cannot be called basic in the metaphysical sense because it has some limitations. With the help of various arguments we can show that this argument of Gale is not acceptable. If we read James's writings, especially his book on *Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism*, we see that the above mentioned claim of Gale regarding the limitation of the concept of pure experience is not acceptable. When James acknowledges the existence of pure experience, he says that the flow of experience can create a variety of objects with the help of relations. Consequently non-phenomenal objects can also come from the flow of experience: since experience is neutral various types of objects can be created from it. This point can be further elaborated with reference to Suckiel's view in this regard. When Suckiel interpreted pure experience, he accepted one characteristic of it. Suckiel claims that there is a continuously widening periphery of pure experience. As a result, there is a possibility that non-phenomenal objects are created from this widening periphery. Hence it cannot be said that pure experience cannot describe or relate to non-phenomenal objects or other worlds.

In addition to this, it can also be argued that 'experience' is taken by Gale as sensible experience; experience that occurs in space and time. But when James used the concept of pure experience, he did not mean sensible experience. Here, James uses the word 'experience' as a neutral term; he does not use the word 'experience' in the traditional sense. If we understand this difference, then we can understand how objects of the non-phenomenal world can be created from pure experience. Gale's objection involves confusion on this point.

In his book *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James wants to see pure experience as the primal stuff and he says that pure experience is the primal stuff from which everything can be made. So James admits the possibility that anything can be produced by taking pure experience as stuff. We can claim, following James that if everything can be generated from pure experience, non-phenomenal objects too will have it as its primal cause and thus have relation with it. Hence pure experience cannot be said to apply only to the sensible world.

An objection may arise here that if we admit that the primal stuff can explain everything, then we must admit that James is a monist. But James is not a monist. If we read James's writings we see that James says the characteristic of this stuff is that it is a combination of many streams with the potentiality to produce various manifestation of this real. Many times he also describes pure experience as a collective name. Just because pure experience is primal does not imply that there is only one reality. Monists would say that the real object is one. But what James means is that whatever is real is made of this primal stuff which is the presupposition of everything. As a result, the above objection does not hold against James.

Moreover, it can be shown in another way that Gale's argument cannot be accepted. In James' metaphysics reality of relation is recognized. Although James talks about different types of relations: the two he emphasizes most are conjunctive and disjunctive relation. Terms like-with, near, like, from, through, because, etc., that are used in describing something are called conjunctive relation. The conjunctive relation represents how the various elements of experience are interconnected. When Gale argues that theory of pure experience applies only to the sensible world, he essentially emphasizes disjunctive relation where the context of the relation between this sensible world and other worlds arise. But if we know the nature of conjunctive relation well then we will see that subject object can be understood in case of conjunctive relation as well. In the case of conjunctive relation two entities can be separated but from the beginning they are not un-related. On the other hand, from a pragmatic point of view, the distinction is only pragmatic, because primarily they are related. Consequently, the emphasis on the conjunctive relation sets James apart from others. But if Gale had insisted on the conjunctive relation that James himself gave, then he would have understood that concept of pure experience applies not only to the sensible world but also to the non-phenomenal world. Pragmatism can act as a mediator between different worlds because there is conjunctive relation, if these worlds were unrelated then relation could not be shown between them. But James says the task of philosophers is to show the relation between different worlds. Thus the explanation on the notion of relation shows that pure experience can be related to other worlds as well.

It is claimed by Gale that there is a metaphysical aspect in pragmatism and it follows from the discussion of realities in pragmatism that the ontology of pragmatism is ontological relativism and this reality is more important. Arguing in favor of his view, Gale says that all

reality claims depend on the individual or person. What is real is relative, depending on a person's interest. As the interests of different persons may be different, therefore realities also become different. Even the interests of the same subject may later change so that what he previously accepted as real may not be accepted as real later. As a result, it can be said that ontological relativism is the main metaphysical theory of pragmatism. He says that any objects we can think of have some reality. James acknowledges the existence of seven worlds. When we think about any object, those objects are in one or the other of these seven worlds. James recognizes the ontological existence of these seven worlds. He said that each of these worlds is a self-contained unity. Each of these worlds may have its own ontology, conceptual system, presuppositions, doxastic principles. Now an interest based person can choose which of these worlds fulfills his needs. The things of the world that satisfy his needs will then be considered real to him. Then Gale is admitting that in pragmatism many reality is possible which one will be real that depends on the subjective or knower interest. He admitted that pragmatism deals with reality. And since every world has its reality, here we are talking about ontological reality. Consequently, Gale is not saying that there is no metaphysical discussion in pragmatism. Pragmatism has an ontology that is relativism. Unique real does not exist in pragmatism because interest is a component for determining reality.

Gale says that the task of the philosopher is to create a unifying relationship between the total world and the sub worlds that exist within it. According to Gale, pragmatic ontology is more important because he thinks that pure experience cannot unify these sub-worlds, but pragmatism can make an indirect unification of these sub-worlds through the mediation of the subject. As a result, pragmatism can explain the existence of these worlds better than pure experience. In this sense, pragmatic ontology is more important.

Contrary to Gale's view, the ontology of pragmatism cannot be accepted simply as ontological relativism. It may be admitted that the human element of pragmatic reality makes a part of reality relative, but it cannot be said that all elements in pragmatic reality are determined by the individual. James says in *Pragmatism a new name for some old ways of thinking* that reality has three parts, the detail of these parts has been discussed in Chapter 1, one of them is the flux of our sensation. James said of this part “over their nature, order, and quantity we have as good as no control. They are neither true nor false, they simple are.”

[123]

So James makes it clear here that we have no contribution on the part of this reality. The third part is the previous truth from which any new type of inquiry begins. We don't have complete control over it. Therefore, it cannot be said that the type of ontology that is developed in pragmatism is developed entirely out of individual interest. Thus, the ontology of pragmatism cannot be called ontological relativism only.

Besides, from the other side, Gale's argument can be refuted by saying that how much relativism can be accepted in pragmatism at all, or whether James would agree that can also be doubted. Because, James says that, experience is a process that constantly presents us with new material from which we take in, discard and rearrange. While doing these we acquire some concepts in a new manner but most are determined by the human race. Pragmatic classifications such as thought-things, matter-mind, subject-attributes etc. are made to produce an individually shareable and manageable shape in unanalyzed experience. But these classifications are not made just by an individual seems our ancestors too contributed to it. As a result, while creating this pragmatic reality, human beings as a race created that reality, so it cannot be said that these are entirely dependent on the individual and are relative. To this it may be added that the interest which plays an important part in the formation of the reality is not called personal interest by James. There are similarities between every human in terms of interest. It is not that the interest depends on the individual. So what one admits to reality is not something that no one else can do. As a result, it cannot be said that the ontology of the pragmatism is relative because the pragmatic reality is formed by personal interest.

