



The Research Training Group 2073 *Integrating Ethics and Epistemology of Scientific Research* (Leibniz Universität Hannover/Bielefeld University) invites to a public guest lecture.

Dr. David Ludwig
(Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Naturalness vs. Social Critique?

Many of our concepts have socially relevant boundaries. For example, it clearly matters whether *marriage* refers exclusively to opposite-sex couples, whether *woman* includes trans women, whether *major depressive disorder* extends to strong grief reactions, and whether *race* refers to anything real at all. Given the non-conceptual consequences of our conceptual practices, it is not surprising that the boundaries of concepts are often evaluated on the basis of social considerations. For example, feminist philosophers have argued that we should aim for specifications of *woman* that constitute "effective tools in the fight against injustice" (Haslanger) and "do justice to trans women's claims of womanhood" (Saul). While social critique plays a crucial role in many classificatory debates, one may worry that it is incompatible with the assumption that conceptual decisions should reflect the empirically discovered structure of a target domain. For example, it seems plausible that the boundaries of *woman* should be based on the biological and social differences that actually exist between individuals and that we should consider the inclusion/exclusion of trans women an open empirical question. But what if these considerations naturalness and social critique pull us in different directions? In these cases, we appear to face a dilemma in which we compromise either the ethical or the epistemic integrity of our concepts. The aim of this talk is to address this dilemma on the basis of a more careful discussion of the relation between considerations of naturalness and social critique.

Friday, May 27th, 2016
14:00 s.t. – 15:15
Room B313 (3rd floor)

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