



SCHOOL of
ADVANCED STUDY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



PROFESSOR PHILIP PETTIT

22 June 2015, 18:00–20:00, lecture followed by a reception

The Asymmetry of Good and Evil

We do good to one another by bringing about welcome consequences and, in particular, by bringing about welcome consequences that are disposition-dependent. Thus we give one another respect by acting out of the beneficent disposition not to interfere in one another's personal choices: by ensuring that we conform to standards of respect in our behavior. But while we do evil to one another by bringing about unwelcome consequences, these are rarely disposition-dependent: they do not require that we act out of a maleficent disposition or that we conform to standards of malice in our behavior. This observation helps to explain the Knobe effect whereby we ascribe intentionality more readily to presumptively bad actions than to good. And it goes some way to explaining the traditional belief that evil consists in the absence of good, not in anything positive.

Venue: Senate Room, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

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