

Learning from Words

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There is a widely accepted family of views in the epistemology of testimony centering around the claim that *belief* is the central item involved in a testimonial exchange.¹ For instance, in describing the process of learning via testimony, Elizabeth Fricker provides the following: “one language-user has a *belief*, which gives rise to an utterance by him; as a result of observing this utterance another user of the same language, his audience, *comes to share that belief*.”² In a similar spirit, Alvin Plantinga says that “...a *belief on the part of the testifíee* has warrant only if *that belief has warrant for the testifier*.”³ In both of these passages, we find strands of what I shall call the *Belief View of Testimony* (hereafter, the BVT).⁴

There are several different yet related components of the BVT. First, while statements are necessary for the process of communication, they are merely vehicles for expressing *beliefs*—they enable us to make public what would otherwise remain private. Strictly speaking, then, we do not learn from one another’s *words*—we learn from one another’s *beliefs*.⁵ This is one of the reasons why nearly everyone takes sincerity on the part of the speaker to be a necessary condition for testimonial knowledge.⁶ In order to properly learn from a speaker’s belief, there needs to *be* a belief present from which to learn. Thus, if a speaker is insincere and expresses what she herself does not believe, then there is nothing for her to pass on to a hearer.

Second, the process of communicating via testimony involves a speaker *transmitting* her belief to a hearer, *along with the epistemic properties it possesses*. For instance, following Fricker’s talk of sharing beliefs and Plantinga’s characterization of the transmission of warrant, David Owens claims that “...testimony transmits knowledge of *p* by transmitting the probative force of reasons for belief in *p* from one party to another.”⁷ Testimony, therefore, is said to be incapable of generating new

epistemic features—it merely has the capacity to transmit from one person to another beliefs that have already been rendered warranted, justified, or instances of knowledge via another source.⁸

Third, and closely related, *statements themselves are not the locus of epistemic significance*—beliefs are. Notice, for instance, that Plantinga does not say that a belief on the part of the testiffee has warrant only if the testifier's *statement* has warrant; instead, he focuses entirely on the epistemic status of the speaker's belief. This is a natural consequence of the previous two points: if statements are merely vehicles for transmitting beliefs that already possess epistemic properties, then the statements themselves simply drop out of the epistemic picture.

While there is much that is intuitively plausible about the BVT, in what follows I argue that this entire picture of the epistemology of testimony is fundamentally incorrect. In particular, I show that, both causally and epistemically, *statements*, not beliefs, are the crucial items in a testimonial exchange.⁹ Hence, each of the components that constitute the BVT is false.

1. *The Transmission of Epistemic Properties: Necessity*

Let us begin with what is perhaps the fundamental thesis of the BVT, which I shall call the *Transmission of Epistemic Properties* (hereafter, TEP). Roughly, the thought expressed by TEP is that a testimonial exchange involves a speaker's belief, along with the epistemic properties it possesses, being *transmitted* to a hearer. There are two dimensions to TEP; one is a necessity thesis and the other is a sufficiency thesis. More precisely,

TEP-N: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B's belief that *p* is warranted (justified, known) on the basis of A's testimony that *p* only if A's belief that *p* is warranted (justified, known).¹⁰

TEP-S: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, if (1) A's belief that *p* is warranted (justified, known), (2) B comes to believe that *p* on the basis of the content of

A's testimony that p ,¹¹ and (3) B has no undefeated defeaters for believing that p , then B's belief that p is warranted (justified, known).¹²

There is much that is intuitive about both of these theses. For, in many respects, a testimonial chain seems to be much like a bucket brigade: in order to give you a full bucket of water, I must have a full bucket of water to pass to you. Moreover, if I give you a full bucket of water, then—spills aside—the bucket of water you now possess as a result of our exchange will also be full. Similarly, in order to transmit to you a warranted belief, I must have a warranted belief to pass to you.¹³ Moreover, if I transmit to you a warranted belief, then—defeaters aside—the belief that you now possess as a result of our exchange will also be warranted. Despite their intuitive plausibility, however, I shall argue that both of these theses are false and, therefore, that each of the components of the BVT is false as well. In this section, I focus on the necessity thesis (TEP-N), leaving the sufficiency thesis (TEP-S) for Section 2.

To begin, consider the following:

CONSISTENT LIAR: When Bertha was a teenager, she suffered a head injury while ice skating and, shortly afterwards, became quite prone to telling lies, especially about her perceptual experiences involving wild animals. After observing this behavior, her parents became increasingly distressed and, after consulting various psychologists and therapists, they finally took her to see a neurosurgeon, Dr. Jones. Upon examining her, Dr. Jones noticed a lesion in Bertha's brain which appeared to be the cause of her behavior, and so it was decided that surgery would be the best option to pursue. Unfortunately, Dr. Jones discovered during the surgery that he couldn't repair the lesion—instead, he decided to modify her current lesion and create another one so that her pattern of lying would be extremely consistent and would combine in a very precise way with a pattern of consistent perceptual unreliability. Not only did Dr. Jones keep the procedure that he performed on

Bertha completely to himself, he also did this with the best of intentions, wanting his patient to function as a healthy, happy, and well respected citizen.

As a result of this procedure, Bertha is now—as a young adult—a radically unreliable, yet completely consistent, believer with respect to her perceptual experiences about wild animals. For instance, every time she sees a deer, she believes that it is a horse; every time she sees a giraffe, she believes that it is an elephant; every time she sees an owl, she believes that it is a hawk, and so on. At the same time, however, Bertha is also a radically insincere, yet completely consistent, testifier of this information. For instance, every time she sees a deer and believes that it is a horse, she insincerely reports to others that she saw a deer; every time she sees a giraffe and believes that it is an elephant, she insincerely reports to others that she saw a giraffe, and so on. Moreover, because of her complete consistency as both a believer and a liar, those around her do not have any reason for doubting Bertha’s reliability as a source of information. Indeed, in her home community, she is regarded as one of the most trustworthy people to consult on a wide range of topics.¹⁴ Yesterday, Bertha ran into her next door neighbor, Henry, and insincerely though correctly reported to him that she saw a deer on a nearby hiking trail. Since, in addition to his trust in Bertha, it is not at all unlikely for there to be deer on the hiking trail in question, Henry readily accepted her testimony.¹⁵