In the words of James "... all these were once definite conquests made at historic dates by our ancestors in their attempt to get the chaos of their crude individual experiences into a more shareable and manageable shape." [124]

Again, another objection will arise against Gale's view that if it is said that there is only relativism in pragmatism, then there will remain no opportunity to say that there is a world more real. But James calls the sensible world which is more real. The things of this world can satisfy our needs much more than the things of other worlds. Moreover, the objects of this world have certain properties for which we sometimes choose them. As a result, if everything was relative, then this statement of James cannot be accepted fully. Consequently, we may claim that the ontology of pragmatism is not relativism.

<sup>124</sup> James, William (1909) p.62

Based on Gale's claims about the relationship between radical empiricism and pragmatism, radical empiricism and pure experience, Gale concludes that pure experience has no relation with pragmatic realities. Gale reaches this conclusion because he does not recognize the logical relationship of pure experience with radical empiricism. He interpreted that they are independent and even said that James abandoned the concept of pure experience. On the other hand, he did not accept the logical relationship of radical empiricism and pragmatism; they are interpreted to be independent. Based on this he concluded that pragmatism cannot be shown to relate to pure experience. But if we look at James's remarks, we can see that James recognizes pragmatism and pure experience as components of radical empiricism. But, if both are the components of the same theory, then they cannot be called independent. The same withhold about pure experience and radical empiricism. It cannot be said that there is no relationship between them. Those researchers who recognize the relationship between the two generally accept James's remarks. In the words of James "The pragmatic method starts from the postulate that there is no difference of truth that does not make a difference of fact somewhere; and it seeks to determine the meaning of all differences of opinion by making the discussion hinge as soon as possible upon some pragmatic or particular issue. The principle of pure experience is also a methodical postulate. Nothing shall be admitted as fact, it says, except what can be experienced at some definite time by some experiment; and for every feature of fact ever so experienced, a definite place must be found somewhere in the final system of reality." [125]

So we can conclude that neither the theory of pure experience nor pragmatism is independent of radical empiricism. They are related in important manner in James' theory. These two theories are not independent, but they are related.

## CONCLUSION

### Section -1

The present research focuses on the relationship between pragmatic reality and pure experience, but this relationship depends on how radical empiricism and pragmatism are related to one another. The relationship between pragmatic reality and pure experience is based on how these two theories relate to one another. If there is no relationship between radical empiricism and pragmatism, then the question of the relationship between pragmatic reality and pure experience will not arise. There is disagreement among James scholars regarding the connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism. The reason for disagreement among researchers is generally rooted in two apparent contradictory remarks of James . James in his early career of philosophy says "...there is no logical connection between pragmatism, as I understand it, 'and a doctrine which I have recently set forth as 'radical empiricism.' The latter stands on its own feet. One may entirely reject it and still be a pragmatist." [126] Using James's statement, a group of researchers attempts to argue that there is no relationship between these two theories. In light of this, those who agree with this assertion and assert that radical empiricism and pragmatism have no link will also assert that these two realities have no connection.

Later in another book, James says: "it seems to me that the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail." [127] Some James scholars agree with this observation and work to demonstrate how these two theories are related.

In order to make our debate more convenient, we will now try to determine what arguments the researchers have provided in the interpretation of the aforementioned phrases. If we categorise the interpretations of different interpreters, we can see that these interpreters can be divided into three groups in a broad sense. In the first group, I will put those commentators who think that there is no relation between these two theories. In the second group, I will put those researchers who think that the relationship between these two theories can be shown. They, however, refute one of James' comments. The final group will be James scholars, who believe that both of James' comments are correct, but that the relationship depends on how we interpret them.

<sup>126</sup> James, William (1921 ) p.ix

<sup>127</sup> Ibid p. xii

In this section, we will examine the arguments both for and against the possibility of a connection in order to determine which interpretation is more consistent with James' theory.

Elizabeth Flower, Andrew J. Reck argues that there is no relationship between pragmatism and radical empiricism. They are members of the first group.

John R. Shook, Ruth Anna Putnam, Richard Stevens, Richard P. Mullin, David C. Lamberth, etc. are among those who belong to this second group.

Ralph Barton Perry , Richard Gale, Wesley Cooper , Graham Bird, belong to the third group.

I will now discuss the first group who think that there is no relation between these two theories.

According to Flower, James' philosophy has two aspects: radical empiricism and pragmatism. She interprets James's comment as saying that the two are distinct because at least one can be a pragmatist without being a radical empiricist. Although that is difficult to determine. She says “There are two aspects of James's philosophic writings, Radical Empiricism and Pragmatism. James said that they were independent—at least one could be a pragmatist without being a radical empiricist.” [128] She contends that the two philosophies are distinct because radical empiricism is a theory about the nature and content of experience, whereas pragmatism is a theory about the meaning and belief on experience. Thus, the nature of experience and our conceptions of experience are two distinct concepts. Thus, it may be claimed that these two theories are distinct from one another. She explains “We noted at the outset of the discussion of Radical Empiricism that James asserted that it and Pragmatism were independent. Strictly he was right, for Pragmatism is a theory about the dependence of meaning and belief on experience, while Radical Empiricism is an account of the nature and content of experience.”[129]

Andrew J. Reck [130] explores these seemingly contradictory statements made by James in his book *Introduction to William James*. Reck says that these assertions do not imply that pragmatism is not a separate doctrine and that radical empiricism is dependent on and logically supported by pragmatism. In light of James' later publications, this statement looks incorrect. He claims that radical empiricism, as a doctrine, allows for many philosophical

