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## William James' conception of realities and their relation

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### **Abstract**

William James' metaphysical theory occupies an important position in contemporary discussions on metaphysics. In his various writings James has discussed about two types of realities: one is pragmatic reality and the other is metaphysical reality. But it is notable here that regarding the relation between these two types of realities James has not expressed any clear view. Accordingly, this issue of relation leads the contemporary scholars of James' philosophy to offer various views that bring out the controversial nature of this relation.

In this presentation, I have discussed these two types of realities and various interpretations of James' scholars regarding their relation. William James in his book *The Principles of Psychology* has discussed about the nature of reality. The second volume of this book includes a chapter entitled 'Perception of reality'. Here, the first thing that James says while discussing the criterion of pragmatic reality is that –“The sense that anything we think of is unreal can only come, then, when that thing is contradicted by some other thing of which we think. Any object which remains un-contradicted is ipso facto believed and posited as absolute reality.”(288-89pp).

James' account of metaphysical reality has been elaborated in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. In this book James defines reality in the following way. He says: “there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience,' then knowing can easily be explained.”4page. Last but not the least, I have discussed the relation between these two types of realities.



**Speaker**