The first point to notice about CONSISTENT LIAR is that even though Bertha is a radically *unreliable believer* with respect to her animal sightings, she is nonetheless an extremely *reliable testifier* of this information—indeed, even more reliable than many average testifiers who, on occasion, exaggerate, distort, or are simply wrong in their reports about what is true. For, as a result of the procedure performed by Dr. Jones, *every time* Bertha sees a deer, she believes that it is a horse yet reports to others that she saw a deer; *every time* she sees a giraffe, she believes that it is an elephant yet

reports to others that she saw a giraffe, and so on.¹⁶ Moreover, this point can be further illustrated by noticing that Bertha's statements satisfy the counterfactuals that are, perhaps, most likely to capture reliability, despite the fact that her beliefs do not. For instance, while Bertha's beliefs are not *sensitive* in Nozick's sense, her statements are, i.e., though Bertha would still believe that p if p were false, she would not state that p if p were false.¹⁷ The same can be said with respect to Sosa's *safety* requirement, i.e., though Bertha would believe that p without it being so that p , she would not state that p without it being so that p . Her statements, then, are safe in Sosa's sense, even though her beliefs are not.¹⁸ Thus, it is clear that Bertha's *statements*, unlike her *beliefs*, are an excellent epistemic source of information about wild animals.¹⁹

The second salient feature of CONSISTENT LIAR is that Dr. Jones *deliberately* performed procedures on Bertha's brain, not only so that her perceptual errors and lying practices would be perfectly consistent, but also so that they would combine in such a way so as to render her an extraordinarily reliable testifier. In large part because of the role that Dr. Jones plays in Bertha's condition, there is no relevant *accidentality* in the belief that Henry forms on the basis of her testimony and, hence, CONSISTENT LIAR cannot plausibly be regarded as a Gettier-type case.²⁰ With respect to the truth of the belief in question, it is neither an accident that Bertha reported that there was a deer on the hiking trail nor that Henry came to hold this belief on the basis of her testimony. For, because of her two brain lesions, Bertha is such that *every time* she sees a deer, she believes it to be a horse, yet reports that it is a deer. Thus, Bertha's deer-reports always covary with her deer-sightings, despite taking a slight detour through horse-believings. Furthermore, given all of Henry's excellent inductive evidence on behalf of Bertha's testimonial practices, there is also no relevant accidentality in his coming to form the belief in question on the basis of her report. With respect to the justification of Henry's belief, similar remarks can be adduced: Dr. Jones deliberately modified Bertha's first brain lesion and added a second one precisely so that Bertha would turn out

to be a reliable testifier.²¹ Moreover, there are no close possible worlds in which Dr. Jones did not perform the surgery on Bertha, and hence there are no close possible worlds in which Bertha does not have the condition she has. Because of this, there is no sense in which it is an accident that Bertha is a reliable testifier and hence a source of justified belief.

The third feature of CONSISTENT LIAR that is here relevant is that Henry not only fails to possess reasons to doubt Bertha's competence and sincerity, he is also in possession of excellent positive reasons to accept her testimony. For, Henry has no reason to doubt that a deer was in fact on the hiking trail in question, nor does he have counterevidence of any kind for Bertha's testimony. Moreover, because beliefs that are formed on the basis of Bertha's statements nearly always turn out to be true, Henry has acquired excellent inductive evidence for believing her to be one of the most trustworthy people to consult on a wide range of topics. So, when Bertha's extreme reliability as a testifier is combined with his very high degree of justification for accepting her report, there is simply no reason to deny that Henry's true belief that there was a deer on a nearby hiking trail qualifies as warranted, justified, and known. Thus, in CONSISTENT LIAR, we find a clear case in which a hearer not only acquires warranted and justified belief on the basis of testimony that is insincere, but also comes to have testimonial knowledge of the proposition in question. Furthermore, notice that Bertha fails to possess a belief with the epistemic properties in question, yet Henry forms a belief on the basis of her testimony that does possess these epistemic properties. Here, then, we find a case of testimonial *knowledge (warrant, justification)* without testimonial *transmission*.²²

The upshot of these considerations is that the statements of speakers are *not only the basis, both causally and epistemically, of the beliefs that hearers acquire via testimony, they are also the bearers of epistemic significance*. For as CONSISTENT LIAR reveals, a speaker doesn't even need to believe the statement she is reporting in order for a hearer to acquire a belief that is warranted, justified, or

known on the basis of her testimony. This shows that in order to have a unified epistemology of testimony, the epistemic conditions for testimonial belief need to be imposed on the statements of speakers, not on their beliefs.²³ Hence, TEP-N is false.²⁴

2. *The Transmission of Epistemic Properties: Sufficiency*

In this section, I take up the remaining thesis of TEP—the sufficiency dimension. I shall argue that speaker-warrant (justification, knowledge) is not sufficient for hearer-warrant (justification, knowledge), and hence that the picture dominating the epistemology of testimony, in which epistemic properties are *transmitted* from a speaker's belief to a hearer's, is thoroughly misguided.

Before proceeding, however, one feature of TEP-S that is important to notice is the no-defeater clause (condition (3)). For, on this view, even if there are times when speaker-warrant (justification, knowledge) is sufficient for hearer-warrant (justification, knowledge), the belief that a hearer acquires from a speaker does not *always* possess the relevant epistemic property to the same degree as the speaker's—a hearer may have a *defeater* for believing the proposition in question that the speaker simply does not possess. There are two different kinds of defeaters that are here relevant. First, there are what we might call *doxastic defeaters*. A doxastic defeater is a proposition D that is believed by S to be true, yet indicates that S's belief that *p* is either false or unreliably formed or sustained.²⁵ Defeaters in this sense function by virtue of being *believed*, regardless of their truth value or justificatory status.²⁶ Second, there are what we might call *normative defeaters*. A normative defeater is a proposition D that S ought to believe to be true, yet indicates that S's belief that *p* is either false or unreliably formed or sustained.²⁷ Defeaters in this sense function by virtue of being propositions that S *should believe* (whether or not S does believe them) given the presence of certain available evidence.²⁸

However, even though the presence of a defeater may render a hearer's belief less warranted than the speaker's from whom it was acquired, this does not threaten the spirit of TEP-S. For what happens in such a case is that the speaker's belief that p , along with its warrant, *is* transmitted to the hearer, but the warrant for the hearer's belief that p is then defeated. What *would* contradict the spirit of TEP-S would be a case in which a hearer believes that p purely on the basis of a speaker's belief that p , possesses no defeaters for believing that p , and yet still has a significantly different epistemic relation to p than the speaker.²⁹ This is precisely the sort of case I intend to provide.