<sup>128</sup> Flower, Elizabeth and Murphey, Murray G (1977) p.62

<sup>129</sup> Ibid p. 673

<sup>130</sup> *Introduction to William James*

movements that are independent of pragmatism. Therefore, it cannot be said that radical empiricism depends on pragmatism. In the words of Reck, “He claimed that “the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail.” But he did not alter his judgment that while pragmatism is an independent doctrine, radical empiricism is a dependent one, logically supported by pragmatism. From the perspective of later philosophical developments James's judgment appears to have been mistaken. For radical empiricism has proved to be a durable philosophical doctrine, permeating other movements such as natural realism and logical empiricism, quite in-dependently of pragmatism.” [131]

Aside from that, Reck continues, radical empiricism was used as a method to solve metaphysical problems long before James used pragmatism to solve metaphysical problems. So the two theories may seem similar in the sense that they are considered methods, but even if they are not related, they prove that pragmatism does not help to prevail over radical empiricism as radical empiricism as a method was already established before pragmatism. He says “...before James had arrived at his formulation of pragmatism as the method which settles metaphysical disputes by reference to the practical consequences of the disputed concepts and principles, he had applied the radical empiricist method to metaphysical doctrine such as monism” [132]

Reck seeks to demonstrate that even if the two are regarded as methods, they have some commonality but still cannot be claimed to be related. Furthermore, he claims that radical empiricism is more than just a methodology and possesses extra elements that cannot be categorised as belonging to pragmatism. Reck attempts to argue that James's core theory is radical empiricism, which cannot be claimed to have anything to do with his pragmatism; there may be some similarities between the two, but they are unrelated.

Now we will discuss the claims and arguments of the second group.

David C. Lamberth [133] interprets James's comments as showing that two theories are not related in the sense that one helps to prove the other. Lamberth states that radical empiricism includes the pragmatic theory of truth, which is one of the components of radical empiricism. Here he also rejects James' first remark that pragmatism and radical empiricism are independent doctrines. James' overall philosophical approach is radical empiricism.

<sup>131</sup> Reck (1967) pp. 58

<sup>132</sup> Ibid pp. 58-59

<sup>133</sup> *William James and The Metaphysics Of Experience.*



He disagrees with James' another assertion that pragmatism contributes to the development of radical empiricism. Lamberth argues in favour of his claims. He says the core of pragmatic epistemology is included in and even dependent on radical empiricism. He also says pragmatism is not only an epistemology; it has a metaphysical commitment. The pragmatic theory of truth is not a philosophical system in James's holistic view. In his words "I have become persuaded that the pragmatic "theory" of truth in James actually does relatively little work from the standpoint of his philosophical system" [134] So it cannot be said that pragmatism helps to prevail radical empiricism .

Moreover, Lamberth also argues that James's philosophy becomes more confused or even misunderstood if one understands his theory of truth without first considering radical empiricism. To elaborate on Lamberth's point, James's concept of truth is so general that it cannot be said to contribute to the development of a philosophical system. In addition, there is so much debate surrounding James's theory of truth that it is unclear what James actually means by truth, making it impossible to say that a clear philosophical system has been originated from something that is also unclear. James's notion of truth is also unproductive; it does not help to shape reality in any way. It follows that James cannot be fully comprehended if radical empiricism is not first examined. From this Lamberth therefore concludes that pragmatism does not increase the acceptability of radical empiricism. Lamberth says - "For us (if not also for James) theories of truth are too commonplace, too contentious, and ultimately too unproductive to be good points of departure". [135] In this way, Lamberth establishes that James's two remarks are partially unacceptable but that pragmatism as part of radical empiricism is related to and dependent on them.

Another scholar John R. Shook [136] discussed how radical empiricism and pragmatism related to one another. Shook claims that when James says that the truth of radical empiricism does not depend on the theory of pragmatism, James basically means the kind of pragmatism that other philosophers Peirce, Dewey Schiller were developing as theories of pragmatism in James's time. But James himself did not refer to his own version of pragmatism. So when James says that radical empiricism does not depend on the truth of the pragmatism, he is not talking about his own theory. Here, James basically means another version of pragmatism. However, radical empiricism and what James

<sup>134</sup> Lamberth, David. C (1999) p. 207

<sup>135</sup> Ibid p. 207

<sup>136</sup> *The Essential William James*

himself refers to as the pragmatic theory of truth are interconnected, and even pragmatism is dependent on radical empiricism. In Shook's words, "James did develop his own kind of pragmatism that continued to be closely related to and dependent on his radical empiricism."  
[137]

John Shook then makes an attempt to demonstrate how radical empiricism is compatible with James' version of pragmatism. According to Shook, there are two fundamental principles of pragmatism: thoughts are active, and thoughts are meaningful. Thoughts are not passive; they are active because one thought always leads to another in experience. A thought is meaningful because it constantly refers to a subsequent experience that will be realised based on our actions. These two principles of pragmatism depend on a radical empiricist view of experience. In this sense, these two doctrines are related and dependent on radical empiricism.

Richard P. Mullin says that William James's theory of truth and meaning is supplemented by radical empiricism because James's theory provides some clarification of some issues and gives content to pragmatism. Mullin says that the relationship between these two theories can be better illustrated by what role concepts play in James's theory of knowledge. He says when we think about an experience, we create concepts from perceptions.. Our belief about this concept becomes true when we act to achieve the goal or consequence. So, if we do not substitute the concept for the perception, the concept by which we act to reach the truth will be impossible to substitute, sensible flux will be needed first, and that is the main postulate of radical empiricism because according to radical empiricism, nothing can be accepted as a fact unless experienced. Anything experienced is acceptable. In this way Mullin tries to show that the doctrine of pragmatism depends on radical empiricism. The truth of an idea is meaningful when it leads us through experience. Mullin also asserts that reality is semi-chaotic. Reality is malleable that, to some part, depends on the person's goal. Because radical empiricism provides content, this pragmatic theory of truth would be difficult to understand if radical empiricism is not accepted. Mullin goes on to say that these two theories are related because of the pragmatic method and the radical empiricism's postulate of pure experience.

Richard Stevens [138] says that James' overall philosophy is radical empiricism. He asserts that pragmatic theory of truth and radical empiricism are connected. The pragmatic theory of truth helps to develop radical empiricism in the initial steps. But one can accept pragmatism

<sup>137</sup> Shook, John.R ( 2011 ) p.17

<sup>138</sup> *James and Husserl: The Foundations of Meaning*

without refuting the tenets of radical empiricism. He says these two doctrines are related in James' discussion. A more coherent interpretation of pragmatism can be established if we accept radical empiricism as its foundation. To understand the pragmatic theory of truth, one has to accept the first premise of radical empiricism, which says that the problem of truth must be solved from the point of view of experience. Cash value is an important concept in pragmatic theory of truth. The cash value of ideas is verifiable by experience, which is again a key tenet of radical empiricism. So it can be said that radical empiricism is related to pragmatism in a basic sense.

