

Einladung zum GASTVORTRAG

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The Social Epistemology of Understanding

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In contemporary social epistemology, a lot of work has been done on how knowledge can be passed on via testimony, e.g., from expert to layperson. By contrast, the epistemic state of understanding has hardly been touched by these discussions. One reason might be that understanding is often seen as a cognitive achievement of individuals, and as necessarily involving certain abilities of the individual. Thus, it has been argued that understanding cannot be passed on via testimony, and that it cannot be subject to a division of cognitive labor in the same way as knowledge. In this talk, I argue that while social epistemological aspects of understanding do indeed differ from those of knowledge, we should nonetheless take social dimensions of understanding seriously: Firstly, testimony can contribute to understanding in various ways, even if understanding cannot directly be transmitted via testimony. Secondly, there are other mechanisms by which a speaker can help a hearer acquire or increase her understanding, for example, by helping them to practice and train relevant abilities. I systematically approach these points by developing them within the framework of a reflective equilibrium based epistemology of understanding.



Tanja Rechnitzer, University of Bern, works at the intersection of practical and theoretical philosophy. Her current research interests concern the social epistemology of understanding and the role of experts and expert knowledge vis-à-vis social and other values in a democratic society. She recently defended her dissertation with the title "Applying Reflective Equilibrium. A Case Study in Justification".

Alle Interessentinnen und Interessenten sind herzlich eingeladen!