To begin, consider the following:

COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING: Bill is a compulsively trusting person with respect to the testimony of his neighbor, Jill, in whom he has an obsessive romantic interest. Not only does he always trust Jill when he has very good reason to believe her, he is incapable of distrusting her when he has very good reason to not believe her. For instance, even when he has available to him overwhelming evidence for believing that she is deliberately lying or being deceitful, Bill cannot come to believe this about Jill. Indeed, Bill is such that there is no amount of evidence that would convince him to not trust Jill. Yesterday, while taking his afternoon walk, Bill ran into Jill, and she told him that she had seen an orca whale while boating earlier that day. Bill, of course, readily accepted Jill's testimony. It turns out that Jill did in fact see an orca whale on the boat trip in question, that she is very reliable with respect to her epistemic practices, both in general and in this particular instance, and that Bill has no reason to doubt the proffered testimony. Given his compulsively trusting nature with respect to Jill, however, even if he had had massive amounts of evidence available to him indicating, for instance, that Jill did not see an orca whale, that she is an unreliable epistemic agent, that she is an unreliable testifier, that orca whales do not live in this part of the country, and so on, Bill would have just as readily accepted Jill's testimony.³⁰

It is, of course, clear that Jill's belief about the orca whale possesses all of the epistemic properties in question—she is a reliable epistemic agent, both in general and in the particular case at issue, and she did, in fact, see an orca whale while boating yesterday.³¹ The crucial question for our purposes is whether Bill knows, or is warranted (justified) in believing, that there was an orca whale in the relevant body of water on the basis of Jill's testimony. And here, the answer should clearly be no.

To see this, notice that because of his compulsively good nature with respect to Jill's testimony, Bill is simply *incapable* of being sensitive to the presence of defeaters regarding her reports. In this respect, he is no better epistemically than a subject who has been brainwashed or programmed to accept any report that is made Jill. For were Bill to be inundated with massive amounts of counterevidence, he would have accepted Jill's testimony just as readily as he did in the complete absence of such counterevidence. Indeed, Bill is such that he would have accepted Jill's testimony *under any circumstances*. Because of this, Bill's belief that there was an orca whale in the relevant body of water is *evidentially insensitive* in a way that is clearly incompatible with warrant, justification, and knowledge.³² Therefore, while Jill's belief possesses all of the epistemic properties in question, the belief that Bill forms on the basis of her testimony possesses none of them. Hence, TEP-S is false.

What COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING reveals is that while a speaker may be both a perfectly reliable believer and testifier, *a bearer may be so constituted as to prevent the epistemic properties of a speaker's belief from being transmitted to her*. This has significant consequences for the BVT. For proponents of the BVT portray the transmission of beliefs as being much like the giving of gifts: if I give you a wrapped box, all you have to do to receive the gift is to receive the wrapped box—the gift, so to speak, comes along for the ride. Similarly, it is thought that if I transmit to you my belief that *p*, all you have to do to receive the epistemic properties it possesses is to receive the belief—the epistemic properties it possesses, so to speak, come along for the ride. But as we saw in COMPULSIVELY

TRUSTING, beliefs are not connected with their epistemic properties the way that gifts are connected with the wrapped boxes that contain them. A hearer may acquire a belief on the basis of a speaker's testimony, and yet not acquire the epistemic properties possessed by the speaker's belief. Moreover, this can happen where it is not explainable by appealing to the defeat of epistemic properties that were in fact transmitted. For Bill's compulsively trusting nature does not make him such that epistemic properties are transmitted to him via Jill's testimony, yet immediately defeated; he is such that epistemic properties *cannot even be transmitted to him in the first place*.³³ Hence, the picture of testimony painted by proponents of the BVT, in which beliefs are passed along with their epistemic properties from a speaker to a hearer, is fundamentally incorrect.

Further support for this conclusion can be provided by examining a second type of case that undermines TEP-S. Consider the following:

ALMOST A LIAR: Phil is compulsively-trusting-Bill's twin brother, though he is not himself compulsively trusting with respect to Jill's testimony. In fact, he is, from an epistemic point of view, quite healthy: he trusts those whom he has good reason to trust—or at least those whom he has no clear reason to distrust—and distrusts those whom he has good reason to distrust. Yesterday, while taking *his* afternoon walk, Phil ran into Jill just after Bill did, and she also told him that she had seen an orca whale while boating earlier that day. Phil, having acquired very good reasons for trusting Jill over the five years he has known her, readily accepted her testimony. It turns out that Jill did in fact see an orca whale on the boat trip in question, that she is very reliable with respect to her epistemic practices, both in general and in this particular instance, that she is generally a very reliable testifier, and that Phil has no reason to doubt the proffered testimony. However, in order to promote a whale watching business she is in the process of starting, she would have reported to Phil—in precisely the same manner—that she had seen an orca whale even if she hadn't. (Of course, she wouldn't

have believed that she had seen an orca whale if she hadn't.) Moreover, given the pattern of the whales' travel combined with the particular time of year it is, it is in fact quite surprising that Jill saw an orca whale when and where she did.

There are two central features of ALMOST A LIAR that are important to notice. First, because she wishes to promote her future whale watching business, Jill *would have* reported to Phil that there was an orca whale in the relevant body of water even if there hadn't been one. And second, given the schedule of the whales' travel coupled with the time of year it is, it was in fact much more likely for Jill *not* to have seen an orca whale when she did than for her to have seen one.