Ruth Anna Putnam [139] says that there is a relationship between these two. The relationship is both-sided, that is, as pragmatism will be required for the theory of radical empiricism similarly to make pragmatism more appealing to everyone, radical empiricism is required. In the words of Putnam "From within James's philosophy, contrary to what he says, pragmatism needs radical empiricism as much as radical empiricism needs pragmatism." [140] James has kept open the possibility that someone can be a radical empiricist even by rejecting pragmatism. This means that radical empiricism will exist independently of pragmatism. Putnam says these remarks are not accepted. She says one cannot reject pragmatism but at the same time become radical empiricist. Putnam says that the problem of solipsism arises from pragmatism. But radical empiricism's first postulate helps overcome solipsism. It is not possible to be a radical empiricist without being a pragmatist. Because pragmatic truth is an integral part of radical empiricism. In this sense, both doctrines are related. She says "...what makes pragmatism so appealing is that it is a philosophy that makes room for our moral lives, that it takes our moral lives seriously. Morality makes no sense unless you and I live in the same world, know the same things, can and do compete or cooperate or ignore each other. Radical empiricism is James's attempt to explain how that is possible." [141]

Now we will discuss the claims and arguments of the third group.

Ralph Barton Perry, [142] gives an explanation of James's above remark. Perry says pragmatism and radical empiricism are not different methods, they are closely related. In the words of Perry "Thus ... pragmatism and radical empiricism do not differ essentially when regarded as methods...." [143] When viewed as a method, why the relationship between them is deep can be shown, in response to this Perry argues that one of the methodological postulates of radical empiricism is the

<sup>139</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, <sup>140</sup> Putnam, Ruth Anna (1997) p.139

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, p.139, <sup>142</sup> *Essays in Radical Empiricism*

<sup>143</sup> Perry, Ralph Barton (1912) p.xii

principle of pure experience. According to this principle, philosophers will debate only over those things that can be defined in terms of experience, and if they are not given in experience, they will not be the subject of philosophical debate. If we take this methodological postulate of radical empiricism, it can be said that it has a close relationship with pragmatism because according to the method of pragmatism, the meaning of any expression depends on the particular consequence which is again determined by the future experience. As a result, it can be said that the postulates of radical empiricism and pragmatic methods are the same thing. Moreover, the method of pragmatism also applies for justifying the admission of relation in radical empiricism. In this way, Perry tries to show that there is a relationship between pragmatism as a method and radical empiricism as a method. But if pragmatism and radical empiricism are seen as doctrines, then they cannot be said to be related, because then they can be independent. In Perry's words "they are independent when regarded as doctrines". [144] The doctrines of pragmatism, according to Perry, include theory of truth and meaning. When pragmatism is employed as this method, it can develop independently of radical empiricism's theory of relations. According to the theory of relations, relationships can be found in all experiences, whether they are conjunctive or disjunctive. However, pragmatism, Perry's claims, can be developed without relying on the theory of this relation, so they can be considered independent. Furthermore, pragmatism is independent of the other two components namely statement of fact and generalised conclusion of radical empiricism. Therefore, it can be said that these two theories are distinct from one another.

In his book *William James* Graham Bird interprets the aforementioned statements made by James by arguing that the first postulate of radical empiricism has some relevance to the method of pragmatism because, in accordance with the postulate, philosophers will only discuss those concepts that can be defined in terms of experience. James also stated that all concepts that are not definable in terms of experience can exist, but they are not included in philosophical discourse. On the other hand, the pragmatic approach is how philosophers resolve disagreements over the nature of truth. In this regard, the pragmatic method and James' radical empiricism are closely related. Then Bird asserts that James himself claims the logical independence of these two theories despite subsequently claiming that the pragmatic explanation of truth supports radical empiricism. The theory of radical empiricism is thus supported by at least part of pragmatism. In Bird's words "Pragmatism, then, is not

equivalent to radical empiricism, and does not entail it, but at least part of pragmatism may lend support to the latter doctrine." [145]

The method of pragmatism is closely related to the postulates of radical empiricism because it considers philosophical disputes in terms of experience. For example, in case of metaphysical dispute like whether matter or spirit is real, pragmatic method can help to decide which is to be considered as pragmatically real. Like in any other case in the present case also what difference either matter or spirit brings in practical life will determine which one is accepted pragmatically. Thus, James shows that metaphysical dispute regarding the existence of things that cannot be verified by direct experience can be resolved by the pragmatic method which is in conformity with the related postulate of radical empiricism. So, the pragmatic approach is helpful in resolving all of these issues. In this regard, James claims that the pragmatist approach aids in the triumph of radical empiricism. [146]

In this way, Bird aims to demonstrate that these two theories are not entirely independent, despite the fact that James did not want to admit their connection. The pragmatic view of truth can help to realise radical empiricism.

Both of James' remarks, according to Richard Gale, are right in a certain sense. In support of the first remark, Gale argues that pragmatism is unrelated to the radical empiricism's postulate because the empiricism discussed in the pragmatic theory of meaning and the empiricism discussed in the theory of radical empiricism are two distinct concepts. Thus, pragmatism does not derive from the postulates of radical empiricism. The postulate of radical empiricism refers to content empiricism, while the empiricism of pragmatism refers to pragmatic empiricism hence the two are distinct. I have presented a detailed explanation of this in the third chapter, so I won't go into it again here. Gale made an effort to disprove the relationship between these two theories. Gale argues later that James' second claim is true because there are some counterexamples to radical empiricism that pragmatism helps eliminate.

Since the relationship between radical empiricism and pragmatism is not the main focus of my research, I won't discuss all the arguments that the above mentioned thinkers have presented in this context. I'll briefly go through the main points of those arguments as well as their shortcomings that have an impact on our research questions.

<sup>145</sup> Bird, Graham (1986) p.14

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p.66

The views of Elizabeth Flower and Andrew J. Reck are not acceptable. Flower distinguishes between experience and a person's beliefs about experience. She thinks experience and my belief about experience are two different things. Thus, radical empiricism and pragmatism are independent because pragmatism discusses beliefs about experience and radical empiricism discusses the nature of experience. Consequently, radical empiricism and pragmatism are completely independent. But if we agree with Flower, then what James says about the nature of pure experience cannot be accepted. In the flow of experience, different things can be produced, and pragmatic reality also emerges from that flow, according to James. Because of this, it cannot be explained if these two are distinct.

