

Three Fallacies about Doing Good

Abstract.

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You may do often good by virtue of the causal effects of your acts but it is a fallacy to think that you may not do good by virtue of non-causal effects too. You may often do good by virtue of the actualistic results, causal or non-causal, of your actions—results that are independent of what you would do under counterfactual conditions—but it is a fallacy to think that those are the only results that can make an action good: there are benefits that require, not just that you act in a certain way under actual circumstances, but that you would act in the same way under certain counterfactual variations. Finally you may often do good independently of the dispositions at the origin of your behavior but it is a fallacy to think that none of the good you can do depends on how good are your motivating dispositions. Causalism, actualism and behaviorism are fallacies worthy of indictment.