The combination of these two features has the following result: there are nearby possible worlds in which an orca whale was not in the relevant body of water, Jill nonetheless reports that there was, and Phil, being in the same evidential situation as he is in the actual world, readily forms the corresponding belief on the basis of Jill's testimony. More generally, Phil's belief about there having been an orca whale in the relevant body of water is *counterfactually insensitive to the truth*. For instance, his belief is neither sensitive (à la Nozick) nor safe (à la Sosa): if p were false, Phil would still believe that p , and Phil would believe that p without it being so that p . Otherwise put, in nearby worlds where it is false that an orca whale was in the relevant body of water, Phil believes that there was one, and there are nearby worlds where Phil believes that an orca whale was in the relevant body of water without this being so. Given this, the true belief that Phil forms on the basis of Jill's testimony not only fails to qualify as knowledge, it also fails to be warranted or justified.³⁴ Thus, while Jill's belief possesses all of the epistemic properties in question, the belief that Phil forms on the basis of her sincere testimony possesses none of them. Hence, once again, we see that TEP-S is false.³⁵

To fully appreciate the consequences of ALMOST A LIAR, it will be helpful to compare it with CONSISTENT LIAR from Section 1. Notice first that while CONSISTENT LIAR shows

that an *unreliable believer* may nonetheless be a *reliable testifier*, ALMOST A LIAR reveals that a *reliable believer* may nonetheless be an *unreliable testifier*. This is why Henry acquires knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) on the basis of Bertha's testimony, despite the fact that she fails to have the knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) in question, and why Phil fails to acquire knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) on the basis of Jill's testimony, despite the fact that she possesses the knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) in question. For, recall that while Bertha's belief is neither sensitive nor safe, the statement that she offers to Henry is both sensitive and safe. In contrast, Jill's orca-whale-belief is both sensitive and safe, but the orca-whale-statement that she offers to Phil is neither. In particular, though Jill would not believe that p if p were false, she would state that p if p were false, and though Jill would not believe that p without it being so that p , she would state that p without it being so that p . Thus, just as Bertha can give epistemic properties to others that she fails to possess herself, Jill can fail to give epistemic properties to others that she possesses herself (even when testifying sincerely). Both cases, therefore, support the same general conclusion: statements of speakers, not their beliefs, are what matter for an epistemology of testimony.

3. *The SVT*

We have seen that both theses of TEP are false and, accordingly, that each component of the BVT is false as well. We are now in a position to also see that there is a counterpart version of each component that is true—one involving the *statements* of speakers. Let us call this alternative family of theses the *Statement View of Testimony* (hereafter, the SVT).

According to the SVT, the process of communicating via testimony does not involve a speaker transmitting her belief to a hearer, along with the epistemic properties it possesses. Instead, a speaker offers a statement to a hearer, along with the epistemic properties *it* possesses, and a

hearer forms the corresponding belief on the basis of understanding and accepting the statement in question. Statements are not, therefore, merely vehicles for expressing beliefs but, rather, they are the central locus of epistemic significance themselves.

There are at least three significant consequences of rejecting the BVT in favor of the SVT. First, because proponents of the BVT portray the testimonial exchange as involving merely transmission, testimony is said to be incapable of generating new epistemic features for beliefs—it merely has the capacity to transmit from one person to another beliefs that have already been rendered warranted, justified, or an instance of knowledge via another source. As Alvin Plantinga says, “...testimonial warrant, like water, rises no higher than its source...if you tell me something and I believe it on your say-so, I have warrant for it only if you do.”³⁶ But as we saw in CONSISTENT LIAR, this is not so: a hearer can acquire a belief that is warranted, justified, and known from a speaker whose own belief possesses none of the relevant epistemic properties. Thus, not only can testimony function as a *generative* epistemic source, but testimonial warrant (justification, knowledge)—unlike water—*can* rise higher than its source.³⁷

Second, and closely related, proponents of the BVT maintain that—defeaters aside—testimonial warrant (justification, knowledge) *cannot fail* to rise as high as its source. We have seen, however, that this is false as well: a hearer’s belief may fail to be as warranted (justified, known) as its source, either for reasons having to do with the hearer—as COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING revealed—or for reasons having to do with the speaker—as ALMOST A LIAR revealed.

Third, it is nearly received wisdom in the epistemology of testimony that there are two central criteria that need to be fulfilled in order for a speaker’s testimony to be epistemically acceptable: “...the sincerity dimension, concerning the attester’s honesty, and the competence dimension, concerning the attester’s having experience or knowledge sufficient to make it at least likely that if the attester forms a belief that *p*, then *p* is true.”³⁸ Otherwise put, in order for a hearer

to acquire knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) on the basis of a speaker's testimony, the speaker must be both a *competent believer* and a *sincere testifier*. As we saw in CONSISTENT LIAR, however, neither a speaker's competent believing nor her sincere testifying is *necessary* for the acquisition of testimonial knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief). And, as we saw in COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING and ALMOST A LIAR, a speaker's competent believing combined with her sincere testifying is not *sufficient* for the acquisition of testimonial knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief).

What really matters for the epistemic status of testimony is whether the speaker is a *competent testifier*, where this is understood in terms of the reliability of the statement in question. More precisely, according to the SVT, TEP-N should be replaced with the following *Reliability of the Statement-Necessity* (RS-N) thesis:

RS-N: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B's belief that p is warranted (justified, known) on the basis of A's testimony that p only if A's statement that p is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive.³⁹

The reliability of the statement in question can, in turn, be fleshed out in any number of ways.⁴⁰ For instance, it may be necessary that the speaker's statement be sensitive, safe, properly or virtuously formed, and so on.⁴¹ What is of import for our purposes, however, is that being a competent believer and a sincere testifier are epistemically relevant only insofar as they bear on the speaker's capacity to be a competent testifier.⁴²

Now, as with TEP-N, RS-N expresses only a necessary condition for testimonial warrant (justification, knowledge). A complete view of the epistemology of testimony will, then, require further conditions, such as (2) and (3) from TEP-S. Thus, at a minimum, the SVT will include the following:

SVT: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B's belief that p is warranted (justified, known⁴³) on the basis of A's testimony that p only if (1) A's statement that p is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive, (2) B comes to believe that p on the basis of the content of A's statement that p , and (3) B has no undefeated defeaters for believing that p .⁴⁴

It is not my purpose here to provide a fully complete account of testimonial warrant (justification, knowledge), and so I shall not defend SVT as such.⁴⁵ Rather, SVT provides the *framework for a complete epistemology of testimony*, one that places the statements of speakers at the center of the acquisition of testimonial knowledge.