Reck argued that if pragmatism is acknowledged as a method, it has nothing to do with radical empiricism because pragmatic approach was used to tackle metaphysical issues long before the pragmatic method was created. Pragmatism cannot be applied even to those things that radical empiricism admits. As a result, there is no connection between them. It follows that they are not connected. Reck's statement is not acceptable because James himself talks about how the method of pragmatism helps radical empiricism. James himself does not say that all discourses of radical empiricism are grounded in pragmatism.

It cannot be said that radical empiricism was created before the doctrine or method of pragmatism was developed. Because James discussed pragmatism long before *Will to Believe*, [147] it cannot be said that radical empiricism is not supported by pragmatism because radical empiricism preceded pragmatism.

I think Shook's view is acceptable because there were other theories of pragmatism in James's time not necessarily related to radical empiricism. But what James himself means by pragmatism has a relation with radical empiricism. We can tell from his writings that James wanted to keep both of these theories. In fact, there may be another reason for saying this. James says in chapter on Pure Experience in the book *Essays in Radical Empiricism* that the relationship between the two is difficult to show, but if it can be shown, it will be significant to his discussion. Another relevant passages in this context can be referred from the same book: "the author employs the term 'humanism' either as a synonym for 'radical empiricism'... or as that general philosophy of life which 'radical empiricism' is the theoretical ground." [148] So it may assumed that in his early career he maintained that the two were not related because he wasn't sure if he could show the

<sup>147</sup> *The will to believe and other essays in popular philosophy* (1897)

<sup>148</sup> James, William (1912 ) p.193, footnote

relationship. But he clearly says that this relation is important, and hints of relationships run through his writings. So if it is said that there is no relation between the two types of theory then many inconsistency will arise in James' writing, because James referred to pure experience in his discussion of pragmatism.

So it can be said that there is a relationship between the two theories because James himself included the principle of pure experience and the pragmatic method in radical empiricism.

Perry admits that pragmatism and radical empiricism are related as methods. But he claims that pragmatism and radical empiricism are not related as a doctrine. Pragmatism as doctrine has no logical connection with radical empiricism because it does not involve the theory of relations described in radical empiricism. However, going against Perry we need to mention that relation is important component of pragmatic reality. James himself has admitted relation as one of the three constituent of reality. As a result, we cannot completely deny relations even when discussing pragmatism.

I think that James's first remark is correct, as pragmatism and radical empiricism are not logically related. But it is also true that these two doctrines are ontologically related. If these two theories are not ontologically related, James will be unable to describe pure experience as a known subject or object. Actually, pragmatic reality is one of these functional elements of pure experience. If James only accepts pure experience without admitting pragmatism, it is impossible to describe this sensible world. So these two theories are related not logically but ontologically.

## Section- 2

We shall now discuss about the connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. We can observe that, in a broad sense, the interpretations of the many interpreters can be categorised into three groups. One group denies the connection between pragmatic reality and pure experience. Another group asserts that there is a connection between pragmatic realities and pure experience. The third group holds that while the relationship is acknowledged in one sense, it is denied in the other. That is the relationship depends on how we interpret them.

The first group includes Seigfried. Gale, Suckiel, Wild, and Sami Pihlström are in the second group. Cooper belongs to the third category.

The first group presented by Seigfried. She initially admits that there is a relationship between pure experience and pragmatic reality, but later denies that either has any metaphysics.

The second group presented by Sami Pihlström , holds pragmatic reality is the basics on which pure experience depends. Gale wild however hold the following : there is nothing called real as pure experience, whatever is there is pragmatic reality, pure experience associated with a part of pragmatic reality. As a result, the pragmatic reality is basic.

An opposite relation is admitted by Suckiel. She says that Pure experience is the basis upon which pragmatic reality is built. Wild on the other hand would admit the relationship but present it in a different way from Suckiel. Wild would claims pragmatic reality is built on pure experience, but pragmatism is actually epistemology, existential phenomenology connects pragmatic reality and pure experience. Cooper view come under the third group. Cooper says that there is pure experience and pragmatic reality, and even though they are not related in one sense, they are related in another sense.

First, we'll briefly explain why Seigfried's assertion is unacceptable. What drawback would James' hypothesis have if Seigfried's claim were to be believed? Seigfried initially sought to demonstrate that adopting pure experience can resolve the discrepancy that arises from the way experience is interpreted in pragmatism. Later, however, because she interpreted metaphysics in the traditional sense, Seigfried departed from her original position and asserted that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism and pure experience. As there is no



principle about being, no formal system, and hence no metaphysics in the traditional sense in pragmatism or pure experience. Pragmatism is actually a theory of knowledge.

I won't get into the details of why Seigfried's viewpoint is incorrect, as we addressed it in Chapter IV, but the main thrust of our argument was that just because James's pragmatism lacks traditional metaphysics it can not be said that other types of metaphysics are also absent from that theory. In addition, we can state that there is metaphysics in the traditional sense in James's theory and the same is explicated in the nature of pure experience discussed by James. Early on in his theory Seigfried himself admitted it. Therefore, it is impossible to accept the idea that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism and radical empiricism. It is possible to argue that there is metaphysics in pragmatism with reference to Seigfried initial acceptance of pure experience as the main metaphysical principles in James' philosophy: it can be argued that since pure experience serves as the foundation for pragmatic reality and also since a part of the pure experience is admitted by James as a constituent as pragmatic reality, pragmatism cannot lack metaphysics. And in the first chapter, we went into great detail about how James articulated reality when discussing pragmatism. James' discussion of pragmatic reality would be out of place if it were claimed that pragmatism contains only epistemology.

