

Plato, Meno

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Plan voor vandaag

- ▶ Achtergrond
- ▶ Centrale thema's/Kernbegrippen
- ▶ Studievragen [in kleine groepen]
- ▶ Structuur argumentatie/hoofdconclusies
- ▶ Kritische evaluatie/Reflectie/Discussie

Achtergrond: Plato (Athene, ca. 427–347 v.C.)

- ▶ Leerling van Socrates en leraar van Aristoteles, stichter van de Atheense Academie [zie Diogenes Laërtius, Leven van filosofen]
- ▶ Werk: rond 35 dialogen
 - ▶ grote diversiteit aan onderwerpen: van kennis (Meno, Theaetetus) naar politiek (Staat), van liefde (Symposium) naar retorica (Gorgias), ...
 - ▶ dialoog als filosofische stijl: middels vraag-antwoord (tegenstellingen) naar waarheid [dialectiek]
- ▶ **Ideeënleer**: invloedrijkste onderdeel van zijn filosofie
 - ▶ Ideeën of Vormen (eidos) bestaan
 - ▶ zijn de enig ware objecten van onze kennis
 - ▶ Kennis als herinnering (anamnesis) [Meno, 82b-86c]
onze ziel heeft in een eerder leven de Ideeën aanschouwd, en zich deze weer herinnert als ze de flauwe afschaduwingen ervan in de voorwerpen om ons heen ziet (allegorie van de grot [Staat, VII, 514a-520a])
- ▶ Terugkerende thema's die ook in Meno een rol spelen
 - ▶ Kennis (episteme) versus overtuiging (doxa)
 - ▶ Pogen naar definities

Meno (geschreven in 380 v.C.)

- ▶ Centrales thema
 - ▶ Algemeen [70a-100c]:
[70a] **Meno.** Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue (arete) is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?
 - ▶ Ons fragment [96c-99b]:
 - ▶ kennis (episteme) versus ware overtuiging (doxa)
 - ▶ kennis (episteme) versus deugd (arete)
- ▶ Kernbegrippen (ons fragment):
 - ▶ deugd (arete)
 - ▶ leerbaarheid
 - ▶ dadigheid/voordeligheid/nuttigheid
 - ▶ kennis (episteme)
 - ▶ (ware) overtuiging (doxa)
 - ▶ rechtvaardiging (aitias logismos, justification or reasoned explanation)
 - ▶ herinnering (anamnesis, recollection) ...
- ▶ Studievragen

Argumentatie en conclusies

► Hoofdargumentatie:

1. Good men (virtue) are beneficent, so guide correctly
2. Not only knowledge but also true opinion guides correctly [97a-98c]
3. Virtue is not knowledge, because it cannot be learnt [98d-99b]
4. So virtue is true opinion (it is imparted to us by divine dispensation) [99b-100]

► Belangrijke tussenconclusies:

- kennis \neq ware overtuiging, maar allebei nuttig;
- deugd (arete) kan niet geleerd worden dus is geen kennis
[in Protagoras, andere conclusie: deugd kan wel geleerd worden]

[70a] **Meno.** Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue (arete) is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?

[...]

[99e] **Socrates.** At the moment, if through all this discussion our queries and statements have been correct, virtue is found to be neither natural nor taught, but is imparted to us by a divine dispensation without understanding in those who receive it, ...

Kennis versus ware overtuiging

- Kennis en ware overtuiging allebei succesvol:

SOCRATES I will tell you. If a man **knew the way to Larissa**, or any other place you please, and walked there and led others, would he not give right and good guidance?

MENO Certainly.

SOCRATES Well, and a person who had a right opinion as to which was the way, but had never been there and did not really know, might give right guidance, might he not?

MENO Certainly.

SOCRATES And so long, I presume, as he has right opinion about that which the other man really knows, he will be just as good a guide – if he thinks the truth instead of knowing it – as the man who has the knowledge.

MENO Just as good.