Hence, strictly speaking, we do not learn from one another's *beliefs*—we learn from one another's *words*.⁴⁶ A failure to appreciate this has resulted in the widespread acceptance of a picture of testimony that is fundamentally incorrect. Thus, in order to make genuine progress in the epistemology of testimony, we need to stop looking at what speakers *believe* and focus, instead, on what speakers *say*.⁴⁷

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¹ As Michael Welbourne says, "...it is more or less standard to describe the whole testimonial process in the vocabulary of belief" (Welbourne 1994, p. 305).

² Fricker (1987, p. 68, emphasis added). In a more precise formulation, Fricker says: "A *speaker*, believing that *P*, and wishing to communicate this belief, makes an utterance which constitutes his asserting that *P*; his audience, a *bearer*, observing and understanding it...as a result comes also to believe that *P*" (1987, pp. 68-9).

³ Plantinga (1993, p. 86, emphasis added).

⁴ Proponents of different strands of the BVT include Austin (1979), Welbourne (1979, 1981, 1986, and 1994), Evans (1982), Hardwig (1985 and 1991), Fricker (1987, 1994, and 1995), Ross (1986), Coady (1992 and 1994), Burge (1993 and 1997), Reid (1993), Plantinga (1993), Dummett (1994), McDowell (1994), Williamson (1996), Audi (1997, 1998, 2004, and forthcoming), Faulkner (2000), Owens (2000), and Reynolds (2002). It is of interest to note that the BVT cuts across the so-called reductionist/non-reductionist debate in the epistemology of testimony. For instance, Fricker (1987, 1994, and 1995) is a reductionist, Plantinga (1993) is a non-reductionist, and Faulkner (2000) endorses a hybrid reductionist/non-reductionist view, yet all three espouse strands of the BVT.

⁵ For instance, Robert Audi says that "...if one takes it (as Thomas Reid may have) that the recipient of testimony is (characteristically) responding to the attester's *belief*—or at least a presumption thereof—and not just to a linguistic or other symbolic act, one may find it plausible to argue that testimony is a conditionally basic source of justification and perhaps of knowledge as well" (2004, p. 21).

⁶ For discussions specifically about the role of sincerity in testimony, see, for instance, Welbourne (1979, 1981, 1986, and 1994), Hardwig (1985 and 1991), Ross (1986), Fricker (1987, 1994, and 1995), Plantinga (1993), McDowell (1994), Audi (1997 and 1998), Root (2001), and Owens (2000). For indirect endorsements of sincerity as a necessary condition for testimonial knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief)—e.g., via the stronger requirement that the speaker have the knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) in question—see Burge (1993 and 1997), Williamson (1996), Audi (1997, 1998, and forthcoming), Dummett (1994), and Reynolds (2002).

⁷ Owens (2000, p. 169).

⁸ When I speak of *warrant* and *justification*, I am interested in these concepts only insofar as they have some connection with knowledge. Thus, there may be some highly subjective notions of these concepts that escape some of the arguments I give in this paper. My interest here, however, is in the *epistemology* of testimony.

⁹ Throughout this paper, I shall focus on the role of a speaker's *statement* in a testimonial exchange. However, since a belief may be acquired on the basis of a speaker's testimony that is not in the form of a statement—by a physical gesture, for instance—a more precise characterization of the arguments in this paper would be in terms of a speaker's *act of communication*. Nevertheless, because a discussion of the requisite conditions for an act of communication lies outside the scope of this paper, I shall continue to frame the relevant issues in terms of statements.

¹⁰ Proponents of the necessity thesis (TEP-N) include Welbourne (1979, 1981, 1986, and 1994), Hardwig (1985 and 1991), Ross (1986), Burge (1993 and 1997), Plantinga (1993), McDowell (1994), Williamson (1996), Audi (1997, 1998, and forthcoming), Owens (2000), Reynolds (2002), and Schmitt (forthcoming). For a slightly weaker version of this thesis, see Dummett (1994).

¹¹ Two points should be noted regarding this condition. First, since TEP-S expresses the conditions required for *testimonial* warrant (justification, knowledge), (2) specifies that the hearer must form the belief in question on the basis of the *content* of the speaker's testimony. This is to preclude cases where a belief is formed entirely on the basis of features *about* the speaker's testimony. For instance, if you say, in a soprano voice, that you have a soprano voice and I come to believe this entirely on the basis of hearing your soprano voice, then the warrant (justification) for my resulting belief is perceptual rather than testimonial. (This example is a slight variation of one found in Audi (1997). For further discussion of the distinction inspired by these sorts of cases, see my (1999)). Condition (2), therefore, is included to prevent cases of this sort from qualifying as instances of *testimonial* warrant (justification, knowledge). Notice, however, that I do not require that the hearer's belief be formed *entirely* on the basis of the content of the speaker's testimony. This is to allow cases where a given belief is formed on the basis of both the content of a speaker's testimony and, say, perception, but where, both causally and epistemically, the testimony is *sufficient* for the subject to hold the warranted

(justified, known) belief in question. In such cases, though perception plays both a causal and an epistemic role, it may be argued that the sufficiency of testimony renders the belief in question genuinely *testimonial*.

Second, there is a weaker version of (2) (hereafter, (2*)) that requires only that B come to believe that *p* on the basis of the content of A's *testimony*, not that such a belief be based on the content of A's testimony *that p*. There is also a correspondingly weaker version of TEP-N:

TEP-N*: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B's belief that *p* is warranted (justified, known) on the basis of A's testimony only if (i) A's belief that *p* is warranted (justified, known), and (ii) B's belief that *p* is appropriately connected with the content of A's testimony.

(Condition (ii) is included to prevent beliefs formed on the basis of features disconnected from the content of the testimony in question, such as the one above about your having a soprano voice, from qualifying as *testimonial*. Of course, if TEP-N is substituted with TEP-N*, more will need to be said about what the appropriate connection in (ii) amounts to.) Now, there are at least two different kinds of cases that might support including both (2*) rather than (2) and TEP-N* rather than TEP-N. For instance, suppose that Virginia asks me whether it is cold outside and I respond by saying, "Your hat and gloves are in the closet." Here, one might say that, given the context, Virginia acquires warranted belief (justified belief, knowledge) that it is cold outside on the basis of my testimony that her hat and gloves are in the closet. Thus, one might claim that both (2) of TEP-S and TEP-N are, in fact, too strong since one can acquire testimonially warranted belief (justified belief, knowledge) that *p* on the basis of the content of a speaker's testimony that *q*. The second type of case that may pose a problem for both of these theses can be seen by considering the following: suppose that Edna asks me whether I see any bald eagles through my binoculars and I respond with a nod. Here, it might be argued that Edna acquires warranted belief (justified belief, knowledge) that I see bald eagles through my binoculars on the basis of the non-verbal testimony provided by my nod. In this way, one might claim that while warranted belief (justified belief, knowledge) that *p* is acquired on the basis of the content of my testimony, it is not based on the content of my testimony *that p*.