According to Cooper, there is a relation between these two realities in a metaphysical sense but not in an empirical sense. He categorises all of James's philosophical ideas into two levels. Then he makes the claim that pragmatism exists on an empirical level and that pure experience exists on a metaphysical level. The emphasis on reality at the metaphysical level is distinct from the emphasis on reality at the empirical level. As a result, one cannot discuss pragmatic reality at the empirical level while discussing metaphysical reality. There is no relation between them in this sense. But if one were to talk about pragmatic realities on a metaphysical level, then the fundamental element of that pragmatic reality would be pure experience. Therefore, it may be claimed that these two realities are related in this sense. The issue of dualism in James' theory would arise, however, if Cooper's position were to be accepted. Since the issue of how these two levels relate will arise if the level is disconnected. Problem of dualism will arise. James, however, had a lifetime opposition to dualism of any form. Furthermore, the two levels cannot be said to be wholly distinct from one another because, if they were, there would be no relationship between them. But James has admitted the relation between these two realities which cannot be admitted if Cooper view is accepted . In addition, we can raise some empirical-level questions that lead to metaphysical-level

questions. But if Cooper's viewpoint is adopted, this possibility cannot be considered. However, if we examine the development of metaphysics, we can see that numerous philosophers, beginning with Aristotle, have addressed metaphysical level issues from this empirical level. So even if one admits two levels in James' theory it would not follow that those two levels are totally discrete and disconnected.

Suckiel and Wild relate these two types of reality by saying that pure experience is the metaphysical reality on which pragmatic reality is dependent. Hence pure experience is basic and it is the ground of pragmatic reality as metaphysical reality. But Wild, Suckiel would differ regarding the nature of these two realities. Suckiel says that pragmatic reality is also metaphysical reality in James's philosophy, although it is secondary; but Wild says that there is no metaphysics in pragmatism, the main theory of pragmatism is epistemological and at the same time there is an existential phenomenological element in it. Moreover, although pure experience is the essence of everything, there are some inconsistencies in it that can be eliminated in the perspective of existential phenomenology. Wild claims that by Interpreting James's pragmatism and pure experience from the perspective of existential phenomenology, the inconsistencies in James's philosophy can be eliminated and the relationship between these two realities can be shown.

We will first address Suckiel's argument. Suckiel recognises that there is a connection between the two realities, but she views pure experience as the primary building block upon which pragmatic realities are constructed as phenomena, since pragmatic realities lack any ontological substance. However, if we agree with Suckiel, then reductionism will apply in this instance. In other words, admission of Suckiel's view will require us to admit that pragmatic facts can be reduced down to simple experience. Then it would also follow that James's theory only has one theory, namely monism of pure experience. But James is a pluralist in his philosophical views; he never referred to monism as an acceptable view. In addition, James does not reductionism. So Suckiel interpretation is not consistent with the spirit of James' philosophy.

Wild's view is not acceptable because, as we have already noted in refuting Seigfried's view, James discusses metaphysics in his pragmatism. As a result, it is incorrect to say that pragmatism is confined to discussing epistemology and contains no metaphysics. Furthermore, Wild's interpretation of pure experience in terms of living body would misrepresent James's conception of pure experience because pure experience is for James the

primal stuff from which unlike living body everything in the world is created, and because unlike living body pure experience can have a state when it is not a subject. A living body can be created from pure experience even though the pure experience itself is not limited to a living body. So the notion of living body can help to understand the notion of pure experience or the relation between pragmatic reality and pure experience only in a very limited way.

In discussing the relation between two realities Richard Gale and Sami Pihlström presents an opposite view point from that of Suckiel and Wild. Without acknowledging pragmatic reality, Pihlström contends, pure experience would not be meaningful or even possible. Pragmatic reality is essential and basic since pragmatic reality makes pure experience meaningful. The cornerstone of metaphysics, according to Pihlström, is ethics; no metaphysics is possible without the inclusion of ethics, he claims in his argument.

According to Gale, pragmatism is a wider concept. Pure experience is relevant for explaining only a part of pragmatic reality: of the seven worlds admitted by James pure experience is relevant only for the sensible world. Pragmatism however can explain the reality of the other remaining six worlds. Pragmatic reality is regarded by Gale as fundamental because it can unify all the seven worlds because a subject of experience, which is a pragmatically real entity, can act as an agent for unifying all these worlds. In this sense Gale considers this unification as indirect and mediated through a subject.

It may be noted that like Suckiel Pihlström too proposes a sort of monism and reductionism because if pragmatic facts are considered to be fundamental, by which any other metaphysics is justified and possible, then no other theory than pragmatic metaphysics can be a fundamental one. If every reality is required to meet pragmatic demands, as Pihlström hold, then every reality will be eventually reduced to pragmatic reality. But we have already mentioned that this sort of monism and reductionism goes against the main guiding principles of James's philosophy. Moreover Pihlström theory would lead to the admission of the possibility of the existence of pragmatic reality independent of pure experience. However this is not admissible in Jamesian pragmatism because James has admitted in his theory of pragmatic real certain elements as constituent the existence of which does not depend on the need of the subject. Evidently these constituent cannot be explained remaining within the realm of pragmatism but requires one to go beyond pragmatism. In James' case the only other theory which has been admitted beyond pragmatism is the theory of radical empiricism which has pure experience as its metaphysical content.

Gale, on the other hand, does not accept pure experience as fundamental because it has only a limited relevance: it is not relevant for the objects of non – sensible worlds. For constructing our arguments against Gale we can refer to what Suckiel reminds us about the nature of pure experience. Suckiel has drawn our attention to the fact that in James' system the span of pure experience is wide one: it is wider than what Gale assumes it to be. Due to this wide span the pure experience can create variety of things including those objects which belong to the six worlds which are different from the sensible world. So Gale's assertion that the relevance of pure experience is limited to the sensible world is not acceptable if we look closely into the nature of pure experience.

In this section our main concern was to point out the main reasons why we do not consider the interpretations of various James scholars regarding nature and relation between two realities to be unacceptable. One of the main reasons has been that none of these interpretations seem to be adequately faithful to certain central principles and views of James' philosophy. To mention a few: James believes that traditional philosophical disputes can be viewed profitably from an inclusive view point, rather than from an exclusive one. Moreover James believes that each philosophical view contains some truth without the admission of which a whole picture of truth or reality cannot be found. James also holds that the philosophical views which are generally considered to be absolutely contradictory may not, in reality, be so. The views which we have considered above in this thesis tend to emphasize on some parts of the James' view of the real rather than the whole of it.

