



EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY AND THE TRANSMISSION OF UNDERSTANDING

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The debate on testimony has focused primarily on knowledge and the conditions of successful knowledge-transmission. The transmission of understanding, by contrast, has been largely neglected. The standard view says, roughly, that understanding cannot be transmitted, or “handed over” from speaker to hearer: understanding can be facilitated, but it remains an achievement on the part of the subject. In this paper we argue that (i) understanding *can* be transmitted from speaker to hearer; (ii) the conditions under which this is possible differ significantly from those for acquiring testimonial knowledge; (iii) a speaker who intends to transmit her understanding to a hearer who is epistemically worse off will have to act as a *Socratic epistemic authority* towards her.