SOCRATES Hence true opinion is as good a guide to rightness of action as knowledge; and this is a point we omitted just now in our consideration of the nature of virtue, ...

- Discussie: is kennis/ware overtuiging altijd nuttig?

Kennis versus ware overtuiging

- ▶ Hoe verschillen kennis en ware overtuiging?
- ▶ Allebei altijd succesvol (volgens Sokrates):

[97c] Will he who has the right opinion not always succeed, as long as his opinion is right?

- ▶ Maar,
 - ▶ Kennis: stabiel, vast (tied up, remain in place)
 - ▶ Ware overtuiging: niet stabiel (an untied work of Daedalus)

[97e] To acquire an untied work of Daedalus is not worth much, like acquiring a runaway slave, for it does not remain, but it is worth much if tied down, for his works are very beautiful. What am I thinking of when I say this? True opinions. For true opinions, so long as they remain, are a fine thing and all they do is good, but they are not willing to remain long, and they escape from a man's mind, so that they are not worth much until one ties them down . . .

- ▶ Ware overtuigingen zijn instabiel [verandert iets ben je niet meer overtuigd], dus zonder kennis geen garantie van succes in de toekomst
- ▶ Discussie: eigen voorbeelden van ware overtuigingen die geen kennis zijn

Kennis versus ware overtuiging

- ▶ Hoe maken wij ware overtuigingen stabiel?

[98a] ... by (giving) an account of the reason why (*aitias logismos*).
And that, Meno my friend, is recollection (*anamnesis*), as we previously agreed.

- ▶ *Aitias logismos* als rechtvaardiging (mogelijk interpretatie)
 - ▶ JTB: kennis = ware overtuiging + rechtvaardiging
- ▶ Discussie: wat te doen met Gettier-cases? is het zoeken van een definitie van kennis überhaupt een vruchtbare aanpak?
- ▶ Kennis als *anamnesis* (aangeboren).
- ▶ Discussie: Kan kennis aangeboren zijn?
 - ▶ Kennis van wiskunde/meetkunde/taal (slaaf van Meno)
 - ▶ Kennis van de weg naar Larissa

Kennis en deugd

98d-e SOCRATES As goodness does not come by nature, we inquired next whether it could be taught. – Yes.

SOCRATES We thought it could be taught, if it was knowledge? – Yes

SOCRATES And that it was knowledge if it could be taught? – Quite so.

SOCRATES And that if there were teachers of it, it could be taught, but if there were not, it was not teachable? – That is so.

SOCRATES And that we agreed that there were no teachers of it? – We did.

SOCRATES So we agreed that it was neither teachable nor knowledge? – Quite so.

► Plato's argument:

- (1) P1 knowledge \Leftrightarrow could be taught
- P2 could be taught \Leftrightarrow there are teachers
- P3 there are no teachers of virtue
- C1 virtue is not teachable
- C2 virtue \neq knowledge

► Mogelijk kritiek: twee verschillende noties van modaliteit in P1 (dispositional) en P2 (circumstantial), dus volgt C2 niet

David Lewis over 'dispositions'

'A sorcerer takes a liking to a fragile glass, one that is a perfect intrinsic duplicate of all the other fragile glasses of the same production line. He does nothing at all to change the dispositional character of his glass. He only watches and waits, resolved that if ever his glass is struck, then, quick as a flash, he will cast a spell that changes the glass, renders it no longer fragile, and thereby aborts the process of breaking. So his finkishly fragile glass would not break if struck - but no thanks to any protective disposition of the glass itself. Thanks, instead, to a disposition of the sorcerer.' (Lewis 1997, 147).

- (2) The glass is fragile (can break) [dispositional], but it cannot break [circumstantial].
- (3) Virtue cannot be taught (because there are no teachers) [circumstantial], but it can be taught [dispositional].

David Lewis, Finkish Dispositions, *The Philosophical Quarterly*. Volume 47, Issue 187, pages 143-158.