However, though the various interpretations that we have discussed are not fully acceptable, it would be interesting to note that some of these views contain certain insights which can be used to present a holistic understanding of James' view of the real. Most of the interpretations that we have discussed admit relation between pure experience and pragmatic reality. While some of the scholars hold pure experience to be basic others have claimed pragmatic reality to be basic. The point that we want to bring home from these interpretations is that taken together they indicate that both the realities can be held to be basic or fundamental depending on the view point we take. Our attempt in the next section will be to try to see whether it can be possible to have any such interpretation of James' view of reality from which it can be shown that pure experience and pragmatic reality are equally real and fundamental.

### **Section-3**

In this section we would like to show that pragmatic reality and pure experience are related. But they are related not in the sense that one is basic and the other is non-basic or one is fundamental and the other is secondary- but in the sense that they are equally real. They both have equal importance; without both we cannot describe and understand reality as a whole. We would also try to show that the uniqueness and the relatedness of these two realities can be explained if James' theory of reality is understood from the view point of process theory.

James himself never explained pure experience as primordial or basic. However, James himself referred to the stream of concrete experience as primordial, referring to the experience that arises from the flow of pure experience, in which the subject-object division is seen and the subject can create various types of objects and have various experiences. James claims that when a subject separates a portion of the flow of experience for his own purposes and creates various concepts, the concepts' justification, creation, and everything else are all possible on the basis of this concrete experience. This is why James says concrete experience is primordial in the realm of pragmatic reality. Accordingly in James' philosophy only in the realm of pragmatic reality entities can be classified as basic or non-basic, but pure experience itself cannot be held as basic or non-basic.

We have already discussed that it would be problematic to consider one of these two realities basic and the other non-basic. Here we would like to establish that as real both pure experience and pragmatic reality enjoy equal status of James' theory, and they are of equal importance. When the flow of experience moves on, when the elements of the flow have not been classified, when the flow is not analysed then it can be called pure experience, according to James. But this flow does not consist in only one stream of experience but it contains multiple streams having the possibility of getting related with each other. Through this relations and actions of one stream on another the unanalysed experience gets gradually analysed. And as one of the first products of this analysis the subject is created. It is a stage in the movement of pure experience. And this subject subsequently creates various objects through its relation with other streams and its functions too. Thus more and more newer things, the possibility of which was contained in the pure experience get created. This is how

some aspects of pure experience turns into pragmatic reality. It can be seen from the above account of the origin of pragmatic real that the pragmatic reality is produced in pure experience and also can act on pure experience to bring the changes in the status of the streams of pure experience. For example after the subject- object distinction is created in through the needs of the subject, one subject can relate to another subject in such a way that the other subject gets changed into an object in relation to first subject. It shows that a stream which initially was manifested from pure experience as a subject gets acted upon by another subject and thus the status of the stream is changed. If changed is an essential feature of pure experience then it must be admitted that the elements of pragmatic reality which are produced from pure experience can in turn facilitate the process of change. This is an evidence of equal importance of both the realities and their inter – relatedness.

If we look at James' discussion of the notion of percept and concept we find that he has referred to the dispute between the intellectualist (rationalist) and empiricist philosophers on this matter. He points out that while the intellectualist consider concept to be fundamental and real, the empiricist hold percept to be real and basic. James criticises both the views and says that for having a grasp of the whole of reality we need to admit both percept and concept as real. If we keep in mind that though the percept concept division holds for pragmatic reality still percept here stands for the perceptual flux which is nothing but the representative of the pure experience as a constituent of the real and concept is a product of human need and as such it represents pragmatic reality. Accordingly since percept and concept are held to be equally real by James and since they represent pure experience and pragmatic reality it can be argued that James would himself consider pure experience and pragmatic reality to be equally real.

One may object against what we have said above regarding the equal status of pragmatic reality and pure experience by saying since James himself would consider pragmatic reality as a product of pure experience it must be admitted to have the status of dependent reality and thus secondary. In response to it .we would argue that though pragmatic reality is based on pure experience the latter cannot be claimed to be the sole basis of the former. If any object is termed pragmatically real then it is a function of pure experience. But pure experience cannot turn out to be a substance or function by itself unless the subject of experience exercises its function of attention, selection etc. the items of pragmatic reality cannot turn into existence. So, pure experience *as such* cannot be the sole element responsible for the production of pragmatic reality. As a matter of fact the possibility of pragmatic reality is contained in pure

experience *as such*. But the actualisation of pragmatic reality involves certain process which can take place only when the *purity* of pure experience surrenders itself to the divisive activity of the subject. We would claim that this interpretation of the relation between metaphysical reality and pragmatic reality is much more consistent with the spirit of Jamesian philosophy

On this point one may wonder that even though the existence of metaphysical reality is significant for the existence of pragmatic reality, can pragmatic reality be in any sense significant for the existence of metaphysical reality as pure experience? Our contention here is that the Jamesian notion of metaphysical reality contains two presentations of pure experience: pure experience as *the possibility of the pragmatic real* and pure experience as *the basis of actualised pragmatic reality*. If pure experience is taken in the form of first presentation then it is undifferentiated though containing the possibility of differentiation. In the second presentation, however, pure experience is to be viewed as flow of experience in which the various elements are differentiated where some differentiated element takes the role of a subject and the others are its object. Since this differentiated state is synonymous with pragmatic reality, it can be claimed that pragmatic reality is significant for the second form of presentation of pure experience itself. It is in this sense that James' notion of metaphysical reality has integral connection with pragmatic reality. From one viewpoint metaphysical reality is significant for pragmatic reality while from another viewpoint pragmatic reality is significant for metaphysical reality. This in its turn brings out the metaphysical significance of pragmatic reality in James' philosophy.

The interdependency and interrelatedness between the two notions of reality admitted by James becomes difficult to understand chiefly because in most of the cases these two realities are taken to be discrete things or types of real. We have seen that James scholars have tried to relate these two realities in different ways: the notions of morality, level distinction, living body etc. have been proposed for understanding this issue. But we have already seen that these explanations of the relation lead to several difficulties. We would submit here that if James' notion of reality is viewed from the standpoint of process theory then a holistic understanding of James' view will be possible.

In Western metaphysics, mainly intellectualist philosophers defined reality as a fixed, permanent substance and explained "change" or "becoming" as appearance, although there were indications of process metaphysics, this metaphysics did not develop until much later.

Process theory is mainly interpreted as a theory opposed to substantive metaphysics. The main focus of process theory is to explain reality through the concepts of change, motion, action, and continuity. In this process theory, priority is given to processes over substances or things, which are here described as subordinate. That does not mean that substance or thoughts are denied here. Rather substances, things, or properties; are attempted here to be explained or understood in terms of processes.

