

BRIEF SUMMARY

Koutstaal, W. (1993). Lowly notions: Forgetting in William James's moral universe. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 29, 609–635.

[From the paper] In his attempt to build, and embody, such a mediating way, James takes in hand any tools, and any substance, that might serve, assessing each according to its promise for helping us move between our ideas and our experiences, and for helping him to unstiffen those two great "columns" of philosophy — rationalism and empiricism — without thereby ousting, or too much unsettling, well established ideas [...] Virtually all of the perennial problems of philosophy appear in one or more guises in these lectures [on Pragmatism]: the problems of substance, of personal identity, of materialism, of free will and determinism, of design, of objective truth and verification, of forms of unity, of the nature of space and time, and James borrows freely from the distinctions and concepts others developed in grappling with those problems. However, he also brings to bear several more mundane or workaday concepts, that others might well hesitate to introduce in a serious philosophical discussion. His appeal to the notion of temperament is probably the best example here [...] But there are also other, less immediately obvious, commonplace notions that he draws upon. One of these is the notion of forgetting. The other, which may in some ways be related to forgetting, is the idea of "moral holidays." Seeing how James uses these lowly notions to give force and substance to his argument for a pluralistic and melioristic religion is the object of this paper.