Although I think both types of examples provide convincing evidence for including the weaker versions found in (2*) and TEP-N*, there are also reasons to prefer the stronger (2) and TEP-N. With respect to the first type of case, for instance, one might argue that Virginia's warranted belief (justified belief, knowledge) that it is cold outside relies too heavily on memory and inference to qualify as testimonial. In particular, one might claim that Virginia must rely on background information stored in memory about the relationship between cold weather and the wearing of hats and gloves and explicitly infer that it is cold outside from my testimony that her hat and gloves are in the closet. And even though memory and inference arguably play a role in the acquisition of all testimonial knowledge, one might claim that here the role of memory and inference is simply too significant for the resulting warranted belief (justified belief, knowledge) to properly be regarded as testimonial. Regarding the second type of case, it may be argued that though I do not explicitly state that I see bald eagles through my binoculars, there is a clear sense in which the non-verbal testimony provided by my nod has this as its content. For just as my responding "Yes" in this context amounts to "I see bald eagles through my binoculars," so too does my nodding in this context amount to testifying to this proposition.

I do not wish to here choose between either (2) and (2*) or TEP-N and TEP-N*. Though I am leaving the stronger (2) and TEP-N in my characterizations of the relevant theses, they can easily be substituted with the weaker (2*) and TEP-N* for those convinced by the cases discussed above.

¹² Proponents of different versions of the sufficiency thesis (TEP-S) include Austin (1979), Evans (1982), Fricker (1987), Coady (1992), and Owens (2000). Burge (1993), Williamson (1996), and Audi (1997) endorse qualified versions of this thesis. For instance, Burge claims that "[i]f one has acquired one's belief from others in a *normal way*, and if the others know the proposition, one acquires knowledge" (1992, p. 477, fn. 16, emphasis added). Timothy Williamson writes that "[i]n *normal circumstances*, a speaker who asserts that *P* thereby puts a hearer in a position to know that *P* if (and only if) the speaker knows that *P*" (1996, p. 520, emphasis added). Similarly, Audi writes, "Concerning knowledge, we might say that at least *normally*, a belief that *p* based on testimony thereby constitutes knowledge...provided that the attester knows that *p* and the believer has no reason to doubt either *p* or the attester's credibility concerning it" (1997, p. 412, emphasis

added). It should be noted, however, that the arguments offered in Section 2 against TEP-S subsume even these three qualified versions of the sufficiency thesis.

It is of further interest to note that there is a version of the sufficiency thesis that is even stronger than TEP-S. With respect to warrant and justification, it can be expressed as follows:

TEP-S*: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, if (1) A's belief that p has x amount of warrant (justification), (2) B comes to believe that p on the basis of the content of A's testimony that p , and (3) B has no undefeated defeaters for believing that p , then B's belief that p has x amount of warrant (justification).

A similar principle for knowledge can be formulated by substituting "has x amount of warrant" with "is known with degree x of certainty" both in condition (1) and in the consequent of the conditional. In Section 2, I shall frame my arguments against the weaker TEP-S since they will apply just as well to the stronger TEP-S*. For instance, if A's belief that p is not warranted and B acquires warranted belief that p on the basis of A's testimony that p , then obviously A and B do not share the epistemic property in question to the same degree. Nevertheless, I should mention that, given the picture of testimony painted by proponents of the BVT—in which a speaker's belief along with its epistemic properties is *transmitted* to a hearer—it is not entirely clear what would justify endorsing only the weaker TEP-S.

¹³ For ease of exposition, I shall sometimes focus on only one epistemic property, such as warrant. The arguments in this paper, however, are completely general, and apply just as well to justification and knowledge (and even, at times, to rationality).

¹⁴ In order to avoid the worry that Bertha's false beliefs would eventually be detected, we can also stipulate that, now that she is a young adult, there are very few occasions in which she either interacts with or discusses wild animals. For instance, we can assume that she lives in an urban environment, is allergic to most non-human animal hair and hence rarely has contact with such creatures, and so on.

¹⁵ A similar, though substantially less developed, example can be found in my (1999). There, however, my purpose was simply to argue against a version of TEP framed in terms of knowledge, rather than the general BVT that is my concern here. Moreover, it could plausibly be argued that the example found in my (1999) is

a Gettier-type case, whereas I shall later argue that there is simply no compelling sense in which CONSISTENT LIAR is such a case. One further point—compare CONSISTENT LIAR with the following: I know that Margot only reports that it is snowing outside when it is not. Thus, when she reports to me that it is snowing outside, I supplement her testimony with the background information I possess about her testimonial habits and come to know that it is not snowing outside. My resulting knowledge, though in part based on testimony, also relies quite heavily on perception, memory, and inductive inference. Thus, one may plausibly argue that this sort of case does not pose a problem for TEP-N since this thesis applies only to cases of *pure* testimonial belief. But notice that this kind of move cannot be made with respect to CONSISTENT LIAR—the beliefs that Henry forms on the basis of Bertha’s testimony are purely testimonial in every relevant sense.

¹⁶ Notice that because Bertha’s ice skating accident took place when she was a teenager, the content of her wild-animal beliefs was already fixed in a normal way, and hence there is nothing about the example that is incompatible with the truth of a causal theory of content.

¹⁷ See Nozick (1981).

¹⁸ See Sosa (1996, 1999, 2000, and 2002). See also Williamson (2000).

¹⁹ It may be objected that even if Bertha’s statements are an excellent source of information, they do not qualify as *testimony* since our ordinary usage of this term requires that the speaker believe the proposition in question. By way of response to this objection, notice that it makes perfect sense to speak of a witness testifying in a courtroom to something that she herself does not believe—it is called perjury. For further reasons to countenance the statements of a speaker such as Bertha as testimony, see my (1999).