Before we proceed further, let us try to figure out what "process" means. Nicholas Rescher is one of the most recent proponents of process metaphysics. In his book *Process Metaphysics: An Introduction to Process Philosophy*, he answers the question, "What is process?" He says "A process is a coordinated group of changes in the complexion of reality, an organized family of occurrences that are systematically linked to one another either causally or functionally." [149]

Processes are associated with different types of events and occurrences. Process does not necessarily refer to changes in individual things but to the conditions of things. A new event is created through the process. An individual thing can also be produced through processes. As there is continuity in the process, it is constantly changing. From one process, more subordinate processes can be created. A process moves towards the future. Processes are related in the sense that there are a series of connections among those that occur within the process. New processes can be created within the process that were not previously included in it. It is false that continuity exists in processes because processes are produced by substances. Processes exhibit continuity throughout their histories. Rescher describes how a physical or mental process can be generated. He says "If the "connection" at issue in that "sequence of connected developments" is one of actual causality, then we have a physical process; if it is mental or mathematical operations, then we have process of different sorts. However, for present purposes, it is the physical processes that constitute the natural world about us which will be the focus of concern." [150] Water boils due to the heat from the fire; this is an example of a physical process. An example of a mental process is the process through which information is received by the senses and then stored in memory.

We'll now examine James' pragmatism in relation to process theory. James' theories of pragmatism and pure experience incorporate concepts of process as well. We will now discuss that pragmatic theory is one type of process theory.

<sup>149</sup> Rescher, Nicholas (1996)p. 38

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 41



In the book *The Meaning of Truth*, James defines "experience" as a process that provides us with material that we digest. When a subject creates pragmatic reality by selecting from the flow of experience according to our needs, he cannot do so randomly. That, too, is a process. James referred to the process as "reflex arc" in his book *Will to Believe*. This reflex arc theory is a triadic process that is physiologically based. There are three steps in this process, which cannot operate independently. According to this process, the sensory impressions we receive through our senses—we receive sense data by attending to something while ignoring the rest because of our interest—are then classified as conceptions. On the basis of this conception, we act. Through this act, an individual fulfils his needs. The purpose of the reflex arc is achieved by satisfying these needs. And through this triadic process, pragmatic reality is created. Processes have an important contribution to the making of pragmatic reality. Thus, we see that process plays an important role in James's pragmatic reality.

William James uses pragmatism in two senses, one in a limited sense and the other in a broader sense. In a narrow sense, pragmatism is a theory of meaning. According to this theory, the meaning of a concept is always found in the course of human experience. The meaning of "concepts" or "beliefs" does not refer to the mental image or object only but also the consequences of the concept or belief. If we want to know the meaning of a word or concept, then we have to know this through the course of our own experiences. Processes are thus also involved in this narrow sense of pragmatism.

Pragmatism is explained in a wider sense by James as a theory of truth. He says, in his book, *The Meaning of Truth* "The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification. Its validity is the process of its validation." [151] When discussing pragmatism in a broader sense, James emphasises "process" to develop his formulation of wider pragmatism in this way. Here we would like to mention that in James' metaphysics not only objects or things are considered to be real but even the concept of truth and philosophical theories would belong to world of abstract objects. So pragmatism as a theory is pragmatically real too. Thus to show that pragmatism involves process is to show that it is a product from pure experience which is also of the nature of a process.

<sup>151</sup> James, William (1909)p. vi

We will now talk about how pure experience might be seen as a "process".

James explains pure experience as the continuous stream that is the primordial material from which all things are generated. However, that does not originate from anything else. According to James, pure experience is initially chaotic but gradually divides into inner and outer states through acts and relations. This explanation of pure experience demonstrates that it is simply a process. When intellectual life is created through pure experience by using concepts, conceptions are nothing but a secondary process, according to James. We can easily explain how different objects and functions are generated by acts and relations in the flow of experience by referring to the process. For instance, knowing is how one aspect of experience relates to another. One portion of experience is called "knower," and another portion is explained as "known." This 'knowing function' can be an example of pure experience as a process.

So, based on the preceding discussion, we can incorporate James' two views of reality into the process theory. On this point I need to explain what, in my opinion, is the relation between pure experience and pragmatic reality? Are they continuous, or should I say they are different? If we focus on James' notion of radical pluralism, then we can say that pragmatic reality and pure experience are not fully distinct realities. Instead, these realities constantly act on each other: one portion of experience might be labelled pragmatic realities and other portion pure experience, it depends on the context. There is continuity between them. Although there is some continuity, there is also some difference because, when pragmatic reality is created from that stuff in a process, it emerges with some features that are not included as essential elements in pure experience but rather as things that potentially exist. However, when pragmatic reality is created, it has some properties that meet our requirements. So from the point of view of pragmatic reality, these features not only exist but are also real because they help satisfy human needs. So, even though pure experience and pragmatic reality are a continuous process in the stream, some characteristics emerge at some point that distinguishes pure experience from pragmatic reality. From the point of view of pure experience, it is pure, but from the point of view of consciousness, pure experience is

something known as pragmatic reality. Within pure experience, various differences are created, which can take different forms. So, in pure experience, pragmatic reality occurs in specific relations; in this sense, these are continuous. But later-stage pragmatic reality is also distinct from pure experience when some properties emerge. So their relations depend on the context. If we accept pure experience as a process, then pure experience and pragmatic reality can be defined without difficulty as continuous. We have to use process interpretation to show that process helps establish the continuity that exists between them. Continuity between pure experience and the pragmatic real, as well as pragmatism and radical empiricism, can be shown in this way.

Sometimes the aspect of metaphysical reality or pure experience predominates; sometimes the aspect of pragmatic reality predominates. In the case of a process, all its elements are not equally dominant. Sometimes interaction dominates the process; sometimes flow dominates. James explains pragmatic reality, focusing on the sensible world. Activity as part of this world comes with definite directions and desires. If this activity results in the fulfilment of a need, it is referred to as pragmatic reality. Here, pragmatic reality plays a dominant role in the process. But if there are no directions or tendencies in the stream, then pure experience plays a dominant role. This process is neither physical nor psychological; it is a stream of experience. A physical or psychological state arises from it. However, Pure experience is the process from which all other processes emerge.

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