

Paolo Natali – *Acting, Desiring to Act, and Desiring What is Good in Plato's Gorgias*

Contemporary philosophers sometimes believe that action theory and serious ethics in general start with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Already in Plato's *Gorgias*, however, we are presented with an analysis of the structure of actions and their normativity that bears the marks of a full-fledged ethical theory lying in the background.

A major difference between Plato's view and many currently fashionable ones is its 'ultra-realist' aspect: the agent's desire is treated not primarily in relation with the action done and the good aimed at as viewed by the agent, but with the action done and the good aimed at as they are in themselves; in particular, according to this theory, it is the real good itself which the agent ultimately desires, even if he or she does not have epistemic access to it. In my talk I shall expound Plato's view as presented by Socrates in the *Gorgias* and discuss some of its (desirable and undesirable) implications.