²⁰ See Gettier (1963) for the initial formulation of the problem and Shope (1983) for some of the many permutations of Gettier cases. For this response (i.e., that it is a Gettier-type case) to the sort of testifier found in CONSISTENT LIAR, see, for instance, Plantinga (1993, pp. 82-3) and Chakrabarti (1994, p. 110).

²¹ For a compelling discussion of the distinction between accidental truth and accidental justification, see Reed (2000).

²² For those who find some of the details of CONSISTENT LIAR a bit too fanciful, the following case can be substituted as a counterexample to TEP-N:

DOUBTING THOMAS: Thomas is a scientist conducting research on the migratory patterns of gray whales and, though he is brilliant, he is crippled by self-doubt. After uncovering evidence that the whales' pattern of migration is actually importantly different from what scientific consensus had thought, his doubts prevent him from coming to believe in the truth of this evidence. Nevertheless, his intellectual integrity leads him to feel an obligation to present his true and reliably acquired research to his colleagues, most of whom readily accept his testimony about the whales' migratory patterns. (Thanks to David Buller for suggesting this type of case.)

Now, even though Thomas's self-doubt prevents him from being a reliable believer regarding the migratory patterns of gray whales, he is nonetheless a highly reliable testifier of this information and so his colleagues can acquire knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) via his testimony. Hence, as with CONSISTENT LIAR, we have a case in which a hearer acquires knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) on the basis of the testimony of a speaker who does not believe and hence does not know (believe with warrant, justifiedly believe) the proposition to which he is testifying, thereby showing TEP-N to be false.

²³ It should be emphasized that it is not open to the proponent of the BVT to argue on behalf of a so-called disjunctivist view of testimony in which beliefs are the bearers of epistemic properties in cases where testimonial knowledge is successfully acquired, while statements are the bearers of epistemic properties in those cases where it is not. For notice: testimonial knowledge *is* acquired in CONSISTENT LIAR. Hence, a proponent of a disjunctive view of testimony would have to endorse a completely arbitrary division, according to which beliefs are the bearers of the relevant epistemic properties in all of those cases that do not pose a problem for the BVT while statements are the bearers of these properties in cases that are counterexamples to the BVT. But this view begins to look suspiciously *ad hoc*. It is much like an epistemologist responding to the Gettier problem by insisting that knowledge is justified true belief in non-Gettier cases, while admitting that it is more than this in Gettier cases.

²⁴ It is of interest to note that even in those rare cases where it has been argued that belief is not the central item involved in a testimonial exchange, it is simply replaced with another *mental or cognitive* item rather than with a *linguistic or communicative* item, as I am here suggesting. For instance, in his (1994), Welbourne argues against certain strands of the BVT on the grounds that while beliefs are not appropriate items for transmission, states of knowledge are. Thus, he claims that "...our concept of knowledge, unlike our concept of belief, is a concept of something which is essentially transmissible" (1994, p. 309). Of course, since the arguments offered in this section subsume a knowledge version of TEP-N, moving from belief to knowledge leads us in the wrong direction. But even if we were to bracket this point and accept Welbourne's proposal, we would still be left with the problem of characterizing how beliefs that fall short of knowledge but nevertheless possess warrant and justification are acquired via testimony.

²⁵ To be even more precise, there are two different kinds of doxastic defeaters: *rebutting defeaters* are propositions that are believed by S to be true yet indicate that the target belief is *false* while *undercutting defeaters* are propositions that are believed by S to be true yet indicate that the target belief is *unreliably formed or sustained*. See Pollock (1986) for further development of the distinction between rebutting and undercutting defeaters.

²⁶ For various discussions of what I call doxastic defeaters see, for example, Bonjour (1980 and 1985), Nozick (1981), Pollock (1986), Goldman (1986), and Plantinga (1993).

²⁷ Following the distinction in note 25, there are rebutting and undercutting normative defeaters. The only difference is that doxastic defeaters are propositions that are believed, while their normative counterparts are propositions that should be believed. Moreover, doxastic and normative defeaters may themselves be either defeated or undefeated. For instance, suppose that Daphne acquires a doxastic defeater for her belief that there is bamboo growing in her backyard when she accepts Clifford's testimony that bamboo doesn't grow in California. But suppose further that Daphne later learns that Clifford compulsively lies about Californian plant life. In such a case, Daphne acquires a doxastic defeater for the belief that she formed on the basis of Clifford's testimony, thereby providing her with a *defeater-defeater* for her original belief that bamboo is growing in her backyard. And, as might be suspected, defeater-defeaters can be defeated by further beliefs and

reasons, which in turn can be defeated by further beliefs and reasons, and so on. Now, when one has a defeater D for one's belief that p that is not itself defeated, one has what is called an *undefeated defeater* for one's belief that p . As specified in condition (3), it is the presence of undefeated defeaters, not merely defeaters, that is relevant to TEP-S.

²⁸ For discussions involving what I call normative defeaters, approached in a number of different ways, see Bonjour (1980 and 1985), Goldman (1986), Fricker (1987 and 1994), Chisholm (1989), Burge (1993 and 1997), McDowell (1994), Audi (1997 and 1998), Williams (1999), Bonjour and Sosa (2003), and Hawthorne (2004). What all of these discussions have in common is simply the idea that evidence can defeat knowledge (warrant, justification) even when the subject does not form any corresponding beliefs from the evidence in question.

²⁹ In his (2000), Peter Graham proposes two different counterexamples to a version of TEP-S, both of which he readily concedes involve the presence of defeaters (p. 371). As mentioned above, however, cases against TEP-S involving defeaters leave the spirit of the thesis in tact. Hence, what I intend to provide is a counterexample to TEP-S that does not depend on defeaters, thereby showing that the entire picture of testimony as involving transmission is fundamentally incorrect.

³⁰ An example that bears some similarities to COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING can be found in my (2003). In that paper, however, I have a different target—there I argue specifically against standard characterizations of non-reductionism in the epistemology of testimony, not the BVT.

³¹ Moreover, since there is nothing unusual about Jill's experience of the orca whale, we can assume that she has excellent *reasons* for forming the corresponding belief. This avoids the objection that Jill possesses the relevant knowledge only if an externalist view of epistemic justification is assumed.

³² For a more detailed discussion of the nature of this incompatibility, see my (forthcoming-A).

³³ Furthermore, as COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING is described, Bill, as a matter of fact, does *not* have any relevant defeaters for the testimony in question: Jill is very reliable with respect to her epistemic practices, both in general and in this particular instance, and Bill has no reason to doubt the proffered testimony. The

epistemic problem with Bill is that even if there *were* defeaters, he would accept Jill's testimony just as readily as he did in their complete absence.

³⁴ I should again emphasize, as I did in note 8, that I am concerned with the epistemic properties in question only insofar as they bear a connection with knowledge. Thus, there may be some highly subjective notions of these properties that Phil does plausibly possess.

³⁵ For those who have reservations about either COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING or ALMOST A LIAR in isolation, we can simply combine the features from both so as to have COMPULSIVELY TRUSTING ALMOST A LIAR. This would simply involve imagining Bill in Phil's scenario, so that we have a hearer who is both evidentially insensitive and counterfactually insensitive to the truth. Given this combination, both reductionists and non-reductionists in particular, and externalists and internalists in general, should agree that the epistemic properties in question fail to be acquired by the hearer.

Moreover, the following represents a third kind of counterexample to TEP-S that should be generally persuasive:

A LUCKY CHOICE: Upon arriving in Chicago for the first time, Alvin asks the first passerby that he sees, Zoe, for directions to the Sears Tower and she reports that it is six blocks east. While Zoe knows that this is the case, and Alvin has no reason to doubt either her credibility as a speaker or the truth of the proposition to which she is testifying, she is the only reliable speaker in this part of Chicago, completely surrounded by incompetents and liars. Because of this, that Alvin chooses a reliable testifier who correctly points him in the direction of the Sears Tower is entirely a matter of good luck.

Now, even though Zoe knows that the Sears Tower is six blocks east, and Alvin does not possess any relevant defeaters for the report in question, A LUCKY CHOICE represents a testimonial Gettier-type case for the recipient of testimony. In particular, Alvin's luckily choosing the only reliable testifier who is completely surrounded by incompetents and liars is analogous to a perceiver luckily seeing the only real barn that is completely surrounded by barn facades. Hence, Alvin does not come to know that the Sears Tower is

six blocks east on the basis of Zoe's testimony, despite the fact that conditions (1)-(3) are satisfied. Once again, we see that TEP-S is false.

³⁶ Plantinga (1993, p. 84 and p. 87).

³⁷ For arguments leading to a similar conclusion with respect to the epistemic status of memory, see my (forthcoming-B).

³⁸ Audi (1997, p. 409). See also the references in note 6.

³⁹ For those who find the cases in note 11 compelling, RS-N may be substituted with the weaker:

RS-N*: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B's belief that p is warranted (justified, known) on the basis of A's testimony only if (i) A's statement is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive, and (ii) B's belief that p is appropriately connected with the content of A's statement.

Of course, if RS-N is replaced with RS-N*, more will need to be said about the "appropriate connection" found in condition (ii).

⁴⁰ It may be objected that requiring the reliability of the statement in question is too strong a condition for testimonial *justification*. For instance, wouldn't I be justified in believing that the President is currently in Iraq on the basis of reading the *New York Times* even if, for some reason, the reporter's statement fails to be reliable or otherwise truth conducive? What I would say is that testimonial justification has two essential aspects: (i) a reliability, or objective, component and (ii) a rationality, or subjective, component. (I argue for this view of testimonial justification in my (forthcoming-C).) Given this, my belief about the President's whereabouts clearly satisfies the subjective, rationality constraint, despite its failure of the objective, reliability constraint. More precisely, even though such a belief fails (i) and is therefore not justified, my satisfaction of (ii) shows that I am nonetheless subjectively rational in my acceptance of the reporter's testimony. (Indeed, such a belief possesses many other positive epistemic properties, such as being held in an epistemically responsible way, being epistemically virtuous, and so on.) This enables us to explain the intuition that the belief in question both *possesses* and *lacks* something epistemically important: it possesses subjective rationality, but lacks objective reliable formation and, hence, justification. (Alternatively, it could be argued that my

belief about the President's whereabouts is *subjectively justified*, but not *objectively justified*. For more on the distinction between subjective and objective justification, see Bonjour and Sosa (2003, pp. 153-55). It is of further interest to note that it is not at all uncommon in the literature to find justification being discussed, either entirely or partially, in externalist terms. To name just a few, see Alston (1989), Goldman (1992), and Bonjour and Sosa (2003.)

⁴¹ See Nozick (1981), Sosa (1996, 1999, 2000, and 2002) and Williamson (2000), Plantinga (1993), and Sosa (1991), respectively.

⁴² Of course, often times, it is precisely *because* a speaker is insincere or an incompetent believer that she is an incompetent or unreliable testifier. For instance, if I frequently lie or form inaccurate beliefs, more often than not this will prevent you from acquiring knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) on the basis of my testimony. But the reason why you are so prevented is that my insincerity or incompetence has made my testimony unreliable. Moreover, a *bearer's beliefs* about a speaker's sincerity and competence can have epistemic significance. For instance, if I believe that you are a compulsive liar or an unreliable epistemic source, then even if you are neither of these, the mere fact that I believe that you are can provide me with a defeater for accepting your testimony. Hence, my beliefs about your sincerity and competence can prevent me from acquiring knowledge (warranted belief, justified belief) on the basis of your testimony.

⁴³ Of course, for testimonial *knowledge*, a condition will need to be added to SVT requiring the truth of B's belief that *p*.

⁴⁴ Again, following notes 11 and 39, SVT may be substituted with the weaker:

SVT*: For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B's belief that *p* is warranted (justified, known) on the basis of A's testimony only if (1) A's statement is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive, (2) B comes to believe that *p* on the basis of an appropriate connection with the content of A's statement, and (3) B has no undefeated defeaters for believing that *p*.

As mentioned in note 39, more will need to be said about the "appropriate connection" in (2) if SVT is replaced with SVT*.

⁴⁵ In fact, in other work, I have argued for conditions on testimonial warrant beyond those found in (1)-(3).

See, for instance, my (2003 and forthcoming-C).

⁴⁶ As mentioned in note 9, it would be more precise to say that we learn from one another's acts of communication (so as to allow for learning from others in non-linguistic ways, such as through a nod or pointing).

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